## Healing Broken Wings (working title)

**by** [Lilfella](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Lilfella)

**Summary**

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Virgil only wants to protect those he loves at all costs. What happens when he can't hide it anymore?

**I project my experiences of being trafficked onto Virgil, so what he experiences I experienced myself while I was being trafficked, just so you know where this fic is coming from.

What is up everybody?! A heads up, this fic is graphic and gets DARK but I fix it! Plz heed the tags and if there's something in there that could be triggering for you, plz take care of yourselves! I assure you that I have this whole thing outlined, so it won't get abandoned!

I try to keep my stuff accessible, including keeping chapters not much longer than 3500 words, so if you have ideas to make my fic more accessible plz lmk!

This fic is not used to represent D.I.D. If you want resources on D.I.D., lmk in the comments section or on Tumblr!

I now have an amazing beta by the name of Jasper01! She's so awesome!!!

Notes

Hello guys, gals, and non-binary pals! A couple of heads ups that I didn't put in the summary because it was already really long:

Most importantly, if I missed tags that you think I should include, please tell me! I want to keep people safe above all else.

This is not intended as a kink fic, but if what's in here is your thing it's all good! This is a kink-shaming-free zone!

Since this is my first time posting, I am totally open to suggestions! If you have writing suggestions or see a typo, please let me know!

And if you have any questions about why a character did/said something, I'm more than happy to explain that!
Virgil felt terrible for how he spoke to Thomas, but he had to get his point across quickly and beg Thomas to never let that happen again. He also didn’t want his Host to see him have a panic attack, or worse, get affected by one. Being in his room made it easier to manage the amount of anxiety that made it to his Host.

He stumbled down the hallway, uncharacteristically clumsy, as he tried to make it to his room. He knew that his time being questioned by Deceit on the stand had piqued the Light Sides’ curiosity, and he wasn’t ready to answer the questions they had. He couldn’t lie and summon the snake, but he couldn’t very well tell the truth, either. Virgil felt his blood pressure rising, felt his muscles tensing and relaxing with a confusing mix of flight! run! flee! run! and freeze! stop! relax! blink out! Black spots were forming in his vision. He needed to focus on his breathing, but he couldn’t while he was trying to get to his room. Doing anything was difficult when every muscle felt like it was made of lead, but he could make it. It was only 20 feet away. He had to hide from the others, had to block his anxiety from Thomas, had to avoid the questions he saw swirling in their eyes...

“Hey Virgil!”

Virgil decided to pretend not to hear Roman as he kept moving towards his room.

“Virge!”

Virgil stopped walking (limping? running?) and let out a deep sigh as he realized that Roman was too close behind him to make it to his room on time. He attempted to take a deep breath in through his nose to try to gather enough strength to speak with Roman and then get back to his room. Roman came to a stop behind Virgil and decided to take his hand and twirl him around like a salsa partner so they were facing each other. Normally Virgil wouldn’t mind contact from one of the light sides, hell, he usually cherished every accidental touch he got, after he gathered himself in the mornings of course. But after dealing with Deceit in the courtroom today, Deceit in control (like always, he’s always been in control), Roman’s hand felt like a brand that made his skin crawl. Virgil roughly yanked his hand away and skillfully moved his head so his bangs and hood mostly covered his eyes.

“Jesus Roman! You can’t just grab people like that!”

Roman rolled his eyes, but looked slightly apologetic.

“Sorry Mr. Fight or Flight! But I had something to ask you and I think I have a good idea for the next video!”

Roman was bouncing on the balls of his heels by this point with hope and excitement shimmering in his cognac eyes. As much as Virgil hated the thought of peopling and just wanted to decompress (panic cry scream cry) in his room, he hated the thought of causing the royal’s light to dim (again, like he always does). His anxiety was starting to spike even more at the thought of the question Roman had, but he held it down as best he could.

Trying to seem as normal as possible (can’t let him know can’t let him know what’s his question oh god does he know does he know he’s gonna hate me he’s gonna hate me he hates me), he sighed
and asked, “Okay, what’s your idea?” (There, get him talking about his idea, he might even forget he had a question)

Roman grinned even wider. “Oh I think the Fanders will absolutely love it! You know how much they love Deceit and have been asking for more information on the Dark Sides?”

Virgil’s blood turned to ice, but he expertly kept his features schooled in a cool indifference behind the shadow of his bangs and hood.

“Yeah?”

“Well I’ve been reading the comments section of the videos, of course, and I noticed that there’s a theory that they have that you used to be active partners with Deceit and the other Dark Sides! We could play into that and talk about lying to yourself and what being a villain means and how people grow and you could work with the other Dark Sides and…”

Virgil’s anxiety was increasing with each word Roman shouted. Roman seemed to notice that something was off with Virgil and paused in his speech, most of which Virgil had missed.

“Virge? Is something wrong? Do you not like my idea?”

Virgil looked up to meet Roman’s eyes (when had he looked down?) and saw concern and sadness there. Dammit, Virgil thought, I can’t bring him down again. Virgil took in a shuddering breath and said, “Sorry Princey. I’m just tired from filming today. Your idea’s fine.” No! Dammit no! He can’t! I can’t! “I’ll catch up with you later, ‘kay?”

Roman frowned, but nodded. “Alright Virge. I’ll chat with you later. Family dinner?”

Patton had instituted a mandatory family dinner every night long before Virgil had been accepted into the famILY. Despite his panic attack that was barely being held at bay, he managed a small smile at the memory of his first mandatory family dinner. (“Now young man, none of that! You’re coming to our family dinner because you’re famILY!” Patton gently grabbed Virgil’s forearm and started pulling him towards the stairs. “Wh-whatever”. He allowed himself to grin until he got downstairs where the other sides were. He had a reputation to keep up dammit.). With Virgil’s erratic sleep patterns, though, he sometimes ended up sleeping through family dinner.

“Y-yeah, I’ll see you there.”

Roman smiled tightly, bowed, and flourished, “Very well, my Dark and Stormy Knight! Until we meet again!” Roman turned to go downstairs, no doubt to express his post-video creative spike to someone who could listen, and Virgil was finally allowed to get to his room. As soon as Roman had turned, Virgil moved the opposite way and let his breathing become more erratic. He began shaking all over, largely as a result of his anxiety and partially as a result of trying to keep his panic under control while speaking with Roman. He felt like fear and panic were clawing and ripping at his brain. When he finally made it to his room, he barely managed to close the door and snap it soundproof before he collapsed into a shaking, wheezing pile on the floor. His vision was definitely tunneling at this point. Virgil was laying on his side, and he could already feel his arm starting to fall asleep. He felt like he wanted to rip off his skin, no, his flesh from his bones. It was itchy and crawling and horrible and uncomfortable. Virgil knew he couldn’t do that, but oh, how he wanted.

Why was Deceit showing up during the day? Why was he there? Why were the other sides and Thomas even giving him room to speak? Why did they ignore Virgil’s obvious discomfort around the other Side? It’s not like he could say much...
Virgil finally let himself go after holding back. He sobbed and cried. He let out his frustration and fear in near wails. Virgil knew he was going to pass out soon if he didn’t get his breathing under control, but he also couldn’t stop sobbing. He gasped in pitiful, tiny breaths when he could, but it felt like his diaphragm was moving of its own accord, forcibly pressing sobs out. He accepted that he was going to pass out and sent a silent apology to Patton and Roman.

Chapter End Notes

See a typo? A missed tag? A writing suggestion? Enter your username and comment down below and get entered to win my friendship!

...we've been re-working the budget, and the prize money kinda got slashed...

(kudos if you liked!)

Anyways, my weird humor aside, this chapter is supposed to set stuff up and cause more questions than answers. Hang in there if you're confused! I promise I'll answer questions in the next couple of chapters!
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Hey all! This chapter is a little angst with mostly fluff.

Edit: I'm absolutely loving all of the interaction on this story!! I love chatting with y'all!! I do have a request: please don't use the comments to vent or detail the abuse you went through. It is not only very triggering for me, but may be triggering for other folks as well. It's why I tag and put TW's at the beginning of chapters; so people can choose to interact with what's safe for them. Since these comments show up in my inbox, I have no choice but to frequently interact with very triggering stuff. I'm a person. Thank you in advance for your understanding!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman swept into the kitchen where Patton was pretending like he was starting dinner and not grabbing a third cookie.

“Hello Padre, my conscientious counsel of conscience! How are you this fine day?”

Patton giggled, “I’m doing great Roman! You sure seem to be doing swell kiddo!”

Roman beamed and did his Princey flourish. “Indeed I am! For today is a wonderful day! We finished filming a fantastic episode, we shall begin editing shortly, and I have a wonderful new idea for future videos!”

Patton smiled at Roman’s enthusiasm. Roman would typically be energized right after filming, but would soon be a sleepy prince after a few hours. He would snuggle up on the couch, insisting he was just relaxing, and fall asleep soon after. Patton loved tucking in his tired prince and cooing at how adorable he was.

“Well why don’t you tell me all about it kiddo! I’d love to hear it!”

“Gladly! I was thinking that we could have a plot point in the Sanders Sides series be that Virgil worked with the Dark Sides in the past! We could talk about growing as a person, taking chances to become a hero, and telling secrets and so much more! What do you think padre?”

Patton beamed at Roman. “I think that’s a great idea Roman! How does Virgil feel about all of this?”

Roman’s smile slipped a little at that. Patton noticed, but decided not to comment on it. “I’m not sure, but he seems to be fine with it. He said he was tired after today’s filming, so I wasn’t able to get a reaction from him.”

Patton’s worry for the stormy side increased. He knew Virgil obviously had a history with Deceit, and he also knew that his dark son didn’t get nearly enough sleep. Patton hoped that Virgil was actually napping; he knew the younger side had a tendency to keep things that were bothering him close to his chest and not tell anyone about them. He resolved to check up on his kiddo before dinner.
“Alright Roman! If everyone’s okay with the Dark Sides being in more videos, I think it sounds like a great idea!”

Roman beamed. “Wonderful! I shall start drafting right away!” With a dramatic exit, Roman left to go to his room.

Patton smiled warmly at his prince’s antics. “Just don’t wear yourself out! And be back in time for dinner!” He called after him.

A faint, “Will do, don’t worry!” was heard.

Patton chuckled to himself. Roman was truly wonderful to have around. Whenever he was in a good mood, his energy had a tendency to fill the room and brighten everyone in it.

With Roman gone, Patton’s thoughts returned to his anxious bean. Patton frowned slightly. If Virgil was upset, not just tired, then Patton wanted to be there for him. But if he was tired and maybe finally getting some much-needed sleep, Patton didn’t want to wake him up. With that, Patton decided to go to him just before dinner was ready.

*So maybe something that can be baked in the oven.*

*Let’s see. I’m thinking… lasagna!*

Mind made up, Patton went about getting his bowls and pans out, his ingredients organized, preheating the oven, and boiling some water. He hummed tunelessly to himself, stirring up the herb-ricotta-cottage cheese mixtures. As he was trying to decide between regular tomato-vegetable-meat sauce and extra-basil-tomato-vegetable-meat sauce (*extra basil today! And some rosemary!*), he found his thoughts drifting back to Virgil. Something in his gut knew that something was off, but he couldn’t tell what. And he didn’t want to wake up Virgil if he was getting sleep…

Patton shook his head. He had a tendency to worry about his children more than necessary, and it seemed like Virgil was tiring of it, if his unscripted outburst near the end of the (adorable!) puppet episode was anything to go by. Patton took a deep breath and steeld himself to wait until the lasagna was in the oven to check on Virgil. Oooo, if Virgil was feeling up to it, he could help make the salad! Virgil is always a blast to have in the kitchen! Truthfully, Patton loved spending time with any of his kiddos, but Virgil’s quiet presence was calming. The way Virgil would listen and gently smile while Patton talked excitedly about the puppy Thomas got to pet or the new recipe he was dying to try made his heart soar. Other times, they would both be working silently, just enjoying each other’s presence and spending time together.

Patton decided that garlic bread would be a necessary accessory. He sliced a loaf of French bread, whipped up a garlic-herb butter, buttered both sides of the slices, and put the loaf back together in tin foil.

A niggling concern at the back of his mind kept bothering him. The way Virgil behaved whenever Deceit would show up… There was something there. Virgil was his stormy child, and he certainly pretended not to like the other light sides at first, but that was just an act. Virgil had opened up since he was accepted by the light sides, and Patton just didn’t think that Virgil had any reason to *pretend* not to like Deceit. Which means he must really not like him. Patton frowned. He seemed really upset that Deceit was there. He was definitely lashing out, and people either lash out from hurt, anger, or fear. Patton wondered which one it was. He knew he could try to figure it out on his own, but he also knew that the best info would have to come straight from Virgil. Even with that, Patton had a hard time dragging his thoughts away from which feeling was causing Virgil to lash
out, and what had happened to cause those feelings. Was it something to do with before Virgil tried
ducking out?

Patton started tearing up. He wished he could have reached Virgil sooner, but he always seemed
like he didn’t want anyone else around. Virgil had kept his door locked all the time before, and
Patton didn’t want to invade his privacy; that’s NOT the way to get someone to trust you. That
poor guy spent so long alone. What could have happened to his son that made him react the way he
did around Deceit?

Patton was startled out of his thought when the timer for his noodles went off. He quickly drained
them in the sink and let them rest while he got the pan ready. Ohhhhh everyone would love this!
He layered up the lasagna noodles, sauce, and cheese mixture before putting it in the oven.

With that, Patton took a deep breath. He picked up Virgil’s water bottle, grabbed some cookies (he
definitely didn’t eat one or two), and headed up to Virgil’s room. He carefully balanced the cookies
between his hip and the arm with Virgil’s water bottle, and knocked on Virgil’s door. When no
answer came, he knocked again. Silence. Concerned, Patton put his ear to the door. He frowned
when he didn’t hear anything. He decided to try calling out to him.

“Virge, honey? It’s Patton. I just wanted to check on you and see if you wanted to come down for
dinner?”

No response.

By this time, Patton’s hair was standing on end and his dad instincts were screaming at him.

*Something is wrong something is wrong something is WRONG!*

Patton tried the door handle, and found it locked. He took a step back and breathed. It would do no
good to panic. He knew that if he panicked, his son would panic, and that wouldn’t help anybody.
After a few deep breaths he had calmed down. He didn’t want to invade Virgil’s privacy, but his
dad instincts were too loud to ignore. He knocked again and called out, “Virgil, I’m coming in.”

He closed his eyes and sunk out… then popped right back up where he was.

“Ow!” he exclaimed, rubbing his head. Wowzers, Virgil really locked his room this time. Although
he doubted it was personal, Patton couldn’t help the sadness and hurt that welled up. *Why does he
want us out so bad? Why doesn’t he trust me yet?* Patton decided that if Virgil wanted alone time
that bad, that he’d leave him to it. Hopefully he truly was napping and had his headphones in. He
moped downstairs and started setting the table. Logan entered the kitchen.

“Salutations Patton. It smells delicious.”

Patton beamed at that. Although he was still upset about Virgil, Logan could always cheer him up!

“Awww thanks Lo! I’m making lasagna! I figured we could use a big meal after such a big day! Do
you want to help make the salad?”

Logan smiled. “Certainly Patton. How much longer does the lasagna need to stay in the oven?”

“Oh about another 10 minutes! I’ll throw the garlic bread in there soon!”

Logan spotted the cookies on the table. “Patton, you know eating cookies right before dinner will
ruin your appetite, do you not? Proper nutrition is important to maintain, and if you fill yourself up
on sweets and leave little room for proper sustenance—”
Patton flinched a little at the mention of the cookies. “Oh no Lo, I was bringing them up to Virgil. Roman mentioned Virgil was tired after the shoot today, so I went up to check on him.”

Logan nodded as he focused on washing the vegetables. “Ah, I see. And how was he?”

Patton’s shoulders slumped. “I don’t know. He locked me out. I couldn’t even sink in!” Patton felt his face and neck start to flush as his eyes welled with tears. “I’m honestly a little worried about Virgil. My dad instincts say something’s wrong, but I don’t want to suffocate him! You’ve seen how he reacts to that lately!” A lone tear broke free and made a path down Patton’s cheek.

Logan was surprised. Virgil rarely locked his door nowadays, much less prevented someone from sinking into his room. Granted, there were some days when his door was locked, but that seemed to be when Virgil was having heightened anxiety and didn’t want to interact with the other sides. And the fact that Patton’s instinct would be so strong as to compel him to try to sink into Virgil’s room despite a locked door had Logan concerned. Although Virgil’s behavior over the past few months has become more erratic...

He was brought back into the moment when he heard a sniffle come from his boyfriend. He winced. Emotional intelligence was not his forte. Perhaps Roman might be able to help? Logan thought. No, he may become cross with Virgil, which I doubt will help things.

As if he were summoned, Roman bounded into the kitchen. “Greetings citizens! Logan! How are-” Roman stopped short as he saw Patton. “Patton, what has harmed your gentle soul? I will slay anyone who dares wrong you!”

Despite his sadness, Patton let out a watery giggle. “Hey Ro. It’s just Virgil…” Patton hiccuped.

Roman straightened. “What did he do?! Tell me and shall make him answer for his crimes!”

Patton wiped his face and shook his head. “No, Roman, he didn’t do anything wrong. I’m just worried about him. He locked his door AND kept me from sinking in! I’ve been trying to give him fewer nicknames and act how he wants, but why doesn’t he trust me?” he whimpered.

Roman was upset. While he was certainly frustrated with Virgil, he could feel the fear coming from Patton. Just as he was about to open his mouth, Logan spoke.

“Roman, I do not believe that an aggressive encounter would do anything to ameliorate the situation. In fact, I believe that would make it worse. Let us wait until Virgil comes down on his own, and then we can discuss his actions.”

While Logan disliked emotions, he couldn’t help but feel protective over Patton when he was crying. Rationally, he knew that Virgil was likely just tired and did not want to interact with anyone, and that interacting with Patton may have caused Virgil to be short with him. However, seeing the heart so upset seemed to cloud his judgment somewhat.

Patton sniffled again, “It’s alright, really guys. I know Virgil probably doesn’t mean it personally. Please don’t get upset at him. I’m just worried about him.”

Roman and Logan nodded, although they both secretly planned to confront Virgil over his behavior. Neither of them liked seeing their boyfriend crying sad tears. Patton jumped.

“Oh! I’ve got to put the bread in! Dinner will be in just a few minutes!”

Logan hurriedly finished cutting the carrots and celery, while he had Roman slice some radishes. Patton put the lettuce and some cherry tomatoes into a bowl, and Logan and Roman added their
vegetables. Patton texted Virgil that it was dinner time, with no response. Logan and Roman watched. Patton forced a smile onto his face and said, “He might just be sleeping! He never gets enough sleep, so I’m sure this is good for him!” Patton gave them each a kiss as a thank you for helping make the salad, with Roman twirling and dipping Patton and Logan blushing sweetly. They sat down to eat, eventually settling in and casually talking about the filming.

“I must admit, you did a great job today Roman. Although I still believe I could have contributed more in the mock trial setting.”

“Why thank you Small Wonder! I am quite good, aren’t I?”

“Ya sure are kiddo! Boy, you’re a really good judge of talent, aren’t ya!”

“Oof, Patton please, I’m exhausted.”

“Sorry Logan. I guess that joke didn’t appeal to you!”

“Please stop.”

“I’m sorry, I just got so excited. I’ll let Roman do the talking. Roman, mind bailing me out?”

“If I ignore you will you stop?”

“Maybe, because that would be a real class act!...ion.”

“...Wow.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, if you see a missing tag, a typo, or a writing suggestion, let me know! Next chapter, things get more intense and helps explain some things.

Leave kudos if you liked!
Virgil came to slowly. The first thing he registered was his pounding head. The next thing he felt was his ribs protesting. He groaned and rolled over, but lying on his back on the hard floor wasn’t much better with the welts criss-crossing his back from his shoulders to his knees. He hissed and arched his back in a reflexive attempt to protect his injuries, but that just made everything hurt. After rolling to his other, less injured side, he pushed up onto his hands and knees and crawled to his bed. With a Herculean effort, he managed to make it up on top of his mattress.

After some breathing, he took stock of himself and his surroundings. He noticed his throat was painful and dry from his attack. His eyes felt swollen, and when he looked down he saw dried blood under his fingernails. He pulled up his sleeves to confirm, and yup, he had scratched himself again. Feeling slightly more grounded, he turned to look at the clock. It read 11:39 PM in large, mocking figures.

Fuck. Here we go again.

Virgil closed his eyes to rest what little he could before they came back. Virgil hated seeing them, but it was part of his role as protector. He had to protect the Light Sides from harm. He wouldn’t let Thomas turn dark on his watch. Besides, it’s not like he had much use outside of this, anyways. He gave Thomas anxiety, so much so that he had a hard time interacting with strangers and he lost opportunities. The least he could do is protect the most important facets of Thomas from the other Dark Sides. Although he had accepted his fate, terror and disgust were still boiling in his stomach and veins for what he knew was about to happen.

Maybe they won’t need me to be all there. Maybe I can blink out tonight…

He felt his heart rate and breathing pick up as he held back tears. I don’t want this. I have to. I don’t want to. Please, not anymore, let them forget, please please please pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease-

“Hello Virgil.”

Virgil felt a surge in dread and nausea. As he heard the shifting of clothes, he had to swallow down a small ball of hot acid that had seemingly lept out of his stomach. He trembled as he opened his eyes, and glared at Deceit in what was hopefully a convincing blank stare. It must not have worked, since Deceit just smiled wider.
“I’m sure you know what to do.” Deceit said as he extended a gloved hand. Virgil looked at it for a moment, gulped, and took it. He felt the familiar swirl as they teleported down to the Dark Side of the mindscape. When he looked up, he was horrified to see the others there. Ever since the arrangement, Virgil noticed that the others would be present almost every time, as opposed to before-

Virgil mentally shook his head. He couldn’t think about that. He had to check his mind at the door. He had to pay attention, at least at first, to see what they had planned. Hopefully, it would be something where he could just blink out and pretend in the morning that nothing had transpired the night before. He had to block out his emotions, and just like that, with practiced ease, his emotions were no more.

“How did you come up with this idea?” Deceit purred as he laid a hand on Virgil’s shoulder. Gentle, but no less threatening. “Logan would be so proud of us! We-”

Malice cut Deceit off. “We’re gonna be doing an experiment!” He clapped excitedly and bounced up and down.

Deceit glared at the other side and continued. “Yes, as Malice said, we shall be doing an experiment, and you’ll be helping us. Doesn’t that sound fun?”

Virgil shivered, his feelings starting to come back despite his best efforts. “What did you have in mind?” he asked, dreading the answer.

“Well you see, we’re going to be collecting quantitative data on your abilities. We’ll need you to do your best while we… count. Now get ready for us.”

Even after all of this time, Virgil still felt the ghost of humiliation at taking off his clothes and folding them into a neat pile. He stood, hands behind his back and head down, while Deceit snapped Virgil’s clothes somewhere else.

Apathy then rolled out the mockingly pristine chalkboard with a perfectly drawn grid showing all of the Dark Sides’ names. Virgil stared it down, as though he could erase its purpose just by glaring at it balefully. Focus the hate there, the anger, the frustration. He just might be able to make it through this. He knows what’s going to happen. Damnit, he thought, we’re filming another Sanders Sides Q&A tomorrow. FUCK. How the FUCK am I supposed to film?? He knew that he was heading into a panic attack. Hopelessness had a tendency to do that to him. No, I can do this. Those videos don’t take as long, and I’ve been through worse. His breathing was still coming quickly and erratically. Deceit tutted.

“Now now Virgil, none of that. We need you here,” Deceit gripped Virgil’s shoulder painfully, using his thumb to dig into a pressure point on the side of Virgil’s neck. Virgil fell to his knees of his own accord. That hurt. No matter how many times Deceit did it, pressure points was a pain Virgil could never get used to or block out for some reason. As Deceit stepped in front of him, his emotions blinked out of their own accord. Virgil suddenly had an idea.

“Sir,” he started carefully, “I thought I should inform you that we’ll be filming another episode tomorrow. I may have more trouble hiding my injuries from the others, so-”

Virgil’s vision went white as his head whipped to the side. As his head came to a stop, his vision went starry, and he registered the pain in his left temple.

“You do NOT speak unless spoken to, whore. Do you understand?” Deceit hissed.
“Yes sir.”

“I don’t care if you have a shoot tomorrow, you WILL hide it. Unless you want the consequences to be enforced.”

“Yes sir.”

“Good. Now be a good boy,” Deceit moved closer and grabbed Virgil’s hair tightly, “and do as I tell you.”

“Yes sir.”

Deceit roughly yanked Virgil’s face against his crotch and rubbed it there. Virgil could feel how hard both of Deceit’s cocks were (hemipenis, Virgil’s mind helpfully supplied). Virgil wasn’t sure why Deceit liked doing that particular thing, but he supposed it was a power or degradation move. Deceit rubbed Virgil’s face against his crotch a few more times, then untucked himself with one hand. Virgil immediately opened his mouth to allow Deceit to shove himself in, knowing the consequences if he didn’t. Deceit sheathed himself in one thrust and held himself there, groaning.

“Gods, Virgil, your throat is so amazing around my cock. Can’t wait to empty my balls down your throat. Fuck!” He was moving in short rocks back and forth as he kept himself in Virgil’s throat. When Virgil thought he might pass out from lack of oxygen, Deceit pulled out just enough for Virgil to breathe in one desperate breath, then shoved himself back in. Deceit’s cock felt burning hot as it slid on his tongue, filling his mouth with a sharp, disgusting musky taste. The sweaty smell of his pubes pressed against Virgil’s nose was almost worse than the taste. Almost.

Virgil knew all of the sensitive spots on everyone’s cocks by now, so he angled the tip of his tongue up to massage the thick vein running on the underside of Deceit’s cock and to play with the base. Virgil knew he hit the vein when he felt a bit more give than the rest of the object in his mouth. Deceit swore and continued his vile rambling.

Deceit must have been excited today, because he suddenly started coming down Virgil’s throat. Virgil automatically started swallowing. Deceit pulled out a little so only his tip was left inside Virgil’s mouth. Virgil obediently swallowed the rest. Deceit then shoved his other cock down Virgil’s throat, repeating what he had done with his other penis. The combined taste of Deceit’s penis and release was strong and sharp and terrible, but Virgil knew it would only get worse as the night went on. Virgil could feel the corona of Deceit’s penis moving in and out of the back of his throat. Deceit was thrusting his penis more freely now that he had already had one orgasm, so Virgil let his mind drift a little. Not enough to blink out, he couldn’t do that tonight if he wanted to avoid punishment, but just enough to focus on something else. He dimly registered heavy breathing and the sound of skin against skin from the other sides jacking themselves. Deceit’s thrusts started becoming more erratic, and Virgil had to quickly swallow if he didn’t want to drool any come out. Deceit groaned.

“That’s right, drink up. Can’t have you wasting any. Every last drop.”

As Deceit tucked himself back in and stepped away to add two tally marks next to his name on the chalkboard, Virgil focused on catching his breath. He kept his head down, but shifted his eyes up just enough so he could see how many people he’d be servicing tonight.

Great, he thought, one down, five more to go. Only five more. You can do this. Just five more Virgil kept chanting to himself as Rage stepped up. Rage was dressed in his usual jeans and red tank top,
but had added a black bandana to his forehead. Virgil knew in the back of his mind that they’d each
go several times, but he couldn’t let that voice be louder than the chant he had going in his head.
He’d die, he was sure of it. The second that voice was louder, he’d just curl up and die right there
on the spot. And he couldn’t let that happen. He had to protect Roman and Patton and Logan and
Thomas. That was his job. He took a breath and opened his mouth as Rage began his typical brutal
pace. Rage gripped Virgil’s hair harshly as he thrusted as fast and hard as he could. Virgil felt
Rage’s testicles slapping against his chin, and he was almost certain his nose was bleeding from the
force of Rage’s thrusts. After what seemed like a ridiculously long time, Rage pulled completely
out.

“Suck my balls bitch.”

Virgil went to comply immediately. Rage was always sweaty, and tonight was no different. Rage
looked up and let out a sound that was between a sigh and a groan. Virgil kept up his ministrations,
just how he knew Rage liked it, for several minutes. Rage’s hips started twitching erratically,
which surprised Virgil since he knew what their plans were tonight. However, just before Rage
starting coming, he shoved himself back into Virgil’s mouth. Virgil swallowed as quickly as he
could, knowing that Rage timed it so he might be able to punish Virgil. Rage might still be able to
do so, if they were going for a new record. One of Rage’s go-to favorites was hanging Virgil up by
one rope attached to both of his wrists and using him as a punching bag. Malice would sometimes
sing a rendition of “Gonna Fly Now” to make it seem like a reenactment of the Rocky movies. It
seemed to help both Rage and Malice get hard again, so Deceit would allow it even if Virgil
“behaved”.

Rage tucked himself back into his jeans and went to put a mark next to his name. Virgil counted to
himself, two down, four to go as Apathy walked over. Apathy had his tattered blue t-shirt and blue
long-sleeved plaid, with his stained, smelly sweatpants.

“Go on.” he told Virgil. Virgil pulled Apathy’s sweatpants down and his nose was assaulted by a
scent that could have only come from someone not showering for at least a week. As Virgil got to
work, he let his thoughts drift to Thomas. He was so proud of Thomas. The light sides were
growing so much. He had to do this. For them.

Chapter End Notes

As always, let me know if there's a tag or typo I missed, or if there's something I can
improve on. And please leave kudos if you liked!

If reading the graphic description would be bad for your mental health, here's what
happens; there are 6 dark sides, including Deceit. They're counting how many times
they can use him on a chalkboard. The last thought Virgil has in this chapter is about
protecting Thomas and the Light Sides.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! This chapter is one of the darker ones in this fic, so please be careful! It starts out with rape, but I put a line of tildes where it ends and Virgil starts taking care of himself if you want/need to skip it. I'll put in a brief description at the end if you want to read that instead!

Edit: also, there is a description of Virgil using cutting as self-harm while he's showering, so feel free to skip that if you'd like as well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The next morning, Deceit sank into Virgil’s room, holding Virgil by his hair. Virgil was limply hanging onto his clothes with one hand. Deceit dropped Virgil, still naked, unceremoniously onto the floor.

“Now, you have an hour until you’re expected for the video.” Deceit stated matter-of-factly, almost bored, as if he didn’t have a catatonic Side sporadically twitching on the ground in front of him. “That is more than enough time for you to pull yourself together. So I’ll mete out your punishment for speaking out of turn now instead of later. Aren’t a kind, merciful soul?” Deceit finished with an evil smirk.

“Yes sir.” Virgil said robotically, not moving any more than needed.

“Of course I am. Now stay still, this won’t hurt a bit.” Deceit sank to his knees behind Virgil and kicked his legs apart. He grabbed Virgil’s hips, spat into his hand, spread it over one of his cocks, and shoved violently into Virgil, sheathing himself in one thrust. Deceit groaned as he bottomed out, and sat there, unmoving for a moment as he enjoyed the intense tight and hot feeling around his cock. Virgil tensed automatically as Deceit shoved into him, but it wasn’t anything new. It was more painful than it would have been if they had used his ass at all that night, especially since they had done so the night before, but they had stuck with using his mouth. By the time they were finished, the total number of tallies was 25.

Deceit began moving in Virgil, slowly at first, and Virgil felt the familiar tearing inside. Deceit kept a slower pace until he felt there was enough blood for him to start moving faster. He didn’t want to get any chafing. After a few minutes, he picked up the pace and started slamming harder and faster into Virgil. Deceit felt what he knew was a somewhat sick thrill at feeling the tearing he was causing, but he didn’t care. He just enjoyed himself inside of Virgil, eyes rolling back into his head.

Before he was too far gone, Deceit pulled out completely. Virgil was slightly confused; usually Deceit would finish inside him, but maybe he felt like marking outside today. Deceit smiled manically to himself, lined up both of his cocks, and slammed into the hilt. Virgil gasped and grabbed the carpet, but he fought the instinct to pull away. Deceit would only make it that much worse if he did.

Deceit set up a fast pace. Once he got both cocks in, he just started rabbiting away until he felt his orgasm building. Virgil couldn’t help the pitiful whimpers that were pushed out of him. Deceit
chased his orgasm, enjoyed the slow build, and released inside of Virgil. His orgasm went through him like an earthquake.

Deceit collapsed onto Virgil’s back, catching his breath and breathing in the sweat. Virgil stayed motionless as he felt himself getting filled up and Deceit’s penises softening inside of him. Deceit’s come felt like fire in his torn up insides.

Eventually, Deceit softened enough where it was more effort than it was worth to keep himself in Virgil. Just before he pulled out, he leaned forward and whispered, “Don’t forget your place, whore. You are nothing. I own you. You’re my cock sleeve to use and pass around as I see fit. NEVER forget that.”

Deceit chuckled.

“Maybe your darling Light Sides have figured you out. Seen how you’re so much more work than you’re worth. Maybe that’s why you’re the perpetual 4th wheel, no matter how much Morality insists you’re part of their family. Just wait until they figure out what one thing you’re good for. We could have a little bonding party! You, me, the other Dark Sides, and the Light Sides! A sloppy party favor for sure, but hey, I’m sure the Fanders would love to see the Dark and the Light getting along.”

Virgil felt an echo of an emotion go through him. It felt like a stake was being driven through his chest and into his abdomen. He knew he wasn’t worth the other Lights’ time and that they were better off without him fucking up their relationship, but fuck it hurt.

As he was already by Virgil’s ear, Deceit made a decision. Sides heal faster than humans. This should be fine. More than fine. He tenderly kissed the side of Virgil’s cheek, which caused a shudder to go through the weaker side. Deceit smiled to himself.

“One more thing Virgil. You’ll be wearing your black jeans today, correct?”

“Yes sir.”

Deceit’s smile grew. “Excellent.” With that, he snapped the room soundproof, summoned a small paring knife, and plunged it into Virgil’s bloody, gaping hole.

Virgil gasped and the world seemed to stop moving. Then, he let out as loud of a scream as he could. With how sore his throat was from being raped and screaming during Rage’s anger management/ foreplay, it only came out as a hoarse cry.

I probably didn’t even need to soundproof the room. Deceit thought to himself. He chuckled once again before getting up, fixing his clothes, and brushing off imaginary dust.

“Well Virgil, you now have half an hour. I suggest you pull yourself together for the video. I would just hate to see what would happen to the Light Sides if they ever found out about our little… arrangement.”

~~~~

And with that, Deceit teleported back to the Dark Side of the mindscape. Virgil lay on the ground for a few more moments, uncaring of the uncomfortable position he was in, before he tried to get his hands underneath him. He succeeded in pushing his torso up a couple inches before his arms gave out and he collapsed onto the floor. His freshly-cracked ribs screamed their protest as Virgil’s vision greyed out for a few seconds. Virgil tried again, and was able to push himself up onto his hands and knees. After a couple gulps of air, Virgil crawled to the foot of his bed and used the
baseboard as leverage to help him stand. Virgil stood hunched over for a moment, and then limped painfully over to the shower. He was eternally grateful that he had the foresight to install a no-step walk-in shower with accessibility bars, a bench, and a detachable shower head for these occasions.

Virgil grabbed loosely at the latch, then opened the door and closed it behind him. Although he knew it would hurt, he turned on the water as hot as it would go. He shampooed his hair as fast as he could. He put in conditioner, then grabbed the soap. It was a lavender-cotton scent, gifted to him by Logan (“While studies on the usefulness of scent as a mood management system are inconclusive at best, I thought it might help your anxiety to either start or end your day with what is typically considered a ‘soothing scent’. ” “O-oh, thanks Logan.” “You are quite welcome Virgil. I hope this aids you in some way”). Virgil managed a half-smile at the memory, even as he felt tears prick his eyes.

Before he knew it, he was weeping. How he loved Logan and his thoughtfulness. He knew that the things the other Dark Sides did to him, like what he had just endured, would make sure Logan or any of the others would never want to touch him. He also knew that their kindness was just an act since they found out Thomas actually needed him, but dammit that didn’t help. Virgil knew that he was stupid, a fucking stupid moron for continuing to love them in the way that he did, and that was yet another reason he couldn’t join their relationship. He wanted to so fucking bad, but he loved them too much to do that to them. His anxiety attacks, his pessimism, his inability to interact properly with anyone most days, his general annoying tendencies that seemed to be everything he did - they deserved better than that. They deserved better than him. Besides, after what the other Dark Sides had done, he doubted they’d even want to look at him, much less touch him. It was something he struggled with; the Light Sides and Thomas needed his presence, but being around them felt like a disservice, like a crime against them. He hated himself, he couldn’t imagine how very much they must hate him.

Virgil forcibly broke out of that train of thought. He had to finish washing his body. Maybe then he could be slightly less disgusting and it would be slightly less worse to inflict his presence on them. They didn’t deserve to be around someone as tainted and disgusting as Virgil. Virgil lathered up his loofa-on-a-stick (a prize that Thomas had won from the state fair) and began to use it to scrub at his body as harshly as he could. He was crying silent, angry tears, but he persisted. When he got to the lash marks, old and new bruises, and busted ribs, he spastically coughed from the pain. He couldn’t let himself vomit, though. He was using every ounce of self-control he had to spare to keep everything down. He had been threatened with a punishment he was horrified anyone, much less his tormentors, could think of if he threw up their “hard work”.

Virgil finished rinsing his hair and body, when his razor caught his eye. He desperately grabbed at it, expertly dismantled it and took out one of the blades, then brought it to his forearm. Cutting numbed his mind when needed, but at times like this he used it to mark his body. THIS was an injury he gave himself. THIS was a mark he made on himself. When he had no control over his body, this was a way to have some semblance of temporary control. He could look at the marks and see what HE did. He could look down, knowing where the fresh cuts and old scars were, and know that those were marks he CHOSE. He cut until there were 6 neat, slightly uneven new lines on his forearm.

He quickly used soap to clean them, before stepping out of the shower and painstakingly drying himself off. He first grabbed a wad of toilet paper to shove by his most recent… injury by Deceit. He then bandaged his cuts, put some clothes on, and went about trying to tame his hair. He looked at the clock. Shit. He only had 15 minutes left. He quickly blow-dried his hair for about 30 seconds, sprayed it, and got his eyeshadow out. On good days, he would experiment with different products and formulas. Today, he went for what he knew went on quick and dark. He brushed his teeth as best he could without making himself gag. Virgil then put on a menstrual pad and a fresh
wad of paper towels next to his bleeding hole. He scrambled out of his room and took the stairs as fast as he could manage. Although he was well-versed in hiding his limping by now, he still had to walk slower to properly hide it.

He got to the kitchen other three sides were just finishing up their breakfast. Virgil’s heart ached at seeing the three happy together, knowing that he could never truly join them, even if they wanted him. They were so happy with each other, he’d never want to mess that up for them. Even if they took him on as a charity project, he’d only bring them down. He loved them too much to do that to them. Eventually, they’d get exhausted from his anxiety attacks. Patton, sweet, wonderful Patton, would try his best, but the light would be drained from his eyes and soul. No, those three belonged together. He was unlovable.

They had gotten together soon after the Christmas Carol video, when Virgil had gone upstairs to his room during the Christmas party they were throwing. It allegedly had happened spontaneously, but Virgil knew that they were just waiting for him to leave. They told him next morning when he had caught Roman kissing Patton in the kitchen. They had asked if he would like to join their relationship, though Virgil knew it was only out of a sense of obligation. They didn’t want him there, much less want to date him. They were only tolerating him since they found out Thomas needed Virgil. Virgil honestly thought Thomas would be fine without him, and now that he knew, he would never try ducking out again. It was clear the other sides were trying to keep him from ducking out again, so Virgil was able to choke out a “No”, release them from their burden, and escape the room. Now every time he saw them together, it was like acid being poured in an open wound.

Roman spoke up, taking Virgil from his thoughts.

“Look who finally deigned to grace us with his presence. You must have slept well, Surly Temple.”

The return to an older nickname was not lost on Virgil. He shrunk in on himself as the guilt of missing dinner and being late to breakfast hit him. Patton works hard, and what does Virgil do? Is either late or doesn’t show up. Yeah, what a great friend he was. No wonder they didn’t want him around.

“Roman, that was unnecessary! Virgil needed to sleep. I already told you he didn’t do anything wrong!” Patton admonished.

Virgil was surprised. Roman thought he did something bad? Well, he’s probably right, but what is it that pushed him over the edge?

“I—I’m sorry Roman. I really did just need to sleep.” Virgil forced out.

Patton whipped around. “Oh honey, your throat sounds so sore! Are you sick?! We can move the filming day if you want!”

Virgil started. No, absolutely not! He would NOT fuck up Thomas’ life more than he already does! Patton cannot be allowed to think he needed to move the day!

“No Patton, it’s fine. Really, I probably just slept with my mouth open or something.”

Patton looked at Virgil, concerned. “If you say so kiddo. Just let me know. Why don’t you sit down and have some breakfast? I’ll make you some tea! Thomas usually films your character last anyways!”
Virgil was able to get a small smile on his face at that. “Thanks Dad.”

It had the desired effect. Patton’s smile shone brighter than the sun. “Sure thing kiddo!”

Virgil knew that he wasn’t going to be able to stomach tea, much less any food. He also knew better than to try and sit, especially with his stab wound. He leaned against the counter and caught Logan’s critical eyes staring at him. Virgil raised an eyebrow as if to challenge him, and Logan began talking.

“My apologies Virgil, you just seem to be rather off this morning.”

Virgil shrugged, not wanting to spend the energy to respond to him.

Roman piped up next. “So, Tall Dark and Stormy, you were sleeping huh?”

Virgil shrunk further into himself at Roman’s accusatory tone. “Y-yeah, I woke up close to midnight, then had a hard time going back to sleep. I-I’m sorry for not coming down to dinner and listening to your idea l-like I said I w-would.”

Roman crossed his arms. He was softening at Virgil’s obviously nervous stutter, but he felt there was more Virgil was keeping from him. And he had made his soft little puffball cry! “I’m more concerned about why you completely blocked us out of your room! Patton was worried about you last night and tried to sink in to make sure you weren’t having a panic attack on the floor, and he got booted out!”

Virgil felt his blood run cold. “What time was this?”

Patton spoke up. “A bit before 7. I was wondering about that. I’m sorry I tried to sink into your room with your door locked, but my dad instincts were telling me something was wrong. Why did you block us?” There was no mistaking the hurt Patton was trying to hide in his eyes.

Virgil had to think quick. “Oh, uh I was honestly just trying to soundproof my room (truth) to listen to some music (lie) and I was about to fall asleep so I must have blocked you by accident. I’m sorry.” Virgil couldn’t help the break in his voice at the end.

Patton was quick to try to comfort him. “Oh kiddo no! It’s okay, really! I was just confused is all.”

Roman felt terribly embarrassed. “I feel I should apologize to you Virgil. I should have spoken with you before jumping to conclusions.” He cast a wry glance toward Logan, who gave him an appreciative half-smile. He turned back to Virgil. “I hope you can forgive me.”

Virgil waved him off. “Don’t worry about it.”

They all then felt the familiar tug of Thomas summoning them.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!! A disclaimer: this isn't a "Roman is a butt" fic. He's just protective over his precious little cinnamon roll and, as we know, can be a bit impulsive. I love Roman, but this is how I feel he'd react. Don't worry, he makes up for it later!
And now a description of the first part of the chapter if you needed to skip it: Deceit brings Virgil back to his room. He punishes Virgil for speaking out of turn (in the middle of the previous chapter) by raping and stabbing him. He taunts Virgil by saying how the Light Sides hate him and how he's worthless, and then he leaves.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hey all! This chapter doesn't contain anything graphic, but there are a few flashbacks. Take care of yourselves! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Sides popped up in the living room, all near their usual spots. Virgil had to steady himself on the banister, but a quick look around the room found that no one noticed. Thomas stood in the center of the room, holding his phone and looking at his Sides excitedly.

“Are you guys excited? The Fanders have been asking for this for a while, so I’m sure they’ll love it!”

All of the Sides seemed excited, even Logan had the corners of his lips upturned. Virgil did his best to smile, but he’s not sure it got across.

“Alright guys, let me hit record and we’ll be getting started!”

Virgil was doing his best to act normal, but he was in so much pain. The agony from the stab wound was now in full-force, his adrenaline having wore off. He was exhausted from too many sleepless nights and days, constantly trying to recover from horrors, from trying to pretend that everything was fine. Virgil could hardly force himself to take deep breaths due to his freshly cracked ribs. The lash marks would seemingly burn in waves. Virgil felt his stomach boiling. His body wanted to puke, was protesting the substances in his stomach, but he couldn’t. Which was probably why his double voice came through with a massive spike of anxiety.

“Is the lens cap off?!”

Virgil winced as he said it. Totally unnecessary.

Thomas flinched and his hand flew to his chest. “Jesus Virgil, I’ll check!” he panted.

“Sorry.” Virgil mumbled, his double voice gone but still rough and deep.

Thomas took the lens cap off. “It’s fine, just watch where you’re swinging that thing!” Thomas joked, still somewhat breathless. Virgil looked down guiltily. Thomas pulled his Twitter back up and got the bookmarked questions displayed.

“Alright, so I have what I think everyone’s responses would be, but let me know if I’m off on something! I’ll record my part first, and then we’ll go in the usual order.”

As Thomas was recording his part and Talyn and Joan were helping out, Virgil felt his mind go back to the previous night and the morning. His injuries hardly gave him another choice. He kept reliving in his head how he got each one, he could feel hands, movement in his mouth and throat, the cheer when they broke twenty, the blows from Rage, the belt and cane lashes from Malice, and Deceit…

Virgil realized someone was calling his name. He lifted his head up and saw that everyone was
looking at him with concern. Virgil felt how weak he had gotten. He wasn’t sure how much longer he could stand, but there was no way in hell that he could sit. Patton said, “Virge? You okay ki-buddy?”

Virgil went for a half-smile, but he’s pretty sure it came out as a grimace. “Yeah Pat, just tired.”

“You sure Punk Panther? He’s been trying to get your attention for a minute.”

Virgil panicked. A minute?! Oh shit oh shit oh shit oh shit fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck…

“Yeah, I just spaced out, lay off Princey.” There. Lash out, then they’ll leave you alone.

As expected, Roman raised his hands in surrender. “Alright, jeez, sorry for caring.”

Virgil gave what was hopefully a convincing scoff, and turned his head back down. He barely had the energy to keep it up.

Thomas interjected. “Guys, it’s not that early. Let’s try to be a little less crabby.”

“Yes sir.” Virgil said without thinking. He froze, feeling like he was suddenly an ice statue.

Fortunately for him, everyone else took it a different way. Patton was the first to scold him.

“Virgil!” Virgil heard Patton take a breath, so Virgil spoke quickly spoke to cut him off.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean that sarcastically I swear! It just came out, I’m sorry, Thomas please-”

Virgil felt close to tears and he wasn’t sure how well he was hiding that.

Thomas held a hand up. “Woah woah woah! It’s okay Virgil, I know things sometimes come out in ways you don’t always mean. It’s fine, I promise buddy.” Thomas gave Virgil what he hoped was a reassuring smile.

Virgil managed a shaky smile back. “Thanks Thomas.” He let out a trembling breath.

Thomas frowned. “Virge, are you sure you’re okay? You know you can sit down and take a break if you want.”

Virgil knew he couldn’t, in fact, sit down or take a break if he wanted.

“I know, I’m fine, I promise. Just tired. I’ll get over it.”

“If you’re sure…”

“I’m sure Thomas.”

“Alright.” Thomas clapped and rubbed his hands together, the sharp noise startling Virgil. “I’ll be shooting Roman’s responses in a few minutes. Everyone take a breather and let’s knock this out!”

Virgil sighed and let himself lean against the railing. He heard footsteps approach him, but decided against acknowledging them.

“Virgil.”

Of course, he didn’t really have a choice. He looked up and met Roman’s eyes, a serious expression on his face. “I hope you know that what I said in the kitchen I meant. I am sorry for being cross with you.”
Virgil shrugged. “Sure, it’s fine. Forget about it.”

But Roman only frowned. “Are you sure? You seem to be off…”

Virgil was getting tired of people asking if he was okay and if he was sure. He wasn’t, it was hard enough to pretend without everyone giving him the third degree!

“Yes Roman, I’m sure! I’m getting more annoyed that people keep asking!”

Roman stepped back. “Alright, I’ll stop asking. Just know that… if something is wrong, you can come to one of us. You do know that, don’t you?”

Virgil studied Roman. He seemed sincere enough. He had to remind himself that they don’t actually care about him; it’s Thomas they care about, and that’s the way it should be.

“Yeah, I know I can come to you if there’s a problem. I’ll let you know if I have one.”

Roman beamed. “Wonderful! May I join you on your steps? I’ve always wondered what the view is like from this vantage point.”

Virgil shrugged. “Sure, knock yourself out.”

Roman jumped up to the landing in one leap. Virgil side-stepped, which jostled all of his injuries.

“Fuck! Do you have any chill?”

“Language!”

“Sorry!” Virgil called back.

“My apologies Virgil, I was simply excited!” With that, Roman started standing and slouching in different ways, spouting soliloquies, testing the spot. Virgil regretted letting Roman up on the landing with him. Not only was he way too close for comfort after such recent abuse by Deceit and the other Dark Sides, but Roman was close enough that he could smell the prince’s unique scent, a warm scent of cinnamon, roses, and the open air. Roman seemed to always be running hot, and Virgil could feel the heat coming off of him. Despite feeling quite uncomfortable, Virgil found himself falling even more for the creative Side as his crush reared its ugly head. He allowed himself to scan the muscles gained from fighting dragon-witches and manticore-chimeras and whatever the hell else Roman came up with. Roman’s outfit may be somewhat stiff, but he could make out the additional bulk Roman had. Virgil was feeling quite torn as he wanted the prince out of his personal space, but was also feeling a fair bit of attraction. It was as though the air was electrified. As Roman inhaled to no doubt start singing Disney songs, Virgil decided to put a stop to everything.

“Alright Roman, enough of a tour. No Disney songs on my stoop of doom.”

Roman sighed dramatically. “Very well. I shall leave you then to continue my quest elsewhere! Farewell my dark prince!”

“Roman we’re in the same room.”

“I know, but we are oh so far away!”

“Just go back to your spot.”

“If you insist!”
Roman did something Virgil didn’t expect: he raised his hand to clap Virgil’s shoulder, but Virgil flashed back to Rage and flinched, drawing up his hands to defend himself, closing his eyes and turning his head away, bracing for a blow. He’d deserve it, sure, but he’s still fight or flight.

Roman froze, horrified. “Virgil…”

Virgil knew he was in the living room shooting a video with Thomas, Joan, Talyn, and the other Light Sides, but he felt so much like he was hanging up by his wrists as a punching bag for Rage in the Dark Side of the mindscape. He felt it, he knew it…

“Virgil, I swear upon my honor - hell, I swear upon Thomas - that I would never harm you.”

Virgil opened his eyes at that. He dared a glance around the room. Everyone was watching the interaction with shock on their face. Virgil looked to Roman. Roman…

Roman looked absolutely devastated.

Virgil cleared his throat.

“Shit Ro, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to do that. I just went into fight or flight mode. It’s not you, I promise, I’m just tired, I do that more when I’m tired, I’m sorry Roman.”

Roman looked at him dubiously. Thomas spoke up.

“Hey Roman, come on. Let’s get set up for your turn.”

Roman took one last look at Virgil with stricken eyes, then turned and went to his spot. Virgil breathed out a sigh of relief. He leaned back against the banister and kept his head down. He didn’t need to see the looks everyone was sending him. He already knew what they were.

Worthless.

Burden.

Waste of space.

Waste of energy.

Waste of life.

Dark Side.

Better off dead.

He couldn’t agree more. He saw Logan adjust his tie out of the corner of his eye.

“Virgil-”

“Don’t.” Virgil said, his tone leaving no room for argument. Virgil heard Logan breathe out through his nose, and Virgil knew he had escaped detection for now. What in the hell was wrong with him?! The Dark Sides have been far crueler, yet he was barely holding it together?! What gives?!

Probably the stab wound.

Goddammit, even his mind was sarcastic. Virgil focused on his breathing as best he could while
Roman delivered his lines. Now that Virgil’s mind was solely on the present, listening to the sounds around him, he was more aware of how weak his body was getting. *Shit*, he thought, *I don’t know how much longer I can stand.*

Thomas, clad in his prince costume, nodded to Roman. Roman took a deep breath and took control. In the Sanders Sides videos, it was always Thomas acting, but each of the sides inhabited his body much more than usual.

Thankfully, Roman killed it as usual, and Thomas moved onto Patton’s lines. Thomas sped through most of the answers, except for a few tongue twisters. While everyone laughed at what was sure to be bloopers, Virgil focused on not puking and keeping himself conscious. With that, Thomas, Talyn, and Joan decided to move onto Logan’s lines. They were ahead of schedule, which Virgil was eternally grateful for. They had been planning on doing Logan and Virgil’s lines after lunch, but Thomas was still feeling good enough to keep going. Logan’s lines took longer than the other two had, as Thomas encountered a few sentences that were difficult to say in one shot and required multiple re-takes. Everyone was laughing at Thomas, Talyn, and Joan’s antics as they each got the giggles. Virgil kept his hood up and his head down, praying no one would notice.

Thomas finished Logan’s lines a bit after their scheduled lunch break. Joan and Talyn had a family dinner to get ready for, so they set everything up for Thomas to do Virgil’s lines. Joan would review the raw footage remotely and let Thomas know if he needed to make any changes. Thomas called lunch break while going over Roman’s suggestions for last-minute changes, mostly in regards to his own performance. Thomas probably wouldn’t institute most of them, Roman was far too hard on himself.

Virgil gratefully sunk out and into his room where he collapsed onto his bed. He knew he had to probably change his paper towels and pad, but he just wanted five minutes…

“Not holding up so well today are we?”

Chapter End Notes

Whew! This chapter was tough because I really wanted to get everyone's voices right, and I think I did okay. As always, if you see something that doesn't make sense or should be changed, please let me know!

I'm tweaking a few sentences of dialogue in the next chapter, so it may be a few days, but absolutely no longer than a week, before the next chapter comes out! Did I mention I'm a perfectionist?
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Just finished my taxes (yes I know this is the last day to do them shhhh), and so I thought I’d treat myself by uploading another chapter! I did kind of leave y’all on a cliff-hanger, didn’t I? (#^.^#)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman, Logan, and Patton rose up in the commons. They were disheartened when they didn’t see Virgil, but they hoped that he was doing what he needed to feel better.

Roman, in particular, was saddened by Virgil’s absence. Roman loved acting! Obviously, he was Creativity. But it was so much more than that! He could get into character and have that be his world. The rest of the real world would disappear. Acting was one of his favorite strategies when he felt bad about himself, miserable, hopeless, or just generally stuck. However, the only downside was that when he was done acting, the real world would still be there, waiting for him. Today was no different. As he saw only his two boyfriends in the commons, sans his dark angel, he couldn’t hold back the wave of sorrow. His face flushed, his vision blurred, and his throat felt tight.

“Patton,” he said in a tight whimper.

At the sound their boyfriend made, both Logan and Patton turned to face Roman. Patton opened his arms and Roman met him halfway. Roman let out a wet sob as he hid his face in Patton’s shoulder.

“He-he-he th-thinks I w-w-w-would strike him! Th-th-th-that I’d h-h-harm him!” Every word made Roman feel more nauseous. Patton rubbed Roman’s back, trying to soothe him.

“Oh sweetie, I’m so sorry. You heard what he said; he’s Thomas’ fight or flight.”

That made Roman look up, and his face broke Logan’s and Patton’s hearts. His eyes were red, his face blotchy and covered in tear tracks. He wore an expression of pure devastation. “D-d-does Thomas th-th-think I-I’d h-h-hurt him?!” He asked in a shattered whisper.

Patton shook his head firmly. “No. I’d know if that was the case, and it’s not.”

Logan also chimed in. “I agree with Patton. I monitor Thomas’ thought process. If he were concerned about you becoming physically violent, I would know. Even if that were the case, Patton or myself would have spoken to you long before now. And Virgil is incredibly protective. If Virgil felt there was a threat to Thomas, you know he’d intervene.”

Roman gave a watery chuckle at that. “I suppose he would.” He sniffled. “But Virgil… h-he-he’s afraid of me…”

Patton hugged him tighter as Roman buried his face back into Patton’s shoulder. Patton placed a chaste kiss to the top of Roman’s head. “Honey, I think we should take Virgil at his word for now. It won’t do any of us any good to try to put extra meaning besides what Virgil said. I can talk to him later if you want?”

Roman nodded miserably.
Patton scratched his fingers where he was holding Roman’s back. “Alright honey, why don’t I get some extra honey for my extra honey and make some tea?”

Logan groaned, and Roman sniffled. “Okay.”

Roman and Patton parted, sharing one last look, before Patton headed to the kitchen. Roman looked down at his boots, still crushed.

“Roman,” Logan began. Roman’s only indication that he had heard Logan was a wet sniffle. “I believe Patton is correct. At this time, we would jump to conclusions if we were to take Virgil’s word at anything but face value.”

Roman sighed. “I know Logan.” Logan winced, his prince’s voice still rough. “But you didn’t see the look he gave me right before he put up his hands. He was so scared. He didn’t even look surprised, just like… he knew what he had to do to protect himself.”

Logan grimaced, it was hard to counter such an emotional event with logic. “Roman…”

Roman turned to face Logan, attempting to smile with confidence. “It’s fine, I know you and Patton are right. I’ll just have to wait until Patton can speak to Virgil.”

With little else he could do, Logan put a hand on Roman’s shoulder. “We’ll be here for you.”

Roman smiled a smaller, albeit more truthful smile. “Thanks Lo. I know.”

With a nod and a smile, Logan went to grab some coffee. He wanted to help his boyfriends, but emotions were very much not his forte and he didn’t want to accidentally make Roman feel worse. He felt drained, but he knew coffee would save the day once again.

Roman stood in the commons a few more moments, still anguished. Virgil truly feared Roman would physically attack him. Roman knew he had been verbally harsh towards Virgil in the past, before he had been accepted, and Roman felt an incredible amount of shame and guilt for that. But had he been so cruel towards Virgil that Virgil honestly thought Roman would hit him?! The very thought made him feel ill. Perhaps he had not apologized enough. Perhaps he could never apologize enough. Roman’s chest felt tight. He briefly considered going upstairs to talk to Virgil, to try to convince Virgil that he would never, ever hurt him, but decided against it. Virgil had made it clear he needed some time alone, he was tired, and he still had to help Thomas film his part yet today. Roman hung his head in defeat. If Virgil, his unrequited love, truly feared Roman, then he was no prince.

Roman wandered towards the kitchen. Patton was quietly humming to himself while making tea, and Logan was sitting at the table while drinking coffee and reading a newspaper. Roman smiled. It was moments like this that truly made him so grateful to be in a relationship with the other two Sides. Well, these moments and…

Roman coughed to steer away from those thoughts, he couldn’t be too distracted today. Thomas needed him for his creativity, not his other main function. That caught the attention of Logan though, who smirked.

“Need help with something Roman?”

Roman stared at Logan. Damn, he was smoother and hotter than the nerd had any right to be. “No Calculator Watch, I’m good.”

Logan raised an eyebrow. “Oh really? You seem rather tense. Perhaps once Thomas is finished
editing for today, we could discuss the matter in your chambers?”

Roman could only nod and squeak out, “Yup!” before Patton set Roman’s tea down at the table, along with his own mug and some cookies.

Patton beamed, although there was a glint in his eye. “Wonderful! Would you two like me to join you?” he asked, scanning their faces.

“I have no objections, do you, Roman?” Logan asked teasingly, though keeping careful and gentle eye contact. After a moment of floundering, Roman got his feet back under him, smirked, and said, “I would love for you to join us, dearheart.”

Patton blushed and smiled endearingly. Roman knew they had a wonderful night to look forward to.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, you thought I was going to address the cliff-hanger? NAAAAW 3>:)

Also, Roman asked for Patton because he knows that Logan can have a hard time with physical affection when he's strained and because Patton is Patton. Both Roman and Patton are a lot more physical than Logan. There's no preferential treatment going on or anything. I just wanted to make it clear that they all love each other. :)

I also headcannon that although Roman is suave as hell, his nerds can fluster him to no end because that's cute af.
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

First and foremost, this chapter starts out with another description of rape. I put a line of tildes between that and when the rest of the chapter starts. Near the end, there's also a description of a character throwing up.

Also folks, this chapter is DARK and really rough. I promise the comfort part of the hurt/comfort is coming, but we gotta get past a little more hurt. Don't worry, Virgil will be getting a bit of a break soon!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Not holding up so well today are we?”

Virgil shivered at the voice, and froze at the unspoken threat. He was face-down on his bed, so he couldn’t see who had entered his room, but he knew. He started pushing himself up, but a hand in between his shoulder blades pushed him back down. Virgil had to breathe through the pain a few times before he could answer.

“I-I’m fine. They don’t suspect anything. I made sure they just think I’m tired and cranky. Please sir, th-they don’t think that you’re-” Virgil stopped speaking as Deceit’s hand that was on his back grabbed his throat from behind and squeezed. Deceit’s fingers were putting pressure on his jugular vein and carotid artery, making it hard to do anything but panic.

“That I’m what, Anxiety? You agreed to this.” Deceit hissed, extending the “s” on the final word.

“N-nothing sir! Just that we have an agreement!”

“Ah, but that’s not what you were going to say, was it?”

Virgil whimpered. Deceit let go of Virgil’s neck, and Virgil began hyperventilating. He vaguely registered that Deceit wasn’t wearing gloves, which meant one of two things was about to happen, and neither were good.

“Virgil, love, I’m sure I don’t have to explain why I’m upset with you.”

“N-no sir.”

“Good.” Deceit snapped his and Virgil’s clothes away. “Then you know why you’re being punished.”

Virgil was paralyzed with terror. Deceit had to be thinking of using his mouth. But why had he pushed him back down then?

He couldn’t… not after he...

Virgil’s questions were answered when Deceit plunged into him roughly and immediately began a harsh rhythm. Virgil could barely think or feel through the blinding pain, and thought the universe might have mercy on him for fucking once in his goddamned miserable life and he’d pass out, but
the pain kept him right there. He had no idea if he was making noises, he was so consumed by pain. Virgil didn’t even know if Deceit was using only one or both of his cocks, but he would bet it was both.

After an indeterminate amount of time passed (it could have been minutes, it could have been hours), Deceit roughly pulled out of Virgil. Virgil felt himself breathing for a few moments before he was flipped over. The change in position caused stars to flash in front of his eyes. Once he had come back down somewhat from that pain, he saw Deceit hovering over him, an evil glint in his eye. Virgil saw Deceit’s cocks bloody and standing out from his body, rock hard and jumping with Deceit’s pulse. Hell, Deceit’s whole lower abdomen was bloody. Deceit grabbed the backs of both of Virgil’s thighs and watched his face as he slowly bent Virgil in half. Virgil’s ribs made it feel like his lungs were filled with water, his bruises screaming, and his torn ass stretching. Deceit suddenly pushed Virgil’s legs even closer to his chest, as close as they would go, which made Virgil shout. Deceit then reentered Virgil and continued his harsh pace from before.

Virgil was staring blankly up at the ceiling, not really seeing or focusing on anything, letting out moans and cries. He figured he might be able to blink out and maybe come back in time to finish filming with Thomas, if they were still filming.

Deceit leaned down, inches away from Virgil’s face. He shifted so his arms and shoulders were holding Virgil’s legs down. Deceit slowed his pace, moving to something almost gentle, as if Virgil hadn’t been stabbed and forced, and kissed Virgil.

That shocked Virgil. He hadn’t been expecting that. Deceit licked at Virgil’s lips, and Virgil opened them, knowing the order for what it was. Deceit plundered Virgil’s mouth, dragging his forked tongue possessively over every square inch of his mouth. Deceit kept up the slow pace, gently rolling his hips as though he were with a lover. Virgil stayed completely still, not daring to move. After rubbing Virgil’s tongue with his, Deceit pulled back and glared at him. “Use your damn tongue, I’m not trying to kiss a dead fish idiot.”

Deceit didn’t wait for a response as he went back in. Virgil pushed his tongue into Deceit’s mouth, unsure of what to do. Deceit, hell, none of the Dark Sides had ever required Virgil to participate in kissing. As soon as Virgil had extended his tongue, Deceit pulled his back, and bit down on Virgil’s tongue. Hard.

Virgil let out a muffled sound at that. Deceit kept the pressure up, breaking the skin almost immediately and sinking a little further into the flesh before letting go. He leaned up as Virgil’s now-bloody tongue retreated back into his mouth.

“That’s for making me wait whore.”

Deceit swept in again and tickled Virgil’s wounded tongue with his own. Virgil cried, but did his best to push his tongue back into Deceit’s mouth. Deceit sat up and slapped Virgil across the face.

“You stupid fucking bitch! Don’t fucking move!” Virgil caught the beginnings of a smile as Deceit came down. Deceit kept prodding at Virgil’s tongue with his own, relishing the whimpers. He focused on the bite mark and the area right around it. Deceit used his fingers to press on and flick injuries on Virgil’s torso, making him flinch and whimper. After Deceit had had his fill of that, he sucked Virgil’s tongue into his own mouth and put as much suction on it as possible. Virgil was letting out pained moans, muffled by Deceit’s mouth and his own tongue sticking out. Virgil could feel a smirk against his lips. Deceit would occasionally drag his teeth slowly up Virgil’s tongue, catching on the bite, until he almost got to the tip, then would recapture the whole thing.

After several more minutes of torment, Deceit sat up, blood on his lips and chin.
“It’s about time your lazy, worthless ass contributed something around here. Hold your legs like this.” Then he pushed Virgil’s legs even closer to his chest.

Virgil cried out in pain, but did as he was told. This wasn’t the first time he had to participate, but he always *hated hated HATED* it. Deceit grabbed Virgil’s hips and started his brutal pace back up.

Virgil focused on getting what little air he could into his lungs. He knew if he passed out, he’d be in way more trouble than he already was.

Deceit used him, mindlessly thrusting into Virgil as he sought his climax. He savored the wet, hot, tight slide, the anguish on Virgil’s face, the sounds he knew Virgil had no idea he was making. Deceit lasted only a few more minutes, exhilarated at his new mind fuck that he finally implemented, and came inside Virgil with a mix between a shout and a groan. He stayed there for a moment, basking in the afterglow, before pulling out. He had one more idea.

He backed up a little on his knees and leaned down. He tsked. “What a mess.” He reached out with one of his long nails and dragged it around the torn, bloody rim. Virgil twitched and moaned, but otherwise remained still. Deceit started rubbing the areas that were bleeding the most, before moving on to the cut caused by his knife earlier that day. He ran his nail up and down the cut as Virgil cried out. Although barely putting any pressure, Virgil could barely stay still and compliant. A few more passes had Deceit satisfied. He got up, snapped himself clean and his clothes back on, and made to leave. He turned back to Virgil as if an afterthought, and was treated to quite a sight.

Virgil was staring up at the ceiling with a desperate look on his face. His face was streaked with tears and sweat. Blood was drying around his mouth, ass, and thighs. Virgil was still trying to be subservient by holding his legs like Deceit told him to, knowing that if he put them down before Deceit said to, he’d be in even more pain shortly. Deceit ran his eyes up and down Virgil’s bruised and battered body, counting his ribs, fondly remembering how he got each of his injuries.

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“For Christ’s sake, put your damn legs down. You really are a filthy slut, aren’t you? You love it. Waiting for your next patron?” Deceit taunted.

Virgil let his legs down with silent sobs wracking his body and hyperventilation taking over. Deceit soaked in the view once more before sinking out to the Dark Side of the mindscape.

Virgil was hyperventilating uncontrollably, wanting to sob, but not having the air or control to.

*Deceit hasn’t kissed me like that since… for so long. Oh god, I won’t be able to talk and they’ll hurt the Light Sides! Oh god oh god oh god the pain. I can’t. I can’t. I can’t.!!* 

Virgil lay there, until he was suddenly numb. He felt the pain, but it didn’t register as a problem. He didn’t feel any emotion. He knew he had to protect the Light Sides and Thomas. After a moment, he slowly rolled to his side and got up, using the headboard as leverage. He let out an involuntary moan of pain. Although Virgil felt pain, it was like it wasn’t connecting with his body, like the pain was happening somewhere outside his body. Virgil knew he was dissociating, but he was grateful. He knew he had to if he wanted to participate in filming today and pretend everything was fine.

Virgil heavily limped over to his bathroom. He didn’t particularly care about hiding his limp at the moment. He grabbed the detachable shower head and rinsed his lower back, buttocks, and legs.
Virgil grabbed his towel, still damp from this morning, and gingerly dried himself. He grabbed as large of a chunk of paper towels as he thought he could fit and pushed them in between his buttocks. He changed his pad, then looked in the mirror.

_Oof,_ Virgil thought to himself. He started feeling emotion flicker back to life, but he was able to hold tightly on enough to his dissociation to drown it. He was exhausted and felt like he was going to pass out, but he somehow found the strength to keep going by thinking of the Light Sides and Thomas. He wiped his entire face down with a makeup wipe, then used a damp washcloth to wipe the oil away. He reapplied his eyeshadow and fixed his hair as best he could. Virgil walked into his room, and noticed the bed was perfectly made and his clothes were folded perfectly on top of it.

_Deceit must have come back. Or one of the other Dark Sides._ He thought blandly to himself. He put on his clothes as quickly as he could manage. He almost passed out when he tried to put on his socks and shoes, so he opted to slide on the fluffy black cartoon bat slippers Patton had gifted him for his birthday. There was that pesky emotion again, coming up to try and get in his consciousness. Virgil pushed it back down, although it was getting much more difficult.

Virgil checked the time. _Oh shit, I’m 3 minutes late!_ Panic began crawling up his spine, but Virgil focused on teleporting into his regular spot. He grabbed the railing when he appeared and swayed.

Patton, of course Patton, was the first to speak. “Kiddo! There you are! You okay?”

Virgil met Patton’s eyes blankly. “I’m fine, just was panicked I was late.” he forced past his bitten tongue. Every word took concentration to say. He looked to Thomas, then to Logan. “I’m sorry I’m back late. I really meant to be back on time.” Emotion started taking over again, his voice cracking at the end and his eyes glassing over.

Everyone looked surprised.

“Virge, buddy, it’s okay. We were just going over Roman’s changes before you showed up. No big deal.” Thomas reassured. He sent what was hopefully a calming smile Virgil’s way, but Virgil’s mind had other ideas.

_See? They didn’t even need you! They didn’t care that you were late! They’d be better off without you._

_I know._

Virgil nodded. “Okay.”

Thomas sent him another sad smile and turned back to Roman. “I think we’ll go ahead and redo your answer to your favorite Crofter’s flavor. I love that idea!” Thomas exclaimed, already ramping up his energy to match Roman’s.

As Thomas got changed and re-shot Roman’s line, Virgil felt his nausea increase. If his stomach was boiling before, it now felt like it was churning like a tempest. Virgil kept swallowing, forcing the contents of his stomach to stay where they were. Thomas _finally_ finished Roman’s part to Roman’s satisfaction (mostly) and rushed to change into Virgil’s outfit. Virgil had his eyes focused on the stairs. If he closed them, he knew he wouldn’t be able to hold back anymore.

Seemingly in the next moment, Thomas was standing in front of Virgil.

“You ready buddy?”

Virgil looked into Thomas’ eyes and saw the concern and love there. Thomas was too good, too
pure for this world. Virgil saw the boy that he made terrified, so anxious he missed out on fantastic parties, great opportunities, and fan interactions. But what if something happened and he had said nothing?! He’d never forgive himself.

*There you go again, being selfish and making it about yourself and not Thomas. Thomas would have been so much happier without you.*

Virgil nodded. “I’m good, let’s do this.” Virgil heard his painful tongue muddle his words, but the others didn’t seem to notice.

Thomas looked worried, but moved into position nonetheless. Roman helped with angling and read the other part of the script to Thomas. The whole ordeal was rapidly taking all of Virgil’s meager energy. He felt himself dissociate into a flashback again. He relived how Deceit used him, how mockingly tender it was. Virgil knew it was a mockery of making love, and Virgil was certain (as if he wasn’t before) that he’d never truly be able to experience that. For some reason, Deceit’s tenderness and kissing felt like more of a violation than anything he’d done previously.

As Virgil woke up, he came to as Thomas and Roman were studying the camera. Virgil also knew he was about to vomit. Maybe if he could get back to his room in time…

“Virgil?”

Came Logan’s careful question. Virgil looked at Logan, then at everyone else in the room. He felt his love for them press painfully against his chest, as his sorrow, pain, exhaustion, and desperation grow.

Virgil could only look at them in horror, knowing now he was too weak to sink into his room from outside the mindscape. His stomach felt like a whirlpool, his whole body but especially his ass throbbed in pain, and he wanted to tear his skin off. Get Deceit’s mark off him, even though he knew their marks and brands were irrevocably on him, in him…

He looked at everyone else in the room once more, before saying in an anguished whisper, “I’m so sorry,”, then letting out a sob and emptying his stomach. He could hear voices overlapping each other as he collapsed. He felt lithe arms catch him before he hit the stairs. His body cried out in protest.

“Don’t touch it, please god don’t touch it.” Virgil begged. He heard a snap.

As his vision was tunneling in, he said one last thing.


**Chapter End Notes**

I had the fricking worst time formatting this. First the second half of the chapter was all bolded, then I had to manually enter in each paragraph break, and then I had to redo all of the formatting. ARGH!

Which leads me to say, if you see weird formatting, please tell me so I can fix it. I think I got it all but I'm not sure.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Hi all! This chapter is really focused on medical stuff, so if that's not your thing or it would be triggering for you to read it, I'll leave a brief summary in the end notes! Please note that there are also several descriptions of a couple different characters throwing up throughout the chapter. Please take care of yourselves!! <3

An alternative summary: in which I pick on the primary overseer of Thomas' language center and the hot, popular persona.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Everyone in the room noticed Virgil looked terrible, but Roman had warned them that Virgil was tired of getting asked if he was okay, so they didn’t say anything.

Logan wonders now if he should have.

While filming Virgil’s lines, Logan noticed the Side getting weaker and weaker. He sent what energy he could remotely as he knew Virgil didn’t want the other sides to worry, but he could only send so much without actually touching him. When Thomas stepped away, Virgil’s eyes were unfocused and obviously not looking at anything. Patton was distracted by the neighbor’s dog, which was fine since they didn’t need to re-film any of his lines. Roman and Thomas were sending the footage to Joan so they could look it over, and Logan knew he should be helping with the technology side of things, but his mind was fixated solely on Virgil. Virgil’s eyes suddenly refocused, and he looked surprised as they moved and landed on where Thomas and Roman were talking.

Logan realized at this point that Virgil had no color in his face. The stormy Side was usually pale, but not even his lips had color. He saw Virgil breathing and swallowing compulsively. Logan decided that although Virgil may be upset with him, Logan had to check.

“Virgil?”

Virgil looked at him with pure panic in his eyes. Virgil’s gaze moved around the room spastically. Logan then heard Virgil say, in the most sorrowful and apologetic voice he had ever heard from him,

“I’m so sorry.”

Virgil sobbed, then vomited a surprising amount of… light pink? Logan knew that although the white portion was likely a concern, the pink tint no doubt came from blood, which is almost always a life-or-death emergency if it came from the stomach. Logan was the closest, so he was able to catch Virgil as he fell. Logan didn’t want him to sustain a head or neck injury on top of what is already a serious illness. Roman was looking around for an enemy that might have hurt Virgil, Patton was asking what on earth happened to his son, and Thomas was panicking, asking what was going on. They were silenced when Virgil let out another sob.

“Don’t touch it, please god don’t touch it.”
Logan looked back at the others, all in equal states of bewilderment, before Roman snapped the vomit out of existence.

Logan could tell Virgil was fading fast, but before Logan could say anything, he spoke once more, crying throughout.

“Don’t be alone. Never be alone. Stay together. They’ll come for you. I failed. I’m sorry.”

Virgil’s head lolled backwards. Logan shifted Virgil so his head rested against his shoulder, and then turned to Roman.

“Roman, may we go to your room? It will be easier to summon what I need there.” Roman nodded, shaken but determined. Logan got ready to sink out with an unconscious Virgil when he felt moisture on his leg. He frowned and looked down.

“What’s wrong?” Roman asked.

“We may need to use your bathroom. It appears Virgil may have had an accident.”

“No problem, use whatever you need.”

Logan nodded as Roman spoke, but something didn’t feel right. He felt the moisture on his leg… it was sticky? Frightened, Logan reached down and touched the moisture and brought his hand back up.

“He’s bleeding.” Logan immediately shifted into emergency mode. “Everyone, come with me to the bathroom. Virgil said to stay together.”

He sunk down with Virgil as fast as he could. When he sank up, he noticed the others had just gotten there and immediately went to turn on the bathtub.

“Roman, I need you to help me undress him.”

Roman nodded. He was clearly horrified at whatever was happening to Virgil, but he would do whatever he could to help. Patton and Thomas were comforting each other, Patton wisely trying to keep Thomas’ anxiety down while managing his emotions.

The first thing they saw when they took Virgil’s hoodie off was the state of his arms. There were scars, cuts, bruises (Logan hoped against hope that those weren’t finger-shaped bruises), and what looked like rope burn. Every type of injury was in various stages of healing, which meant this was not the first time this had happened.

Patton saw before Thomas and fell to his knees with a sob. Thomas went to comfort Patton. Thomas held Patton for a moment before turning his head, then promptly muffling his sobs in Patton’s shoulder.

Roman had tears starting to fall down his face, but kept going with shaking hands.

Logan and Roman took Virgil’s t-shirt off next. They both had the urge to retch, but Roman’s was stronger, forcing him to spin on his knees and puke into the toilet. Scars, lashes, bruises, and burns littered his emaciated chest. Logan knew that Virgil ate less than the other sides, but he had no idea how little Virgil ate…

Shaking himself from that line of thinking, Logan went to undo Virgil’s pants, but it was difficult at the angle Logan was sitting. Roman was able to turn back around and help shimmy his pants
off. They saw Patton approach to take Virgil’s slippers off, but Logan intervened.

“No Patton. Stay with Thomas and neither of you look right now. I need to worry about Virgil.” Logan decided to add, “I’m sorry.” Patton nodded sadly and went to Thomas, turning him to face the other direction. Thomas was insisting that he know what’s going on with his Anxiety, but Patton reassured him that he’d be informed later and that now they needed to stay strong.

By the time they got Virgil’s pants off, both Roman and Logan had tears streaking down their faces. More evidence of abuse covered Virgil’s body, and with every inch they got more of the story. Though incomplete, they knew that the tale would be nothing but horror. Roman turned off the water when it reached about halfway, and Logan shot him a grateful glance. They had to get his boxers off next. Logan grabbed a hand towel that was laying nearby, and as soon as they peeled Virgil’s boxers off, he flung the towel to cover him. Roman sent him a questioning glance.

“I’m sure Virgil wants as few people as possible to see him.” Roman nodded.

The boxers were tacky and heavy with fluids that Logan didn’t want to think about. He spotted a soaked sanitary pad and a red wad of what he assumes used to be absorbent material.

“Roman, I need you to summon an O2 meter, or oxygen meter.” Thomas had visited loved ones in the hospital enough, so he snapped and quickly summoned one. Logan attached his to Virgil’s finger and was beyond relieved to see his oxygen levels at a strong 97%.

“Roman, I’ll need you to help lift Virgil into the bath on three. One, two, three!”

They lifted him and gently set him into the bath. Logan closed his eyes and focused as hard as he could. He heard a pop, and he saw an endoscope in his hands. He summoned antibacterial soap, a tray, and latex gloves, which was much easier than the endoscope, and sanitized himself up to his upper arms. He put on gloves, then sanitized the endoscope as best he could and rinsed it in the sink. Roman was staring, almost catatonically, at the pile of clothes and puddles of blood on the floor. When Logan shut off the sink, that seemed to snap him out of his shock.

Roman turned to Logan, the most serious Logan’s ever him. “What do you need me to do?”

Logan spoke as he went to Virgil and pulled the chair from the vanity to sit next to Virgil’s head. “Just do what I tell you.”

“I can do that.”

Logan began feeding the endoscope down Virgil’s throat as quickly and carefully as he could to get to his stomach. Logan explored every inch of Virgil’s stomach, and to his relief found no bleeds. On his way back up, he looked more carefully to see if he could find where the blood is coming from. He found significant abrasions and bruising on Virgil’s throat and an irritated-looking bite wound on his tongue. The only good news he could think of is that it looked like most everything had clotted, barring his tongue which was bleeding sluggishly.

Logan concentrated and summoned a mild base solution that was safe to ingest. He knew he needed to neutralize the acid or else it would keep the wounds open and potentially get them infected. He felt himself becoming drained. He turned to Roman. “Roman, would you summon gauze, long tweezers, and a set of hemostats for me?” Roman closed his eyes, snapped, and they appeared on his tray. “Thank you.”

Logan dipped a couple squares of gauze in the basic solution with the tweezers and thoroughly coated Virgil’s mouth. Logan decided to get fresh gauze, soak it in the solution, then carefully
pressed it against the back of Virgil’s throat and tongue, in an effort to counter the acid in his throat.

Logan looked at the water, which had become pink. Logan had thought the serious bleed had come from his digestive track, and now he had wasted his time treating instead of diagnosing where the other bleeding was coming from! Fucking rookie mistake! Dammit dammit dammit!!!

He looked to Roman. “Please summon two bags of O negative blood with an IV stand and set.”

Roman snapped and the requested items appeared. Logan got to work, attaching the IV tubes to one of the bags. He took some of the soap, quickly disinfected Virgil’s hand, and sunk the needle into Virgil’s vein. Logan summoned some tape, and strapped some gauze down on top of the cannula.

He took a step back, and examined Virgil’s body. He didn’t see any injuries that would be causing this kind of blood loss, so he reluctantly removed the hand towel still covering Virgil. He felt his penis and testicles want to retreat up into his body at what he saw, but he had to remain focused. He had a terrible, sinking feeling about where the blood was coming from.

“Roman? I need you to help me turn him over.”

Roman’s face was ashen, and Logan was sure he wasn’t looking so great either. Logan looked around, and grabbed a fluffy bath towel. He laid it on the back of the tub, then grabbed Virgil’s shoulders. Roman reached in and gently grabbed Virgil’s hips.

Logan looked at Roman. “Alright, on my three count again. We’ll be moving him up a little so his head and chest are supported by the towel.”

“Got it.”

“One, two, three!”

They moved Virgil as carefully as they could. Once they saw his back, Roman let out an anguished cry and had to catch himself on the edge of the tub, weeping. Virgil had fresh lashes and old scars criss-crossing his back. Bruises and burns were splotched around unevenly, seemingly highlighting the lashes. The worst parts, though, were the bite marks on his upper back and shoulders, the fingerprint bruises on his hips, and bleeding coming from his rear.

Logan kneeled back down and delicately spread Virgil’s buttocks. He couldn’t see, there was too much blood and…

Oh my god.

Logan basically knew by this point what had happened, but to see such evidence was horrific. He put his arm on the side of the tub and pressed his forehead to it as he allowed himself a few sobs. After he collected himself for a moment, he pushed his emotions to the side with great difficulty and grabbed a washcloth. He conjured a speculum, not wanting to put the shattered royal through summoning that.

Logan pulled the plug and let the water drain out. He did what he could with the washcloth (and snapped it out of existence) and requested Roman summon a squeeze bottle with a narrow snout and sterile saline solution. Logan took a deep breath, then used the speculum. Nothing could have prepared him for what he saw. He froze, and it took him several long seconds to unfreeze his uncooperative body.
Logan began squeezing saline on and into Virgil (*dear god, oh Virgil who did this to you?). Logan saw that most of the tears didn’t need stitches thankfully, but several did along with a strangely straight laceration. Logan had Roman summon a stitching kit, and Logan started with the deep, clean laceration. Logan wished he could have used dissolvable stitches, but he wasn’t about to risk Virgil’s health.

*So you just ignored his sudden change in behavior? I’m sure this had nothing to do with it.*

Logan resolutely ignored the mean little voice in the back of his mind for now, though he knew it was true. He saw the blood vessel that was causing most of the bleeding and hesitated. Although he didn’t want to accidentally cause bowel death by cutting off critical blood supply, he knew he couldn’t let Virgil keep bleeding, and he simply didn’t have the expertise to be able to properly redirect blood flow. He stitched it up using three stitches, then closed the rest of the laceration with eight more. He moved on to the other tears mechanically, the rest needing one or two stitches. All in all, Logan ended up using eighteen stitches.

Logan had Roman summon antibacterial cream and layered it on as best he could. Logan changed his gloves, and next came the less life-threatening injuries. He first used the saline, then the antibacterial soap, to clean any cuts, lashes, or burns, before applying antibacterial cream, gauze, bandages, and medical tape. There was a lash on Virgil’s upper right back that required a few stitches to close, but none of the other injuries required that. He then summoned bruise cream and applied it wherever he saw bruises, which was damn near all over.

Next came turning Virgil over again. As much as Logan hated moving Virgil at all, he knew it had to be done. He had Roman snap the tub dry.

“So, I’ll need your help to turn Virgil over again. This should be the last time.”

Roman took hold of Virgil’s hips and looked at Logan expectantly.

“One, two, three!”

Logan used a clean towel to gently dry Virgil as he went, repeating the same actions on his front as on his back. He had placed another hand towel over Virgil and saved his genitals for last. Logan forced himself to keep going. Roman was still by the bathtub, but had his back against it, knees up and slightly parted, with his forearms resting on his knees. He was openly sobbing as he hung his head.

Logan looked at the damage and was slightly confused. He could tell that there was bruising and minor burns, but he couldn’t tell what had caused the damage to his urethra. Until he got it.

Logan lurched to the toilet and took his turn to vomit up everything he had consumed that day. He dry heaved after he had emptied his stomach, his body trying to reject what it had seen. Roman’s hand was gently rubbing his back, even as Logan heard Roman muffling his cries. After another moment to collect himself, Logan switched out his gloves and grabbed his creams. He first applied antibacterial cream to the tip of Virgil’s penis, just in case, and bruise cream everywhere else.

Finally, finally, he was done caring for the outward injuries. He threw away his gloves and turned to Roman.

“Roman, I need you to summon an X-ray machine with a table and lead walls around it, as well as two lead aprons.”

Roman winced at the memory of Thomas breaking his leg, then furrowed his brow in
concentration and snapped. Logan could tell how much of a toll that took on Roman.

“Thank you Roman. I believe that will be the last major thing I need you to conjure for a while.”

Roman nodded, breathing heavily while tears silently streamed down his face and his chest hitched with sobs.

Logan was strong enough to carry Virgil, so he donned the lead apron and carried Virgil into the X-ray space, having Roman wheel in the IV stand, and closing the door behind him. It took a bit of experimenting, but he was able to figure out how to position the machine. He took photos of Virgil from his neck down to his feet. Logan laid his apron over Virgil, along with a fluffy bathrobe, and carefully reviewed the photos. He winced to find 9 ribs were cracked and the rest were no doubt bruised, but he didn’t see any evidence of anything else worrisome. He summoned a roll of gauze and ace bandage. He had Roman hold Virgil up while he carefully wrapped his entire chest.

“Roman, I’ll need a few more things. First, please summon several bags of lactated Ringers solution.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t-”

“That’s alright. One moment.” Logan felt shaky, but he closed his eyes and focused. He snapped his fingers and he had 4 liters of lactated Ringers.

“Can you summon a heart rate monitor, glucose monitor, and blood pressure monitor please?”

Roman nodded. He closed his eyes, and with some strain, summoned the requested objects.

“Roman, do you think you can summon clothes on to Virgil? I’m afraid I don’t have the strength to summon anything else right now.”

Roman panted. He was sweating, clearly strained, but he slapped a smile on his face and said, “Of course!”.

He closed his eyes, and attempted to summon clothes, but only managed boxers before he had to catch himself. He looked up at Logan apologetically, fresh tears shining in his eyes. “I’m sorry Logan.”

“Do not worry, this is adequate. Can you help me move him to your bed?”

“Now that I can absolutely do.” Roman picked up Virgil bridal-style, gently nestling his head against his shoulder and placing a chaste kiss to his forehead.

Logan opened the door for Roman and Virgil, and walked out of the X-ray area with them and the IV stand. Thomas and Patton were leaning against a wall, and when they saw the many bandages they both put their hands over their mouths.

Logan knew he could break down in a few minutes if he could just make it through getting Virgil settled in bed and debriefing Thomas and the other Sides about his findings.

Roman came to a stop next to his bed. Logan pulled the comforter and sheets back so Roman could place Virgil’s limp body on the mattress. Logan was glad he had thought to put the IV in his left hand. Logan stepped up to the mattress, covered Virgil except for his left arm, and connected the rest of the monitors. Virgil’s blood pressure was low, but not dangerously so. He wasted no time in attaching the lactated Ringers and putting the ports on both it and the blood wide open. Virgil’s glucose was also low, and his heart rate was slightly elevated, likely due to systemic shock. Logan
switched out the now-empty blood bag for the other.

Satisfied, he turned to the others, intending to tell them the extent of Virgil’s injuries. When he saw their faces, however, that flew out the window.

Logan shattered.

He fell to his knees and began sobbing, covering his face with his hands. Logan felt hands and arms touching him, comforting him, and he gladly leaned into it. Logan felt the others crying along with him, and let himself join in. He soaked up the comfort, the camaraderie, the love, until an unknown time later his sobs pattered out into hitched breaths. He opened his eyes and heard whimper and hiccups from around him. He looked up and saw the devastated looks on everyone else’s faces, and knew that even though they had failed Virgil, they would never let anything happen to him ever again.

Chapter End Notes

After Virgil collapsed, Logan, Roman, Patton, and Thomas all went to Roman's bathroom. Logan and Roman took care of Virgil's injuries while Patton supported Thomas. Once they got Virgil settled in Roman's bed, Logan broke down, and everyone supported each other.

I also wanted to mention something that might explain Logan's actions in not checking Virgil over completely before starting treatment. He may be Logic, but I wanted to show how Logic can be clouded and become hyper-focused on one thing in the face of fear for a loved one and shock.

Edit: I took care of a few errors as pointed out by the wonderful CKTKat! Thank you so so much for taking the time to point them out!!
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Whew! I worked super hard to get this chapter out tonight. The comments I've been getting on this fic are so motivating and inspiring! And getting the Grammarly extension has made editing so much easier omg.

This chapter contains descriptions of injuries and sounding. Lmk if you need to skip this chapter and would prefer a short description in the end notes, and I will gladly provide that for ya!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Logan didn’t know why, but he caught the others’ eyes and they all met his. If Logan wanted to think about it, he could likely compare it to how primitive humans attempted to form communal bonds way back in evolutionary history, but Logan had more important things to worry about. Namely, how he was going to tell the others and surely shatter their hearts into such small pieces that they may never be put back together again.

Just like Humpty Dumpty. He thought somewhat hysterically.

He stared at the carpet for a moment before standing and straightening his back, hearing several pops. He saw a sitting area near a fireplace that they could all chat by.

“We'll discuss Virgil’s injuries over there. I’m going to check Virgil’s monitors and IV’s before I join you.” Various sounds of agreement were heard before everyone shuffled over.

Logan stared after them with love before he turned to Virgil. Virgil’s pallor looked somewhat healthier than before, with a bit of color in his lips and cheeks. He turned his attention to the monitors. He was heartened to see that Virgil’s heart rate and blood pressure were returning to more normal values. Logan saw that his oxygen levels were still good, but frowned at his glucose level. Once he or Roman recovered, whoever does first, he’ll need to get a shot of glucose. Virgil’s glucose level wasn’t dangerously low, but Logan wanted as little stress on Virgil’s body as possible.

Logan walked over to the others and sat down. He caught Roman’s eye and immediately hated himself.

“What a foolish oversight on my part!” Logan exclaimed, hitting himself on the side of the head, “Roman, please lock your room to anyone.”

Roman smiled and puffed out his chest. “I did as soon as I sank in.”

Logan let out a sigh of relief. “Thank goodness.” He looked around at the expectant faces staring at him. He sighed.

“As you know, Virgil has been very seriously injured by someone, or more likely, several individuals as indicated by his last statement.”

Patton burst out with a warbly, “Is Virgil going to be okay?!”
Logan sighed. “That is a difficult question to answer Patton. Do I believe he will recover physically? Yes, it is likely so long as he does not incur any new injuries. As for mentally or emotionally, there is no way of knowing.”

Patton whimpered at that and drew his knees up.

Logan took a deep breath.

“I will,” he flipped through a few index cards, “cut to the chase. Like I said, as indicated by his last statement and injuries, Virgil has been assaulted by several individuals. As for the rest of his statement, I am unsure as to what he meant.”

“You mean when he said that they would come after us and that he failed?” Thomas asked, trying to contain his sorrow enough to speak.

Logan nodded. “Yes. To draw any conclusions right now would be beyond foolhardy. However, we do need to take several precautions. Thomas, I doubt they would physically harm you, but I do believe that we are either dealing with Neutral Sides or, more likely, Dark Sides who wish to turn you dark.” Thomas audibly swallowed at that. “For our own safety, I believe we should heed Virgil’s advice and stay together. Absolutely no going into any room on our own, and we should leave the bathroom door open. I will not take any chances.”

Roman spoke up, “I think we should lock the Light and Neutral side of the mindscape as well.”

“I agree. Patton, Thomas, you’ll need to work on that together.”

“Wait wait wait.” Thomas said, holding up a hand, “What do you mean ‘lock the mindscape’? And how do I help?”

Patton turned to him. “It means that no one can get in the Light side, and no one can get in the Neutral side. It’ll keep both us and the Neutrals safe from whoever hurt Virgil. I’ll just need you to meditate, and I’ll take care of the rest.”

Thomas nodded, still a little confused. “Okay. Whatever you need.”

Logan steeled himself. “The next thing we need to discuss are Virgil’s injuries. Although I loathe to break Virgil’s trust like this, I believe that the threat is great enough to warrant knowing the kind of people we’re dealing with.” Logan closed his eyes before he began listing off the injuries.

“I found evidence of whipping, burning, and beating, resulting in several broken ribs. Most of his body is covered by wounds. Virgil also has injuries on his arms indicative of self-harm. I found abrasions and bruising in his throat, as well as a bite injury to his tongue. Rope burn on his wrists and ankles indicated that he had been restrained. I also…” he trailed off, unable to say what he found next, so he stalled. “I found that each type of injury was in various stages of healing, which indicates that this has been going on for a while.”

Logan paused, knowing he couldn’t put it off any longer. He took in a shaky breath. “He…” his voice caught, disobeying him. Logan cleared his throat. “I also found that he was…” Logan now understood the meaning of ‘getting choked up.’

Logan screwed his eyes shut, took a deep breath, and forced out, “He was sexually assaulted.” Once he started, it was much easier to keep going, like the words were spilling out of him, despite hearing the heartbroken sounds around him. “I found a massive amount of tearing in his rectum, as well as a laceration whose origin I’m unsure of. I found what I believe to be seminal fluid on and in him. I suspect the damage to his throat was caused by sexual assault as well. And I” his voice
caught again. Why was this part harder to say than the rest? He heard Patton retching into a wastebasket. “His genitals, both his penis and testicles sustained bruising and minor burns. The burns seemed to have a very crisp outline, so I’m unsure as to what might have caused them at this time. I also found evidence of sounding.” Everyone was crying by this point, and Logan couldn’t stop the tears that ran down his face.

Thomas looked up and asked through his sobs, “Wh-what’s sounding?”

Logan dreaded that question. “It is the insertion of objects into the urethra.”

Thomas looked horrified, staring at Logan. The only sounds he was making was hiccuping breaths. Roman shakily reached over to place a hand on to their Host’s back as his other hand covered his mouth while sobbing. Patton looked about ready to pass out. The emotional Side could only take so much.

*I can make it, I’m so close, just a few more sentences.* “I tell you this because whoever it is that hurt Virgil like this is a true monster. We cannot take any chances. I believe that for all of us, this is life-and-death.”

There. He was done.

Logan got up without another word, crawled onto the California king on the opposite side of Virgil, laid down next to him, and wept.

Chapter End Notes

That bit about primitive humans using eye contact to create and maintain social bonds is a really popular evolutionary theory and one I subscribe to. It's so fascinating to realize how much we unconsciously use eye contact for so many things in everyday life! I decided to include it because poor Logan's mind is scattered due to the situation and what he's seen, so his brain is spewing facts when Logan isn't focused. My inner Logan is clawing their way to the front of my mind and is fighting with my Roman over these couple of chapters X'D

Edit: I just found out that after a certain number of comments, you have to start clicking on the "Thread" button to see other replies?!? WHY AO3?!?!

So if you get a notification that I replied but can't see it, try checking that button. All y'all's' comments mean so much to me and I want you to be able to see the replies!
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Yowza! This is hopefully going to be the longest chapter. I've already broken it in half, and it's STILL close to 4,000 words! If your attention span starts giving you trouble and you need me to shorten it, lmk and I'll figure it out!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The other three joined Logan on the bed once they had calmed somewhat. Patton nestled himself on Logan’s chest, and Roman came in behind them, lying on his back throwing his left arm over both of them. Thomas stood at the edge of the bed, unsure of what to do, before Roman decided for him and pulled him down on top of him. Thomas yelped, and Roman just looked down to smirk at him, attempting to re-establish some normalcy. He was brought out of it by Patton’s whimpers. Patton was staring at Virgil, devastated.

How could something so terrible be happening to his kiddo right under his nose?! He knew something had been wrong, so why didn’t he tell anyone? He had tried approaching Virgil about his concerns, but Virgil had assured him everything was fine, and he didn’t want to go blabbing around that he was worried because he didn’t want to make the others worry about Virgil needlessly and make Virgil mad at him and…

Patton shook his head. Spiraling right now wouldn’t do anyone any good. He was exhausted and needed to sleep for sure. Being the center of emotions and morality on any given day was exhausting, but today he was completely drained and very fragile. Logan had wrapped an arm around his shoulders when Patton had laid on his chest and was rubbing his hand up and down Patton’s arm. Patton snuggled in a bit more and sighed. Looking at Virgil, he couldn’t help but notice how pale he was and- wait, did he still have eyeshadow on? After a moment of studying Virgil, Patton realized, no, those were his natural dark circles. Patton felt a few more whimpers escape him as Logan tightened his arm around him. He knew Virgil objectively looked better and was better, but gosh he was still so pale! And so hurt!

He suddenly felt a chaotic swirl of emotion right before Thomas asked, “Is this my fault?”

Everyone turned to look at him in shock. Thomas was staring at Virgil, tears still leaking out of his eyes and sniffling.

Patton was surprised and heartbroken for his Host. “Thomas, why would you think that?!”

Thomas whined miserably and laid more heavily on Roman. “They’re my sides, aren’t they? This is my mind? Why would I do something like this to Virgil?” Thomas began crying more heavily as he went on. Patton was too exhausted and emotional to come up with a response, and Roman was focusing on holding Thomas with the arm not draped over his boyfriends, repeating “no, no, Thomas, no” into his Host’s hair. Logan spoke up.

“Thomas, little is known about people like you with unique abilities. However, what we do know is that you are a good man. You do not have the capacity to sexually assault anyone. While we are indeed aspects of your personality and start out as exact mirrors to you, we do each exhibit our own personalities as we grow and develop. Your Dark Sides do not necessarily reflect you. You are the
one in control. Some of the Dark Sides are not inherently negative traits, but ones you suppress or ones that have become nothing like you. You keep your Dark Sides so suppressed that it is unthinkable that you would ever become like them. Yes, there is the threat of the Dark Sides turning you dark, but that is nowhere near come to pass. Their violent tendencies are not your fault. They are their own people. In addition, they may have been influenced by someone else’s Sides.”

Thomas sniffled. “That can happen?”

Logan nodded. “Yes.”

Thomas sighed and nestled into Roman’s broad chest more. “Okay, that makes me feel a little better, I guess.” Thomas let out a few more cries.

They lay quietly with each other until Thomas broke the silence again.

“Logan, all of you… I’m so proud of you guys.”

That got everyone’s attention. Thomas continued. “You all held it together really well because Virgil needed you to. I needed you to. Logan, you did so good. You did exactly what needed to be done, and Roman you helped even though I could tell it was killing you. And Patton, you wanted to help your dark strange son so badly, but you stayed with me.” Thomas’ eyes filled with happy, proud tears. “Thank you all. I’m so proud to have you as my sides.”

Logan would never admit it, but a few stray tears found their way out of his eyes.

They stayed like that for another hour, comforting each other until Thomas’ stomach growled loudly.

He smiled sheepishly. “I guess I’m getting hungry.” He frowned. “I don’t want to leave you guys…” he trailed off.

“Don’t worry Thomas. Take care of yourself. That’s the most important thing.” Roman assured.

Logan agreed. “Indeed. Try to avoid situations that may make you anxious. While I admittedly am not intimately familiar with all of the inner-workings of Virgil’s job, I do know that excess anxiety can be draining on him.”

Thomas nodded. “Okay. Anything else I can do? Should I bring food in here?”

“Nah, we can summon or make our own food kiddo. But I do need your help to seal the Light and Neutral Sides of the mindscape.”

“Right! How do I know when I’m done meditating?”

“I’ll give you a big burst of happy!”

“Okay Patton.” Thomas knew that Patton was trying to lift his spirits, but there was only so much he could do. “Are you sure Virgil won’t mind me leaving?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “If I’m not mistaken, I believe that Virgil would be more anxious if you were to set your schedule back on account of him. He would prefer that you get as much work done as you can.”

“Just make sure to take breaks kiddo! This is… hard, and none of us want you to push yourself too much.”
Thomas closed his eyes and breathed deeply.

“Okay. I’ll sink up and meditate as soon as I can. Is it safe for you guys to be out in the real world?”

Logan sighed deeply. “Unfortunately, not at this time. We’ll need to ensure that those responsible are detained in some way before we can be in the real world.”

Thomas looked down. “O-okay, I think that’ll be fine. I’ll miss you though. Can I come visit you guys?” he asked hopefully.

“Absolutely kiddo! Whenever you want! We’d love to have ya!”

Thomas smiled at that. “Alright. I might need some food and a nap before I can meditate though. I’ve got a monster headache.”

“That is adequate Thomas. We’ll feel it once you start.”

Thomas nodded, then closed his eyes and sunk out into the real world.

Roman turned, withdrawing the arm he had flung over Logan and Patton but putting the arm he had over Thomas, as though trying to spoon both Logan and Patton at the same time.

“Now what?”

Logan looked at Roman’s lost expression. He cleared his throat. “We’ll keep an eye on Virgil. Once you’re recovered, I’ll need to you summon a shot of glucose and a dose of morphine to start.”

Roman looked down guiltily. “I don’t know if I’ll be able to summon that right now…”

“Once you’re recovered.” Logan repeated. “Now I believe the most prudent thing for us to do is to get some rest. We’re all drained by today’s events and we cannot help Virgil if we are exhausted.”

With that, they settled once more. Patton scooted in as close to Logan as he could get, and Roman did the same to Patton. Logan resolutely closed his eyes to rest. He sensed the others trying to relax as well. Shortly thereafter, they were all asleep.

////////

Roman groaned as he heard an alarm blaring. He felt Patton shifting against him, muttering under his breath. Roman stretched and groaned, one arm coming down to scratch sleepily at his chest. Logan had shot up, eyes going immediately to the equipment attached to Virgil, making sure the alarm wasn’t coming from him.

“Sorry fellas, that was my alarm for when it’s time to start dinner.”

Roman checked the clock and saw that it was 6 PM.

“Do not worry Patton. It is probably for the best that your alarm woke us up to prevent oversleeping.” Logan reassured.

Roman watched Virgil’s bandaged chest rise and fall beneath the blankets as reality came back full force. Roman hated reality sometimes. But right now, his friend needed him. He remembered what Logan had said, and felt his magic come back to him. He wasn’t full-strength yet, but sleeping for 3 hours certainly helped. He snapped, and three syringes appeared on the table next to Virgil. Logan got up, and when he saw the three syringes, looked at Roman in confusion.
“I summoned an extra morphine dose. Just in case.”

Logan winced sympathetically and injected the glucose and one dose of morphine into the catheter. It would take several minutes, but that should bring Virgil’s blood-glucose levels up. Logan detached the blood bag and set it aside, and removed the flattened bag of lactated Ringers. He attached a fresh bag of lactated Ringers and carefully removed the cannula where Virgil had been receiving blood. Virgil’s vital signs were mostly in the normal range, save for the blood-glucose levels.

“What do you think I should plan for food?” Came Patton’s question. “Thomas hasn’t meditated yet. He’s still napping.”

Logan frowned. “We need to wake him up, or else he will disrupt his regular sleep cycle, which will lead to decreased emotional control and productivity. A regular sleep cycle assists with the processing of emotions and daily events.”

Patton nodded sadly. “I can witness to that. I don’t do so hot when Thomathy doesn’t sleep well.”

Logan hummed and then froze. “Patton. Did you just make another reference to the past video with a pun?”

Patton giggled. “I guess I did. Sue me.”

Logan groaned. Roman chuckled, then closed his eyes and focused on bringing Thomas out of his sleep with a happy dream. The Sides felt Thomas wake up. Thomas’ headache was gone, now that he had eaten and slept. Halfway through his supper, Thomas felt himself get very sleepy suddenly, which he suspected was the doing of his main Sides. He sat down, closed his eyes, and focused on his breathing. He had to help Virgil.

Patton started. “Ah, there he is.” He closed his eyes and relaxed. Roman took the opportunity to admire his boyfriend. Although they were all nearly identical to Thomas, each side had some physical variation.

Patton’s face was sweet, even when his eyes were closed and his muscles were completely relaxed. Like he was naturally the kindest, gentlest soul you’ll ever meet (which may very well be true). He had more body fat than the other main sides, but it was a strong dad bod. Roman thought it was adorable, how round and soft his loving boyfriend was. He was deceptively strong, able to lift any of the others when needed.

(Roman found this out after Thomas didn’t get a call back for an audition, and Roman was crying on the couch, grieving the lost dream and nursing the bruises the Ego had sustained. Patton had comforted him as best he could, and eventually Roman settled into wet hiccuping breaths. He started to fall asleep against Patton. However, “Nuh-uh mister. You’re sleeping in your bed! You don’t need to wake up tomorrow morning with a sore neck on top of everything else!” Roman groaned and looked up at Patton teasingly. “Make me.” Patton’s expression shifted into a smirk that Roman had never seen before, and before he knew it Patton had picked him up bridal-style. Roman would forever deny the squeak he let out at that.)

Roman came out of his reminiscing when Patton opened his eyes, grinning tiredly, sweat beading on his forehead. “It’s done. The Light Side and Neutral Side of the mindscape are safe.”

Roman smiled brilliantly. “That’s wonderful Patton!”

Logan had a rare full smile on his face. “Indeed it is.”
Patton giggled (the giggle that melts both their hearts every time). “It sure is! Now what do you want me to make for dinner?”

Logan looked back to Virgil. “Perhaps a soup and some bread. If Virgil wakes up, I want him to be able to eat it.”

That sobered everyone up. Patton looked like he was on the verge of tears again, and Roman wasn’t far behind. Patton took a brave sniffle. “I can do that Lolo!” Patton left the room. Roman tensed.

“Logan, my room is still locked. I have every confidence in Patton’s abilities, but…” he bit his lower lip. He couldn’t bear to think of another one of his loves being hurt like Virgil had been.

“Go with him. I know you’ll keep him safe. Call me if anything happens.”

Roman kissed Logan, smirking at his blush (it’s so much fun to catch the nerd off-guard), and went after Patton. He caught up with Patton in the kitchen, who was cubing some kind of red meat.

Roman bowed and flourished grandly. “Hello my fair prince! May I accompany thee on thy quest to provide sustenance to weary troops?”

Patton smiled, a little too widely. “Sure! Grab and rinse some carrots and potatoes for me? Oh! And some onions and celery! I’m making a steak soup with egg noodles! It’s im-pasta-ble not to love!”

“Yes my king.”

Patton smiled and went back to cubing meat. Roman frowned, but wasn’t entirely surprised at the lack of reaction. He went about preparing vegetables and potatoes. Roman noticed Patton was cutting the steak a little too quickly, but he decided against bringing it up. Just as he was about to get started on the onions, Patton grabbed them.

“Don’t worry Ro! I’ve got this!”

Roman acquiesced but was worried. Patton’s tears started almost immediately, and Roman knew that wasn’t from the onions.

“Patton, lovebug-”

“I’m fine Ro! It’s just the onions!”

Roman walked over and gently put his hand on top of the knife. Patton sniffled.

“Roman, I have to.”

“No, you don’t.” Roman pulled him into a hug. “It’s okay. It’s okay to not be okay.” Patton buried his face in Roman’s chest and sobbed. Roman kept his tears silent for his heart’s sake. He shushed him and rocked them, swaying back and forth. Patton sobbed into Roman’s chest for several long minutes before he pulled away.

He looked up at his dashing prince, offering a wet smile. “Thanks Roman. I needed that.”

Roman looked down, tears on his own face. “I know heart.” He gently kissed the tip of Patton’s nose. “I’ll handle the onions.”

Patton took a breath and stepped away, Roman letting him. Patton set about mincing garlic while
Roman chopped the onions. The water and beef broth boiling, Patton added the carrots, potatoes, celery, bay leaf, and steak. He sprinkled in pepper, mace, cinnamon, paprika, ground mustard, and a bit of cayenne. After a few minutes, he sweated the onions and garlic and put those in as well.

Once that was set to boil, he looked around.

“Hmmmm, what do you think about cheese and crackers Roman?”

“That sounds lovely!”

Patton sliced an entire block of colby jack and a block of cheddar cheese before arranging them and crackers on a plate with some grapes. He got out some of the leftover garlic bread and set the oven to preheat at a low temperature. When the oven beeped, Patton put the garlic bread in to reheat.

Once that was done, Roman summoned a large tray and stacked the food, some plates and bowls, and silverware. They sunk back into Roman’s room, Patton holding on to Roman.

Logan had finished cleaning the bathroom and was putting the blankets back over Virgil’s legs. Roman spotted Virgil’s hoodie at the foot of the bed.

“Ah Roman, Patton, perfect timing. Most of Virgil’s bandages were fine, I had to change a few, but I could use your help unwrapping his chest. I would like to check the bandages there.”

Roman’s stomach let out a loud growl. Patton smiled.

“I got this sweetie. Why don’t you eat? You worked hard today!” Patton leaned up, kissed Roman, and went over to help Logan, who was putting on fresh gloves. Roman let Patton go, but kept a close eye on both. He pulled three chairs up next to the bed in a semicircle, then served himself and sat down next to them.

Roman saw the pain in Patton’s eyes as more and more of Virgil was revealed, but Patton was holding himself together. Logan had a neutral look on his face, but Roman could see the torment swirling in his eyes. Roman felt for his boyfriends and his dark love, but knew there was little he could do.

_Are you supposed to save their true love? I’m supposed to be a knight in shining armor, and I couldn’t save Virgil. Instead, during our last morning together, I was a complete cad. Now Virgil may die thinking I hate him. Oh how I wish I could take it back. How I wish I could take so much back. Was the reason Virgil didn’t reach out because of me?_

Roman suddenly wasn’t hungry anymore. He looked down and saw that he only had a little left, so he forced it down. Logan and Patton were re-wrapping Virgil’s chest at this point. Patton looked shaky and pale, while Logan had a lone tear track on his cheek. Patton gently, oh-so-gently, set Virgil down, kissed his forehead, then sat back up. Twin tears ran down his face. Roman sat aside his bowl and opened his arms. Patton walked over to Roman and curled up in his lap. Roman hooked his chin over Patton’s head and rubbed his back. Logan checked the IV line, then checked the monitors, checked the IV line again, then checked the monitors again, and moved to check the IV line.

“Lolo.”

Logan looked up, surprised that Patton spoke so clearly while so distressed.

Patton smiled sadly. “Eat something honey.”
Logan jerked his head. “Right.” He wiped his face roughly with his forearm, threw away his gloves, and grabbed some dinner.

They ate in silence, Patton still curled up on Roman’s lap and holding his bowl of soup to his chest. He finished and went to eat some crackers, but stopped. Roman tightened his hold slightly and kissed the back of his head.

Patton stood. “I think I need to spend some time in my room. I need to sort through today for myself and Thomas.”

Logan nodded solemnly. “Let us know if you need anything. May we periodically check up on you?”

“Sure thing!” Patton responded cheerfully, although it was obviously forced. He left and went to his room, fiddling with the sleeves of his cat hoodie. Roman decided that if the Dark Sides were going to make a move, they would have done so already. Roman focused and unlocked his room.

Roman turned to Logan. He knew that Logan’s primary love language wasn’t physical touch, but he also knew that Logan sometimes needed it more than he let on.

“Logan, would you like a hug?”

Logan inhaled some soup at that. After coughing it up, he looked at Roman.

“That came out of nowhere.”

Roman shrugged and maintained eye contact, smirking at Logan.

“I wouldn’t mind cuddling on the bed once I’ve finished my dinner.”

Roman waggled his eyebrows. Logan rolled his eyes, but smiled fondly. Roman snapped the dishes into the kitchen sink downstairs and conjured a mini-fridge for the leftovers. He crawled onto the bed next to Virgil and gently moved some hair out of his face. Logan watched the two, bittersweet emotions running through him. How he wished for this to happen, but never, never in this context.

Logan finished his dinner a short time later and joined Roman. Roman rolled onto his back and lifted his arm, which Logan crawled under. He laid his head on Roman’s chest and grabbed his shirt. Roman wrapped his arms around his boyfriend protectively and put his nose to Logan’s hair, breathing in the perfumed scent of hair spray. His heart was heavy, knowing his loves were suffering. He felt like crying, but his body seemingly refused. After a half hour of laying together peacefully, Roman felt a tug from the Imagination. His stomach dropped.

“Logan, Thomas is having a nightmare.” He paused, then swallowed. “It’s about Virgil. I have to help him.” he said apologetically.

“Go. I’ll be fine. I’ll be here when you return.”

Roman leaned down and kissed Logan deeply, trying to convey his gratitude and love. He leaned his forehead against Logan’s, caressing the side of his face.

“I will return as soon as I’m able. You’re amazing, caring so well for Virgil.”

Logan smiled and leaned up to kiss Roman once more. They pulled away as Roman felt another tug.
“I’m sorry my love. I must go now. I shall return soon!” And with that, he got off the bed and quickly walked with purpose and determination to the Imagination.

Logan watched him go. He stared at the empty door frame for a moment longer, then decided to go check Virgil’s vital signs. He was pleased with the results. He took down the empty bag of lactated Ringers, and debated if he should put up another one. He thought Virgil might be hydrated enough, but he wasn’t sure, given his state of starvation and his absence that night and morning. And while he didn’t want to dehydrate Virgil, he didn’t want to have to insert a urinary catheter either, although it may become necessary.

Just as Logan was deciding that he may need to put up another bag and catheterize Virgil, he noticed Virgil’s heart and respiration speed up and his blood pressure slowly rise. He frowned at the monitors and looked at Virgil. Just as he was getting concerned, Virgil stirred. Logan’s heart soared and he stopped moving for a moment. He decided to take a step back and quietly ask, “Virgil? Are you awake? Can you hear me?”

Virgil kept shifting on the bed and making sounds like he was trying to get up. Logan sat down in one of the nearby chairs and grabbed Virgil’s hand. He started gently running his thumb over Virgil’s fingers. He sent out a mental tug to the other Sides. Sure enough, within moments Patton raced into the room, and Roman wasn’t far behind him. They were panting, obviously having sprinted.

Patton was the first to speak. “What happened?! Is Virgil okay?”

Before Logan could get anything out, Roman jumped in. “Is he getting sicker? Did one of the Dark Sides try something?”

Logan attempted to speak again, but was cut off by Patton. “Is he gonna be okay? Is he-” he choked off with a sob.

“Hush please! I cannot answer you with you speaking over me! Virgil is fine, I believe he may be waking up.” Patton looked ready to cry, and Roman was staring at the ground. Logan sighed.

“I apologize for being stern with you. But I wanted to reassure you that Virgil is fine before you made yourself too upset.” Patton smiled weakly.

Virgil inhaled loudly, then let out what sounded like a grunt. All eyes were on the limp side in the bed. Virgil scrunched up his face and let out a high-pitched, pained moan.

Virgil opened his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! As always, leave a kudos if you liked!
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Uffda! My Roman is really productive today! I've been making myself write a chapter for every earlier chapter I edit and post, so for each chapter you see go up know that there's another new chapter later in the story that just got written. That plus editing means my Roman has a lot to be proud of today!

Here's another longer chapter for ya! I didn't think I'd get this out today!

(I'm actually really proud of this chapter and am crossing my fingers that you all love it!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first thing Virgil felt was… nothing. He felt like he was floating, like his limbs weren't attached to him. He felt himself breathe in, acutely aware of the air going into his nose, filling his lungs, his lungs deflating, air escaping his nose. He felt peaceful. Virgil simply floated, feeling his body breathe.

Of course, no good thing could last. Virgil may be calm, but he was still Anxiety, and that caught up to him.

Is Thomas okay? What’s going on? Why do I feel like I’m floating? Am I high? How long have I been out? Was I drugged?

Virgil became aware of his head. Specifically, his pounding headache. He frowned, but it wasn’t the worst pain he had ever felt before. Not like when he was locked up with Malice for a week…

Virgil resolutely tried focusing on feeling another part of his body, but he could feel the beginnings of a panic attack licking at his mind. He concentrated on his breathing exercises, and after a couple rounds he felt a little better. Virgil felt like his arms were weighed down, and he could feel a tingling sensation in his left arm. Once he was able to feel his arms, the rest of his body followed quickly after. Virgil could feel soreness in his chest and spikes of pain from his ass, but nothing like it was before.

Virgil was still trying to take stock of his body and figure out what was going on when his hearing returned. He could make out Patton's and Roman’s worried voices, as well as beeping that sounded an awful lot like a heart rate monitor.

Are Roman and Patton worried about me?

Virgil concentrated, and was able to decipher words.

“Hush please! I cannot answer you with you speaking over me! Virgil is fine, I believe he may be waking up.”

A pause.

“I apologize for being stern with you. But I wanted to reassure you that Virgil is fine before you
made yourself too upset.”

No. No, they can’t be this upset over me. No no no. I must still be dreaming.

With great difficulty, Virgil found he was able to shift his limbs. However, with that came full awareness of his pain. A grunt was punched out of him, and he couldn’t help the moan that escaped him after that. Once he felt he had a bit more control, Virgil decided it was now or never.

After a few failed attempts, he opened his eyes.

And he knew he had died.

Roman and Patton were staring at him, fear and hope in their eyes. When he met theirs, their faces shone like the sun and Patton’s eyes let loose the tears it was holding. Roman was thanking every deity he could think of.

But what really let him know he had died was the fact that Logan was touching him. Not to grab him, or hurt him, but a gentle hand in his, a thumb tenderly swiping over his fingers. Logan’s eyes were shiny with tears of relief, those same beautiful eyes studying him with a sharp focus. Logan would never touch him, and none of the other Sides would ever actually want to touch him. Virgil could tell that Roman and Patton were barely restraining themselves, wanting to run to Virgil, but obviously not wanting to crowd him. Logan didn’t stop holding his hand. Instead, when Virgil made eye contact, Logan used his other hand to cover Virgil’s.

Virgil felt a terrible pain in his chest not caused by his ribs. He wanted this when he was alive, not some illusion of love. Virgil wanted them to look at him like he was worth something, like they loved him. He wanted Roman’s strong arms around him, for Patton to hug him, for Logan to hold him. He wanted to have them to want to spend time with him, to have Roman take him on adventures and regale him with tales, for Patton to dab cookie dough on his nose, for Logan to sit by him and read quietly with a smile on his face. He wanted their hands, their lips, and after time, maybe he could handle more. He knew he was selfish and ungrateful, but dammit he wanted the real thing. He wanted their love. Virgil knew loving him would only destroy them, and he knew it was for the best, but gods he wanted.

Was this Hell? To have their love, only for it to be fake, a fabrication? It must be. Virgil knew he had done more than enough to earn his ticket. He despaired. Perhaps this was his comeuppance for making their lives miserable, for being nothing but a drain.

I hope they can protect themselves and Thomas. Thomas. Oh Thomas. I hope you’re okay.

Virgil felt his eyes grow hot with tears as he closed them. He let out a sob.

“I wish this was real.”

The hand on his stopped moving. He could hear Roman stop talking and Patton suck in a breath. Gods, this must be Hell. He had their love, and he could still do nothing but hurt them. He sobbed again.

“Virgil,” Logan’s voice, oh so beautiful, “Why don’t you think this is real?”

Virgil opened his eyes to meet Logan’s dark, espresso ones. You’re so beautiful. Even as a gilded illusion of Hell. “Because. This is Hell.” Maybe if I acknowledge it out loud, the illusion will fall away. I can survive the fire and brimstone. I can’t survive this, not a moment longer. Virgil felt a strange wave of calm, accepting his fate.
But nothing fell away. Patton was breathing loudly, whimpering with every inhale and exhale. Roman looked like he had just seen the citizens of his Imagination all be consumed by fire. And Logan looked shocked and... lost. Like he saw a problem and didn’t know how to fix it.

“Virgil,” Logan started, his voice breaking. Dammit Virgil, you can’t keep from hurting even figments of Hell? Really dude? “Why do you think this is Hell?”

Something in Virgil broke. “Because you’re touching me.” He looked at the Roman and Patton look-alikes. “Because you love me.” He stared up at the ceiling. “Because none of this can be real.” He closed his eyes. Still the illusion held. Maybe he was under Malice's hold again? It wouldn’t be the first time, but this wasn’t Malice's M.O. He’d usually just go for the dark nightmares, creatures with teeth and claws and spikes ripping him apart. Or that one time where he’d changed Virgil.

Logan’s voice, now thick with tears, came through again, cutting off Virgil’s dark thoughts. “Is there anything that would convince you otherwise?”

Virgil thought for a moment. There was one thing, but...

“No.”

Logan, Logan, laid his head down on their joined hands and let out a sob. He took a pained gasp, and sobbed again. Although he knew they were fake, Virgil felt their pain as though it were his own. He hated seeing the other Sides distraught, and he knew it was his fault this time. But they were fake, so why did he care? He hated himself for caring about the fabrications, but they were so real, it was hard to not have his heart ripped out at their faces and voices.

Roman shouted. “AHA! I KNOW!!”

Virgil nearly jumped out of his skin, jostling his injuries and making him hiss through his teeth. At least Hell got that part of Roman’s personality right. Roman looked at him with a wet face, shining with hope.

“Virgil, you’re a Side!”

Virgil knew he was fake, knew it, but couldn’t help the raised eyebrow. “Yeah? I was, anyways.” Roman visibly flinched at that, but powered on. “You can feel if it’s actually Thomas!”

Virgil’s blood turned to ice. They can’t drag Thomas down to Hell, can they? No, only if he dies, and he’d never come down here anyways. He doesn’t deserve it.

Virgil wanted to protest, but Roman was summoning already.

And Thomas was there. Standing in his pajamas, bleary-eyed and sleepy. Once he caught a glimpse of Virgil, though, he woke up.

“Virgil! Oh my god!” Thomas was holding his hands over his mouth, eyes shining with tears.

“Thomas?” Virgil’s voice came out rough. He couldn’t believe it. But he was here, there was that pull, that recognition that made Virgil know it was Thomas.

“Virgil! I’m so glad you’re awake!” Thomas cried.

Virgil just stared at him, still not believing his eyes or the pull in his chest. Virgil could feel the
love for his Host, the want to run to him and protect him, but it couldn’t be real, none of this could be real…

Thomas’ face became more concerned. “Virgil? Is… is something wrong?”

Logan spoke, his voice choked. “Virgil believes that this is not real. That he died and is in Hell.”


“He doesn’t believe that we love him.” Patton sobbed.

Thomas looked heartbroken. “Oh Virge…” He took a couple steps toward the bed and stopped. “Virgil, is it okay if I approach you?”

Virgil nodded numbly. Was this real? It couldn’t be. But there was no mistaking Thomas, Thomas, no mistaking the love in his eyes. Thomas paused next to the bed.

“Can I sit?”

Virgil nodded again, staring at Thomas in awe. Thomas had tears running down his face. He sat down, Logan scooting back and removing his hands. Logan was shaking with choked cries. Virgil felt the absence of Logan’s touch like a freezing burn, similar to the feeling when Thomas had gone to Minnesota and had grabbed a light pole when it was -12 outside.

“Virgil, is it okay if I touch you?” Thomas asked carefully. He quickly added. “It’s okay if you say no, you don’t have to.”

Virgil nodded. Thomas gently covered Virgil’s hand with his own, then softly lifted it, like he was holding a butterfly. Thomas ran his thumbs over Virgil’s knuckles.

“Virgil,” Thomas had to stop and swallow the lump in his throat. “Would you like me to hug you?”

Virgil tried to sit up, and let out a pained, drawn-out keen when he fell back. He sobbed at his failure.

“Virgil! Shhh, it’s okay, I’ve got you, you don’t have to sit up. Do you want a hug?” Virgil bobbed his head up and down, not sure if it even looked like a nod.

Thomas slowly leaned forward, giving Virgil plenty of time to tell him to stop, before gently wrapping his arms around Virgil. Virgil put his arms around Thomas, hiding his eyes in Thomas’ neck. He had no idea if he was even doing it right, he’d never done this before, what if he was fucking it up, he has to be making poor Thomas so uncomfortable-

Oh.

So this is what a hug feels like.

Virgil had never felt so safe, had never felt loved, before now. And now he wondered if he could ever get enough.

Virgil sobbed, sobbed for his love, crying for the pain he felt, trying to tighten his arms to show his love. He let out his pain through his wails. Thomas hugged him back, albeit more gently, mindful of Virgil’s injuries. Wherever Thomas touched felt like fire, but it was okay for some reason. It was like when the Light Sides touched him, but this was different somehow.

Virgil cried for what felt like hours to him, Thomas, and the Sides, but was only a few minutes. He
was too weak to keep crying, and his grip on Thomas loosened as he lost what little strength he had. Thomas gently set him down. Thomas grabbed a Kleenex from somewhere and began gently wiping down Virgil’s face.

“Thomas?” Virgil whispered hoarsely.

“Yeah Virge?”

“Did you want to hug me, or-” Virgil’s throat closed up, but Thomas knew the question his Anxiety had for him.

Did you hug me because you felt you had to?

“Virgil, look at me.” Virgil met Thomas’ eyes reluctantly and saw a fire there.

Good job, you’ve fucked it up. He’s so pissed, he’s going to hurt you, they’re going to hurt you he hates you hehatesyouhehatesyou-

“Virgil, I love you.” Virgil felt like he was frozen in time, looking into Thomas’ determined eyes. When he finally got his mouth to work again, he rasped out, “R-really?”

Virgil saw more tears spring to Thomas’ eyes at his question. “Yes, really. And I… I’m so sorry that I’ve made it so hard for you to believe that but I do. I love you so much Virge.”

Virgil closed his eyes and tried to breathe evenly. He was so tired of crying, and he needed to be strong for his Host. His amazing Host, who even though he shouldn’t, has every reason not to, still loves Virgil. He felt Thomas gently wiping the tears away from his face.

Virgil’s bladder chose that moment to protest. He grimaced and Thomas stopped touching him immediately.

“Virge? You okay?”

Virgil shifted uncomfortably. “Yeah, I’m fine, it’s just…” He shifted uncomfortably and blushed, not meeting anyone’s eyes. Logan seemed to catch on first.

“You were unconscious for 8 hours and 37 minutes and I did give you two liters of lactated Ringers solution-”

“What?”

“IV fluids. Do you need to use the bathroom?”

Virgil closed his eyes and nodded.

“Aw that’s okay kiddo! Do you want some help?”

Virgil bristled at the thought of one of the Sides helping him piss. “I can walk.”

He slowly, painfully pushed himself into a sitting position, internally cursing each whine and moan that slipped past. Once he was close to something resembling sitting, he used his torso as leverage to keep himself upright. He breathed harshly through his nose, trying to keep from crying out. It was then that he realized that he was clad in only boxers.

“Uhhh… can I have some clothes or something?”
Roman, glad to have something to do, jumped at the opportunity. “Of course!” And conjured a pair of sweatpants and a purple t-shirt for Virgil. Thomas leaned over and grabbed the hoodie from the end of the bed.

“Here you go bud.”

Virgil grabbed the hoodie gratefully. Logan interjected.

“Virgil, may I remove your IV cannula? I don’t believe you’ll require more IV fluids.”

Virgil looked at Logan. He had this crestfallen look about him. Virgil felt guilty, knowing he had caused it.

“Yeah, go ahead. And, uh, Logan?” Logan looked up from putting on gloves. “Sorry about earlier.”

Logan waved him off. “Think nothing of it. You woke up in a strange scenario with morphine on board, I should have expected it.”

“Right, with- wait, with WHAT on board?!”

Logan jumped at the outburst. “Morphine. I’m sorry, I thought you might need it, given…the extent of your injuries.”

That’s when reality came crashing down around Virgil. Memories of the previous night, the morning, filming, Deceit, throwing up, apologizing…

Virgil’s breathing started coming more quickly.

Who did you think bandaged up your pathetic, disgusting body you stupid idiot?

Virgil was horrified. That means… he knows… they all know… they’re not safe...

Logan was softly calling his name. Virgil turned wide eyes to Logan.

“Virgil, can you hear me?” Virgil nodded shakily. “Alright, I need you to breathe with me, can you do that? In for one, two, three, four…”

After several rounds of breathing exercises, Virgil was feeling more composed. He could still feel the fear and humiliation licking at the back of his mind, but he was able to function for now. He turned embarrassed eyes up to the Sides and Thomas. “Sorry ‘bout that.” He mumbled.

“Do not worry, we are not offended. Do you need anything?”

Virgil shook his head. “Nah, I just have to get to the bathroom.”

At this, Roman stepped forward. “Would you like help up?”

Virgil felt himself bristle again, but forced himself to stay calm and not lash out. “I’m fine.”

Logan jumped in. “Before you go, may I remove that cannula? Then you’ll be able to put on your hoodie without the worry of it catching on your sleeve.”

Virgil shrugged. “Yeah that’s fine.”

Logan nodded. He grabbed a cotton ball and some medical tape, similar to another spot on his
hand. He removed the needle and immediately pressed the cotton ball down on top of Virgil’s hand. Logan vanished the needle and taped down the cotton ball.

“Alright, that should do.”

Virgil tested his hand, put on his hoodie, then turned to the task of getting off the bed. Virgil rotated himself until his legs fell off the bed (which hurt a fucking LOT), then he used his arms and momentum to push himself up. His legs chose that moment to promptly give out.

Fortunately, Roman was right next to him and caught him. “Virgil! Are you alright?”

The room was spinning, and Virgil felt like he was on a ship in the middle of the ocean. His legs were rubber and refused to move. Virgil’s ribs and back were on fire from pain, and there was a different kind of fire wherever Roman was touching. He looked up at Roman, who was spinning along with the room. The spinning slowed down and after a few seconds, Virgil was able to respond.

“Yeah, I’m good. Just have to get my sea legs.”

Roman frowned, but didn’t comment. “Virgil, I’m concerned about you falling. May I please at least help you to the bathroom?”

Virgil knew there was no way he could make it on his own.

“Fine.” he acquiesced.

“Do you think you can walk with assistance, or may I carry you?”

Virgil was angry at how helpless he was. With his face on fire, he refused to meet anyone’s eyes as he muttered, “Can’t walk.”

“It’s alright Virgil. Can you put your arms around my neck please?”

Virgil met Roman’s hopeful eyes. He sighed and locked his hands together behind Roman’s neck. Roman slowly lifted Virgil and cradled him close to his chest. Virgil’s face felt hot and he refused to look at anyone as he was carried to the bathroom.

“Alright, we’re here. Do you require any further assistance Virgil?”

Virgil shook his head silently as he was set down on the toilet. Roman was as gentle as he could be, but Virgil couldn’t help the grunt of pain that escaped him. Roman apologized but Virgil waved him off.

“Don’t worry about it. Can I have some privacy?”

“Of course! I’ll be just outside if you need anything.”

Roman walked out of the bathroom, but left the door cracked. Virgil let out a sigh at that, and took the chance to look around.

Holy shit, Princey really is extra in everything he does.

The bathroom had white marble flooring with black swirls in it. The ceilings and walls were vaulted and intricately decorated with filigree. In the center of the bathroom was a white and gold clawfoot bathtub that could probably fit 4 people. He had a massive rainfall shower that could comfortably accommodate 6 people in the back, and a vanity complete with Hollywood lighting
and stacked high with products. Fluffy bathrobes were lined along the wall near the shower, each a
different style. Roman also had a jacuzzi that he was sure had powerful jets. Off to the side,
however, was what looked like a giant machine surrounded by strange walls.

What the fuck is that? Tanning or some shit?

Virgil decided he’d ask Roman about it later. For now, he focused on shimmying his sweatpants
and boxers down. His lower half protested loudly, but Virgil had a feeling that the morphine was
helping out. He couldn’t help the small pained sounds as he emptied his bladder; it had been two
nights ago that they had done that, and it always hurt for at least a week afterwards. Virgil finished
cleaning himself up, and decided he was done being helpless. With an indignant anger burning
through him, he set about walking to the sink (of course it’s beyond extra Jesus Christ Princey).
He had to support himself on the wall, and he limped heavily and painfully, but he eventually made
it to the sink. He rested his weight on the counter and washed his hands, getting water all over the
counter since he was holding himself up. He chanced a look in the mirror.

Goddamn I look awful.

He was paler than usual and gaunt. His eyes were red-rimmed and had dark shadows cast under
them. He looked like death warmed over.

I don’t even need eyeshadow. He thought grimly. I look like a fucking corpse.

Virgil could see bandages peeking out from underneath his shirt. That triggered the panic attack
that he had barely holding at bay to come back full force.

Oh god they know they know they saw they know they know I’m gonna die they hate me they hate
me
theyhatemetheyhatemethey’llneverwanttotouchmeorlookatme’mgonnadiealonetheDarkSideswillhurtmeth

Virgil only vaguely felt himself hit the ground due to the pain. His vision was swimming with tears
and he felt like he couldn’t breathe. He could feel in his throat that he was making some kind of
noise but he had no idea what. His eyes distinguished figures around him, and his panicked mind
knew they were Dark Sides.

Chapter End Notes

Me: Okay let's give Virgil a hug.
My muse: Cool cool, we're gonna bookend it with massive angst.
Me: What?
My muse: Everyone's gonna cry bad tears.
Me: No! Why?!
My muse: Do you want me to go on strike?
Me: ...
My muse:...
Me: FINE! OMG
My muse: 3>:D
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Three chapters in one day? It's more likely than you think.

I mentioned this in a previous author's note, but I thought now would be a good time to bring it up again. I'm drawing from my own experiences when it comes to trauma, panic attacks, and panicky thought processes. So if some of the panicked thoughts seem redundant and/or contradictory, that's on purpose.

I hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“NO!! Get the fuck away from me!” he screamed. That seemed to give the figures pause. He sobbed. “I’m sorry. Please I’m so fucking sorry. Do whatever you want to me, just please don’t hurt them. Please…”

One of the figures came closer and kneeled in front of Virgil. Virgil whimpered, closed his eyes and curled his body into a fetal position. Virgil kept whimpering in fear as he felt his hand be gently picked up by long, slender fingers.

Reminds me of Logan’s. Which Dark Side has fingers like Logan’s?

Virgil didn’t know why he couldn’t figure it out, but he knew he had to focus on the Dark Side in front of him if he wanted to survive and maybe save his family. He felt another stab go through him as his brain taunted him with the fact that they didn’t consider him family, but he did his best to focus on the hand holding his. Virgil realized they were talking and if he hadn’t just used the bathroom, he’s sure he would have pissed himself in fear at missing what they were saying.

“It’s okay darling, please just focus on my voice. You’re safe, I promise.”

Logan?!

Virgil opened his eyes and yep, that’s Logan alright. With Thomas and the other Light Sides standing behind him. Virgil turned his attention back to what Logan was saying.

“Virgil can you focus on your breathing for me?” Virgil nodded, still gasping and making pitiful noises. Logan smiled encouragingly and brought Virgil’s hand to his chest. “Good. In for one, two, three, four…”

After several attempts, Virgil managed to inhale properly, but coughed when he was supposed to hold his breath.

Stupid, worthless Side. Can’t even fucking breathe right? No wonder they don’t want you around. They hate you. You’re such a burden. You know you only tax them, right?

Virgil let out a heartbroken sob.

“Shhh Virgil, it’s okay. You’re safe here. Can we try breathing again?”
After hiccuping a couple times, Virgil was able to mostly get through one round of breathing exercises, despondency taking over the space his panic had been. After several minutes of successful breathing, he was laying limply on floor. He couldn’t move; it was like his despair took all the strength he had in his muscles. He closed his eyes and felt himself twitching and whimpering sporadically, but he hung onto consciousness for the others in the room.

“Did he… did he pass out?” Patton’s shaky voice came.

“I’m unsure. He may have, or he may be near it. Roman, if you would?”

“Sure thing Specs.”

Virgil felt strong arms pull him against an equally powerful chest. His head was cradled against a muscled shoulder.

Virgil was completely unable to move. Look at how scared they are of you. They think you’re made of glass. Boy, if they were tip-toeing around you before, now they have to be even more careful! Good job. While he was still reeling, he was placed on a bed and he felt something draped over him. His whimpers and twitching had died down, but he still felt too weak to open his eyes. He could hear voices around him.

“It seems Virgil had a panic attack.”

“Way to state the obvious Bill Dry.”

“I am establishing-”

“No, no we are not doing this right now. Roman, say you’re sorry.”

“Sorry.”

“Good. Now Logan, what were you saying?”

Virgil smiled inwardly. Mom Thomas was hilarious to him. His amusement quickly faded though. He knew that Roman must be incredibly anxious if he was lashing out like that. Ha! They don’t even need you for Anxiety. Looks like you’re making sure the Light Sides have that in spades. No wonder they hate you.

Logan cleared his throat, and Virgil just knew that Logan had adjusted his glasses.

“With Virgil’s trauma, going to the bathroom could have exposed him to any number of triggers. Unfortunately, we won’t know what caused it unless Virgil tells us. In the meantime, when he wakes up, we should try not to crowd him. I do not want him to become overwhelmed.”

There were noises of agreement.

Patton burst out, “I don’t want to upset my dark strange son!”

Virgil finally found the strength to open his eyes. He inhaled deeply through his nose and groaned.

“Hey Virge, can you hear me?” Thomas asked.

Virgil shifted his eyes to Thomas. His Host was staring at him in concern. “Yeah Thomas, I’m fine.”

Thomas looked uncomfortable at the next question. “Do you know what caused this panic attack?”
Virgil knew. But he’d be damned before he told anyone. He might still be able to salvage this if he didn’t tell. So he shrugged with one shoulder and muttered, “Dunno.”

Thomas looked disappointed by that, but didn’t press further. *The only thing you can do is let Thomas down.*

Logan took a couple steps toward Virgil, but stopped a fair distance away. “Virgil, do you feel you injured yourself or opened any injuries when you fell?”

Virgil took a moment to take stock of his injuries. They throbbed, but it didn’t feel like anything was particularly painful. Though he could feel the morphine really wearing off. “No, I think I’m good.”

Everyone sighed in relief. Virgil was trying to breathe through the pain. He figured he may as well try to lighten the mood.

“Is your bathroom extra enough Princey?”

Roman grinned. “Never!”

Virgil rolled his eyes fondly. “By the way, what’s that weird machine with the walls around it?”

That seemed to dampen everyone’s mood. *Way to go Virgil.*

Logan cleared his throat and adjusted his glasses. “I had Roman conjure an x-ray machine to see if you had any other injuries that were not visible. Actually, would you like to go over your injuries?”

Virgil turned his head to the side, looking away from them. “I’d rather not.”

He could hear Logan let a breath out through his nose. “Very well. I will respect your decision.”

“Do you think you feel well enough to try to eat some food kiddo? I made steak soup!”

Virgil turned his head back and looked at Patton. He had this hopeful look in his eyes that Virgil just couldn’t bear to take away.

“Sure, I’ll have some.”

Patton’s face brightened. “Great! I’ll make you up a bowl with some cheese and crackers and oooooo do you want some garlic bread too? I can get that!” Patton was already moving around, Roman having conjured a microwave.

Virgil chuckled despite himself. “Sounds great Patton.” A stab of pain went through him and he screwed his eyes shut as he hissed through his teeth.

“Virgil, are you certain you did not injure yourself further?”

“Yeah, this is pretty normal, I’ll be fine. It usually comes in waves-” Virgil cut himself off, realizing what he was saying. *Guess the morphine isn’t out of my system after all. Seriously, is this shit truth serum?*

Patton was trying to hold himself together, but was failing miserably. Thomas wasn’t faring much better than Patton. Roman was staring at the ground in anger, and Logan’s brow was furrowed at Virgil.

*You’re hurting Patton and Thomas and pissing off Roman and Logan. They hate you they fucking*
Surprisingly, it was Patton who snapped out of it first. After wiping his face and breathing deeply, he said, “I think the soup’s ready. You still feel up to eating some kiddo?”

“Yep. Sounds good.”

He tried and failed to sit up, the pain too much and his body too weak. Patton rushed over with the food in a tray. He set the tray down on the nightstand and sat next to Virgil. “Easy there amigo. Let me help you.”

Virgil felt himself getting angrier and angrier at needing help, but he held it in. He wasn’t mad at Patton, he was mad at himself for being too weak and pathetic to handle a pretty standard night with the other Dark Sides, and now, because of his uselessness, Thomas and the Light Sides were likely in danger.

*It wasn’t just the night, though, was it?*

Virgil felt nausea creep up again at the memory of his morning and “break” with Deceit. With incredible effort, he focused on Patton’s arms helping him sit up and then lean against the paternal Side. There was a fair amount of pain involved, which helped keep him in the moment. Patton’s arm, hand, and chest felt like fire, but the good kind. He knew that his “touch ache”, as he’d come to call it, would only get worse once Patton’s touch was taken away from him, but he foolishly let himself savor it. Once he was securely leaning against Patton, Patton grabbed the tray and put it over his lap. Patton moved to grab the spoon out of the bowl, but Virgil got to it first.

Virgil had to admit, it was really fucking good. The soup burned like a bitch on his wounded tongue and throat, but it was worth it. The steak pieces especially were amazing. Eventually though, the pain and nausea became too much. Virgil looked down, dismayed that he had only finished about half the bowl, and most of it had been broth.

Patton rubbed Virgil’s arm encouragingly. “It’s okay buddy! I’m just glad you were able to get some soup down. Do you think you can handle some bread or cheese and crackers?”

No, Virgil did not think he could, but he couldn’t let the caring Side down, either. He managed a slice of garlic bread and exactly one cracker and one piece of cheese before he had to tap out.

Patton grinned brightly at him. “You did great Virge! I’m so proud of you!”

Virgil gave Patton a half smile. He didn’t feel like he had done anything particularly deserving of praise, but the Light Side was putting up with him way more than he should.

“Do you want me to lay you back down or do you want to keep sitting up?”

Virgil’s ass was screaming at him, but he 1) was tired of being helpless and laying down made him feel helpless, and 2) knew he’d puke everything back up again if he laid down.

“I’ll stay up for a bit.”

“Okie-dokie!”

Roman snapped, startling Virgil, and Virgil could feel a mountain of pillows behind him.

“Thanks Princey.”
“What can I say except, you’re welcome!”
Virgil huffed out a laugh through his nose.

Logan cleared his throat and adjusted his tie.

“Virgil, I think it is time that we discuss your statement to us before you fainted after filming. Specifically, that someone or multiple someone’s are coming for us and that you failed at something?”

Virgil felt his lungs shrinking. He couldn’t get enough air. That’s a problem, right?

“I can’t.” he whispered.

Virgil heard Logan sigh next to him. “Virgil I understand… No, I don’t understand how very difficult this must be for you and I am so incredibly sorry, but I am concerned for your safety and ours, as well as Thomas’. You absolutely do not have to go into detail, but we do need to know: who did this to you? Who threatened you and us?”

Virgil could barely hear Logan over the blood rushing in his ears. It felt like his throat was closing up. Virgil knew if he told, he’d be damaged, possibly beyond repair, and the things they would do to the Light Sides…

“I can’t.” he repeated.

“Virgil.”

“I can’t!!!”

Virgil curled in on himself, hugging his arms around his torso.

“I can’t! I- I have to protect you. They’ll hurt you. I can’t let that happen. Only I deserve to be hurt. Virgil felt his throat close all the way. Virgil knew he couldn’t talk right now even if he wanted to. If he said anything, they’d hurt them. He couldn’t let the Dark Sides hurt the Light Sides. He just couldn’t.

“I- my apologies, Virgil. I am incredibly sorry to have upset you.” Virgil risked a half-second glance at Logan. He looked grief-stricken.

“Would it be easier if I asked yes and no questions and you just nodded and shook your head?”

That… that sounds like that would be awesome. I want to tell them everything, but I don’t want to, and I can’t. I want to so bad. But they still can’t know. He shook his head, his voice box paralyzed.

“Virgil, may I attempt to use some logic to help work through some of your anxious feelings right now?”

Virgil nodded quickly. If Logan could help fend off another panic attack, that would be fucking fantastic. It wasn’t unheard of for him to have back-to-back panic attacks, but he hated feeling so useless for so long as it typically wiped him out for the rest of the day and most of the next.

“Forgive me for jumping to a conclusion, but I think it may perhaps be warranted in this instance.” As frightened as he was, Virgil managed a snort at that.

“If I am figuratively putting the clues together correctly, it seems that someone has threatened to harm us if we find something out, correct?”
Virgil looked at Logan in shock. He felt chilled to the bone from the fear for Logan's safety he was feeling. He felt twin tears of relief roll down his face. Although terrified for his friends, he felt like an elephant was taken off his chest now that someone knew.

Logan nodded. “Virgil, I believe that this next statement may be more comforting for you. We… already know.” At this, Logan closed his eyes and swallowed, his voice thick. “It’s okay to tell us because by not telling us, you’re changing nothing. We already know. I believe that us knowing and not hiding the abuse from us nullifies whatever agreement you had with your abusers?”

Virgil shuddered and whimpered, but nodded.

“Alright. Virgil, do you believe you can tell us who hurt you and who’s threatening to hurt us now?”

Virgil suddenly found the quilt interesting. He closed his eyes, breathed in, opened his mouth, and… nothing came out. He frowned in frustration and hatred towards himself.

Logan seemed to understand. “Would shaking and nodding your head be okay?”

Virgil nodded furiously.

“Alright. Are the same people who hurt you the people who are threatening to harm us?”

Virgil nodded.

“You’re doing very well Virgil. Are the Sides who hurt you Neutral Sides?”

Virgil shook his head.

“How? Now we know that we can allow them into the main mindscape and to protect them as well. Were the Sides who hurt you Dark Sides?”

Virgil let loose a few more tears and nodded.

“Is it a few of the Dark Sides?”

Virgil shook his head, scared of the next question and the response from the other Sides and Thomas. Now they’ll know how fucking disgusting you are. How worthless you are. How much work you really are. Virgil began shaking.

“Is it all of the Dark Sides?”

Virgil scrunched his eyes shut and sobbed. He nodded.

He heard shocked and heartbroken sounds from around the room. Now you’ve done it. Now they all know how fucking gross you are. Holy shit, you’re in Roman’s fucking bed. How much cleaning is he going to have to do before he can sleep here again? They’re going to have to scrub the main mindscape with bleach. They’re going to kick you out and send you back to the Dark Side and then the Dark Sides will take you whenever they damn well please...

“Virgil.” Logan sounded choked up.

Virgil glanced quickly up at him. He had tears streaming down his face. Virgil looked away.

Logan’s just now realizing how tainted you’ve made the place. You should have offed yourself so long ago. Before you even met them.
“I’m sorry.” Virgil wheezed. *That’s the least they deserve. The least. Maybe I can make it up to them in other ways.*

Patton’s quaking voice broke Virgil out of his thoughts. “Virgil, sweetie, you have *nothing* to apologize for. It’s not your fault. I promise. I’m so sorry you went through so much. We’re here for you.”

Virgil’s vision began tunneling in. He knew there was nothing he could do to stop from passing out. With Thomas’, “We believe you,” the last of Virgil’s strength left him and he slipped into blissful unconsciousness.

Chapter End Notes

They finally know! And Virgil got some support! It's all looking up from here, right? ...right? 3>:D

There will actually be more comfort in the next chapter, but be aware that the angst train is still chugging along.

Also, the times where Virgil is mute is also from my own experience. He can't talk about it, but he wants to, but he can't, and so his voicebox makes the decision for him and says, "lol nope"
When Virgil awoke, it was to a hushed conversation.

“Guys, we need to be quiet, we don’t want to wake Virgil.” Thomas whispered.

“How could this happen to my sweet boy?” Patton wailed.

“I will slay the fiends!”

Okay, maybe not so hushed.

Virgil moaned as he tried to move his body, but the smallest twitch of muscle seemingly lit up every single one of his nerves and HOLY HELL.

His eyes shot open as he tried to suck in some air, which only served to remind him about his ribs. His lower half was almost blindingly painful, so much so that he was entirely unaware of the keen he let out as he closed his eyes against the pain.

“Shhhh Virgil, it’s okay. You’re safe now.”

Virgil let out a frustrated grunt.

“Morphine… please…” he grated out.

“Of course.”

Virgil felt Logan move and get the morphine. What the fuck? Why does it hurt worse?!

Logan came back over and used a small amount of the antibacterial soap on Virgil’s inner elbow. “You may feel a small pinch, but it’ll be over quickly.”

Virgil braced himself. The pinch wasn’t bad at all, he could barely feel anything over the pain.
consuming his body anyways. He distantly felt Logan applying a cotton ball to his inner elbow.

“It’s over, Virgil. For your health, I do have to ask you: is the pain worse than before you passed out on the stairs?”

“Yeah. Fuck.”

Logan continued. “Are you certain you didn’t harm yourself further when you collapsed in the bathroom?”

“Yes! Jesus Christ. I don’t know what the hell is wrong with me.”

Virgil could feel the morphine start kicking in and giving blessed relief.

“It may be due to your… treatment.”

Virgil opened his eyes at that. He turned to Logan, who looked distinctly uncomfortable.

Logan met Virgil’s eyes and straightened in his chair. “I’m sorry if I caused you additional pain Virgil. I… I had to put in 18 stitches.”

Virgil felt his eyes bug out of his head. “18?!?”

Logan looked apologetic. “Yes.”

Virgil looked down at the quilt and processed. I’ve never needed stitches before. At least I don’t think so. Virgil thought to himself.

Patton made a strange sound. When Virgil looked up to see what was wrong, he saw Patton holding his hands to his mouth.

“Did… did I say that out loud?”

By the way Patton started shaking, he assumed yes.

“Shit, sorry Pat.”

Patton whimpered. “Kiddo, you don’t have anything to be sorry about.” He paused. “Can I… would you like a hug?”

Virgil felt his skin nearly jump off his flesh in revulsion. He wanted a hug from Patton so badly, his “touch ache” was demanding it, his soul was screaming for it. However, the thought of one of the Light Sides doing something physical with him because they thought they had to, even though they didn’t actually want to, made Virgil feel like there were scorpions under his skin.

Better to make them think I don’t want contact. They won’t ask or think they have to touch me.

“N-no, I… I don’t want you to touch me.” Virgil felt like crying as he said it, but he had to. It was for the Light Sides’ benefit. He couldn’t bear to get his gross film on them.

Patton deflated. “Okay kiddo. I’m proud of you for telling me that.”

Virgil wanted to cry desperately, but he couldn’t let on that he had just lied. He could feel the pounding headache return. He swore and grabbed his head.

“Are you alright Virgil?”
Virgil grimaced at the sound. “Yeah, just a headache.”

“I apologize Virgil. That may be a side effect of the morphine. Do you have any other symptoms?”

Virgil couldn’t hold back the dry laugh that escaped him. Yeah, he had a ton of other symptoms.

“Nah, I’m good.”

“Very well. I was wondering, since you have your voice back, if you’d like to talk about… anything?”

Virgil wanted confront what Logan was tip-toeing around. You mean getting fucked, beat up, and tortured by the other Dark Sides? He held himself back, not wanting to hurt the logical Side. He also felt strangely hesitant to speak.

Ah. Shame, there it is.

Virgil shook his head. “I kinda just want to sleep.”

“Of course. Would you like space or company?” Logan asked.

Virgil opened his eyes. He could fill them filling with tears. He wanted… he wanted…

“Virge, buddy?”

At Thomas’ careful question, traitorous tears escaped his eyes. He closed his eyes in a vain attempt to stop it.

“I…” Virgil couldn’t finish his sentence. He couldn’t ask the Sides, Thomas, to sleep next to something so disgusting when they probably didn’t even want to anyway. Gods, how he wanted.

Thomas decided to take control. “Virgil, is it okay if I join you on the bed? I won’t touch you if you don’t want me to.” Virgil opened his eyes. Thomas was looking at him with so much love and patience.

You deserve someone so much better than me.

Virgil acquiesced. Thomas moved to the other side of the bed and crawled over to Virgil, laying down a few inches away from him.

Roman spoke up. “Virgil, may we… may we join you and Thomas?”

Probably to make sure he doesn’t hurt their Host.

To help ease their concerns, and to (selfish, so fucking selfish) help him feel better, Virgil agreed.

“Yeah, that’s fine.”

One by one, they crawled into the bed on the other side of Thomas. Virgil was in pain, stressed to his limit, and his emotions were in turmoil. Yet, surrounded by those he loved, he fell asleep.

///

“Listen to me you whore,” Deceit hissed.

“Yes sir.”
Virgil felt the familiar sensation of the snake moving in him.

“Did you think you could hide it from us? The fact that you went crying to the Light Sides and Thomas? Oh, you poor baby, couldn’t handle a little bit of pain? I thought sluts liked getting fucked.” Deceit taunted.

Virgil felt terror flow through him. “I didn’t tell them anything, I s-swear!”

Deceit slapped him. “Don’t lie to me whore! And how do you address me?”

Virgil sobbed. “Sir, I’m s-sorry, I didn’t tell, I-”

Deceit cut him off. “They found out, didn’t they?”

“S-sir, I’m sorry, I c-couldn’t-” Deceit punched Virgil’s nose. Virgil felt the crunch and blood began pouring out of his nose and down his throat, causing him to choke and cough.

“You were too fucking weak to handle a little punishment? You’re good for absolutely nothing, slut. Except, well, this.” Deceit gave a few pointed thrusts, causing Virgil to whimper.

Deceit smiled. “Good for nothing Side. Now, I’m sure you remember the consequences if they ever found out?”

Virgil’s eyes shot open.

“No…"

Deceit punched him again, this time cutting the inside of his cheek. Virgil had to be spitting out blood near constantly if he didn’t want to inhale any.

“Don’t you dare speak to me like that again!” Virgil whimpered. “Open your eyes, whore.”

Virgil complied. He was met with each of the Light Sides tied to a chair, watching.

Virgil turned to Deceit, begging. “Please don’t hurt them, do whatever you want to me, just don’t hurt them, please!” Deceit backhanded Virgil. “You worthless bitch! How dare you! And don’t worry, I won’t hurt them. Yet.” He smiled evilly. “But I will agree to do whatever I want to you.”

Roman was the first to speak.

“I knew you were a villain! How could you betray us like this?!”

Virgil whimpered. “I-I tried, I didn’t-”

“SHUT UP! I know what you are now.” Roman’s face twisted cruelly. “You just love bending over for the Dark Sides, don’t you, you Dark Side slut? You’ve infiltrated our ranks! How dare you plot to hurt Thomas!”

Before Virgil could respond, he was met with Patton’s defeated voice.

“He’s succeeded, kiddo. He hurt Thomas. Thomas is going to turn Dark now.” Patton said to Roman. He turned to Virgil. “I tried to make it seem like we cared. I tried so hard Virgil. How could you do this?” Patton shook his head tearfully. “I knew you were a Dark Side. You never belonged to this famIly.”

“No! Please…”
“Silence cretin.” Logan’s harsh voice cut Virgil off. “You disgust me.”

Virgil sobbed.

“Don’t worry, gentlemen. Virgil has caused you quite a bit of strife, hasn’t he?”

Sounds of acknowledgment came from the Light Sides.

“Well, this is how we relieve the stress that Virgil causes us. Why don’t we keep him in your guys’ cell when we’re not using him? He loves it.”

Virgil watched the faces of the Light Sides in horror. Initially consumed by shock, their expressions darkened as they scanned Virgil’s body.

“That sounds… acceptable.” Logan began.

“Sounds good to me!” Patton chirped.

“Lovely.” Roman drawled.

Virgil could see evidence of their lust slowly growing.

“Virgil.” Virgil tore his gaze from the Light Sides. Deceit was glaring at him.


“Yes sir?” he ventured. He heard a gasp from somewhere. He felt pain in his chest. He looked down and saw Deceit rubbing his scaled knuckles up and down his sternum, which fucking hurt a shit ton.

“Wake up, please.” Deceit sounded… tearful? Virgil looked up and saw Deceit’s manic grin staring down at him. Virgil was beyond confused. Deceit’s face wasn’t matching his voice at all. Virgil’s vision started getting fuzzy.

Can’t pass out, can’t pass out, can’t pass out...

“Virgil please! Please wake up!”

Virgil’s eyes shot open. He saw Logan above him, hands on Virgil’s shoulders. I passed out. Oh god.

Virgil could take being raped by the Dark Sides, but not by… never by…

I can’t survive this. I’m going to die oh god I’m going to die!

“NOOOOOOO!!” Virgil screamed. He pushed at Logan, who moved surprisingly easily. Virgil started backing away, but fell. Virgil looked around in shock. He was in… a bedroom? Roman’s, if the colors and decorations said anything. Roman must have changed the cell to better match what they’d be doing.

Virgil saw the Light Sides begin approaching. He backed up until he was in a corner. He was hyperventilating, letting out desperate keens on each exhale.

“No, please god don’t…”

“Don’t what Virgil?” Logan asked.
Virgil hid his head. “Please anything else, you can do anything else, just please don’t…” he swallowed thickly. They were really going to make him say it? Did they get off on that?

“Please don’t fuck me.” he whispered brokenly. “Please, anything else, I can take anything else, but not that. I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m so fucking sorry.” He began sobbing hysterically, almost screaming as the possibility of the Light Sides forcing him became more and more clear. Adrenaline was flowing through him, he had to get his skin off, it was so terrible and heavy and itchy! He started desperately scratching at his skin, trying to gouge it, peel it off.

He felt hands firmly grab his. “Virgil, stop.” came Thomas’ tearful voice.

Virgil’s head shot up. He was horrified. “No, no…” Thomas couldn’t be here! It wasn’t safe for his Host, he had to protect him! Virgil tried pulling his hands back, but Thomas held them firm. Virgil’s eyes widened in pure horror. “No…” he whispered hoarsely. Thomas would never...

Virgil looked around the room and was even more confused as his sobbing built up again. Logan had backed up until he hit the bed, watching with wide eyes, his face pale and wet, hands shaking violently in front of his mouth. Roman wasn’t doing any better, staring at Virgil, back against an armoire, crying. Virgil couldn’t see Patton, but he could hear retching. Virgil’s attention turned back to Logan, who was shakily approaching again. Virgil paused in his crying.

And then screamed.

Logan froze where he was. “T-Thomas, I think you’ll have to do it.”

*What? No!* Virgil thought frantically as he started his hysterical crying again.

Thomas sighed. “Okay, I can do it.”

Virgil’s struggles began anew, trying to break out of Thomas’ grasp. “*No! No! Please god NO!!*”

Thomas’ grip tightened as Roman came over to help hold Virgil. “I know it’s scary, but it’ll help you feel better.”

Virgil let out a shattered cry. “*No! I’m not a slut, I don’t like it, please Thomas! I don’t want this!*” He heard Thomas gasp as his grip loosened. Virgil immediately began tearing at his arms again. He felt a prickling sensation on the side of his neck, and turned just in time to see a tearful Logan pulling a syringe away.

Virgil began feeling his muscles get weaker and looser. He felt Roman’s grip on him turn into something more gentle as he was laid against a broad chest. Virgil felt his panic ebbing away even as sobs continued to come out of him. He felt more like he could breathe. His vision started lightening. Virgil didn’t realize that the world was so reddish-brown before. He faintly remembered that he would sometimes see like that during bad panic attacks. *Is that what happened to me?* Virgil asked himself. Now that his blind panic had subsided and he was reduced to the occasional hiccup, Virgil could hear heart-breaking sounds coming from around the room.

Virgil realized that what he had experienced was a nightmare. While he usually got a couple of those per night, the difference this time was that there was actually someone around. Virgil recoiled as he remembered his actions. *Well, if they didn’t hate me before, they sure do now.* He glanced at Thomas, who was also crying. *He loved me, actually loved me, and I fucked it up.*

Virgil began crying anew at that, completely hopeless and broken. He felt like his heart was being ripped out of his chest. *He hates me he hates me they all hate me now...*
“No one hates you Virgil.” Roman said from above him. Virgil looked up dazed. He drunkenly put his hand on Roman’s cheek to wipe away some of the moisture there.

“You’re crying Ro.” he drawled.

Roman managed a weak, watery chuckle at that. “As are you, my dark angel.” He became serious again. “Virgil, I… I don’t hate you. I could never hate you.”

Virgil sighed as he let his hand fall, weakly sagging against Roman, greedily drinking up the contact. “You can though. You used to hate me.”

Roman made an anguished sound from above Virgil and buried his face in Virgil’s hair.

“No, Virgil, I… I never hated you. I was selfish and too self-absorbed to notice what you did for Thomas. I didn't trust you. But I never hated you. I know there's likely nothing that can make up for how boorishly I treated you, but I'm hoping someday you'll come to see that I don't hate you.”

Virgil considered. “If you really mean you don't hate me, I guess I can believe it.” Virgil normally wouldn't accept the idea that Roman didn't hate him that easily, but whatever Logan had in that syringe made it difficult for him to think of a counter argument.

“I don't hate you. I promise.” Roman whispered into Virgil's sweaty hair.

Virgil let his eyes slide closed as he fully relaxed against Roman and smiled. "Okay."

Chapter End Notes

I decided to split the chapter. Don't worry, I'm working on the next chapter right now, and there's actually comfort in there! At least there's a little comfort right at the end, right?

Fun fact: rubbing your knuckles on someone's sternum hurts so fricking bad holy frack. It's a good way to try to rouse someone from unconsciousness. If you want, you can try it on yourself! Curl your fingers into kind of a fist and rub it on your sternum.

I also used my own experiences from waking up from nightmares and tranquilizers. With a nightmare like that, it takes a while to figure out where you are. Also, I only had a tranquilizer used on me once and they are niiiiice. The red-brown hazy vision is derealization, where the brain isn't sure what's real and what's not so you feel like you're in a dream and nothing's real. It's a trauma reaction. I've had that and I honestly prefer flashbacks to derealization. It's beyond terrifying. Luckily, it's only happened three times to me.

Summary of the italicized block: Deceit is sexually assaulting Virgil and hitting him. He taunts Virgil with the fact that Light Sides know and that they're going to be punished. Visions of the Light Sides appear to Virgil and rebuke him, with the implication that they will sexually assault him later.
Okay, sooo... I deleted an entire chapter and had to re-work a couple parts of other chapters. There was a plot point that was going to be in the story that would add some chapters and backstory to Virgil, but honestly it just felt like it was shoehorned in there. Honestly, the story is WAYYY better now without that awkward plot point and I'm so much happier without it. You know it's unnecessary when it changes exactly nothing about the rest of the story lol. As for the backstory, there are way better ways for that to come to light than what I had been planning, and I'm so much more excited to write the new stuff I have planned. I'll still have a smaller instance of that plot point and I'll point it out in the end notes when it happens so I don't spoil anything and to make this long-ass author's note makes more sense. You all deserve a better fic than what that random plot point would have provided and I'm not about to put out a sub-par fic for the sole reason of it being in my initial outline.

That particular plot bunny is still in my head and I'm positive I'll write another fic devoted entirely to that (once I write a sympathetic or morally-neutral Deceit fic because I feel slightly bad about how I'm portraying him in this lol). It might be a standalone or I might make it part of this universe. In any case, it doesn't belong in this fic right here.

Why am I telling you this? If I'm being entirely honest, I had to straight up delete 6 hours of work and I want sympathy. Q_Q I'll trade you sympathy for the comfort part of the hurt/comfort formula? ToT ToT ToT Although the story is ten times better without the plot point, it still hurts my muse's shriveled up soul.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil held onto consciousness. He felt himself get lifted and put back onto Roman’s bed. Thomas came over and brushed Virgil’s bangs out of his face.

“I don’t hate you Virgil. I love you. So much.”

Virgil couldn’t stop the whimper even if he tried. Thomas kept carding his fingers gently through Virgil’s hair.

“Virgil, I- we’d never hurt you, you know that right?”

Virgil tried speaking, but his tongue felt like a dead weight in his mouth. After a few attempts, he managed a raspy, “Ogan?”

“Yes, it’s me. None of us would ever hurt you in that way, I swear it.”

Virgil groaned. “Wha’ ‘appen’d?”

Logan sighed. “It seems you had a truly horrific nightmare. We attempted to wake you, but we had difficulty. You woke up and started hurting yourself. It seems I frightened you.” Logan’s voice broke on the last sentence. Virgil felt the mattress shift. He heard Patton whisper, “It’s okay Lo,”
along with tiny sniffles. After several moments, Logan began speaking again. “I had to inject you with a tranquilizer. I’m sorry Virgil.”

“Is okay. I was freakin’ out. Don’ usually have anyone around after nightmares.”

Virgil heard Patton make a choked sound.

“Have nightmares of this calibre occurred before?” Logan asked.

Virgil grunted an affirmative.

“How often would you say these occur?”

“Couple times a night usually. I’m pretty used to ‘em.”

Patton whimpered. Virgil heard him clear his throat. “Well, you never have to deal with those alone ever again! We’re your family and we’re gonna be here for you!”

Virgil didn’t have it in him to argue. “Okay.”

Thomas began pulling blankets up around Virgil’s shoulders. “How are you feeling?”

Virgil tried to shrug, but his body wouldn’t obey him. “I’m feelin’ better. Tranquilizer feels gooood. Kinda dizzy and floaty though”

He felt Thomas’ breath as he huffed out a laugh. “That’s good, I’m glad. Do you want me to stay bud?”

Virgil frowned, anxiety filtering in through the haze. “Wha’ time izit?”

“Almost 8 AM.”

“Nah, I’m good. Tranquilizer is helpin’.”

“Alright buddy. Call me if you need me, okay?”

“Okay.”

Virgil felt as Thomas went back into the outside world. He comfortably floated as he sensed movement around him. Virgil thought someone might be bandaging up his upper arms, but he wasn’t sure. Slowly, he came back to his senses. Virgil blearily opened his eyes to a blurry world around him. He saw a large figure lean over him and flinched involuntarily.

“I’m sorry Virgil! It is I, Prince Roman! How are you feeling?”

Realizing he probably wasn’t in immediate danger, Virgil was able to shrug this time. “Better. I guess. I’m feeling a little tired, but I think the tranquilizer is wearing off.” Virgil blinked heavily, trying to clear his vision. “Where’s everyone else?”

Roman swept his hand. “Thomas is editing, spending time in my domain really gave him a great kickstart! Logan is assisting with that and Patton is sorting through memories and emotions. We’re all working hard and Thomas is doing great!”

Virgil sighed in relief as his vision began to clear. He began to feel very nauseous, and he just knew it had to be the tranquilizer. “Hey Ro, do you think Logan can summon something for my stomach? I don’t feel good.” Virgil really didn’t want to puke on the royal’s bed.
Roman jumped up. “Of course! I shall fetch him right away.” Roman darted off.

Virgil used the quiet time to assess his situation. He was still in Roman’s room. Most of the medical equipment was gone, save for a rubbermaid of what looked like creams, gauze, and tape. His arms were definitely more heavily bandaged. When he tried to take stock of his… stab wound, he frowned. It felt as though there was something almost cottony there with something greasy? Painstakingly, he reached down and felt around. He could feel gauze. He got a bit of the greasy substance on his finger and brought it up to cautiously sniff. It had a distinct medicinal smell.

*Can never accuse Logan of being anything less than thorough.* He thought drily, though he tried to keep his mind off the fact that Logan had been down there and touched him and seen. Virgil wasn’t as bothered by the fact that Logan had touched him, more that Logan might be tainted. He couldn’t get any of Virgil’s poison on him, he *couldn’t*.

Roman and Logan came in as Virgil quickly wiped his hand on his sweatpants. Logan was holding a small, round pill in his hand.

“Here you are Virgil. This is odanestron. Allow it to dissolve on your tongue and swallow. It should start working quickly.”

Virgil nodded his thanks and did as Logan asked. There was a little bitterness to it, but it was mostly covered up by the synthetic fruity flavor.

“Thanks Logan, Roman.”

“Not a problem at all. Is there anything else you require?”

He could really use another trip to the bathroom. “Ummm…” he blushed as he looked down.

“Ah. Do you need to use the facilities Virgil?” Virgil nodded. “Very well. Is it alright if Roman helps you?”

“Yeah, that’s okay.”

Roman leaned in. “Alright, I’d like to carry you. Does that sound good?”

“Yeah.”

“Excellent! If you could, please put your hands around my neck like last time.”

Virgil did so and drank up the contact as he was carried to the bathroom by Roman. Roman had switched out of his prince uniform and was wearing a soft red Henley with black slacks and what Virgil had to assume was Italian leather shoes. Virgil’s “touch ache”, as he predicted, had come back with a vengeance. Whenever he had gotten touched accidentally by one of the other Light Sides in the past, though he soaked it up in the moment, he always had to escape to his room for several hours to hyperventilate and cry. The pain in his chest was always so unbearably worse after he was actually touched.

Roman set Virgil gingerly on the toilet seat, and Virgil was able to hold back his grimace this time.

“Do you need assistance in order to relieve yourself?” Roman asked.

Virgil shook his head. “No, I think I’ll be good until-” he paused. He didn’t want to collapse again. “-until I need to wash my hands.”
“Very well! Call me if you wanna reach me!”

“Was that a Kim Possible reference?”

Roman’s grin widened.

“Get out. I have to pee.”

“As you wish.”

Virgil groaned at the Princess Bride reference but smiled to himself. Once Virgil was done, Roman helped him wash his hands and got him back into bed. Patton and Logan were back in the bedroom. Patton sent a nervous glance Virgil’s way.

“Heya kiddo! Feeling any better?”

Virgil gave Patton a half smile. “Yeah Pat, I’m feeling better.” Virgil felt a pang of guilt. “I-I’m sorry about earlier…”

Assurances were hurriedly spouted at Virgil, but Virgil wasn’t having it.

“No, I freaked you guys out. I shouldn’t have done that. I’m really sorry.”

Logan spoke up. “Virgil, you were terrified from what I can only gather to be a truly horrific nightmare. You did nothing wrong by being frightened.”

Patton jumped in. “Yeah kiddo! We were worried, sure, but we just wanted to make sure you would be okay!”

‘Okay’ enough for Thomas to function properly.

_Shut up brain. Let me have this._

_No._

Virgil sighed. He looked back up at the other Sides. “Okay.”

Patton beamed. “Great! Do you feel up to eating something?”

“Yeah, my stomach’s feeling better.”

“I’m very glad to hear that Virgil.” Logan said, smiling genuinely.

Patton got more of the leftover steak soup ready with garlic bread, cheese, and crackers. He brought the tray back over to Virgil and they repeated the process from before, with Patton holding Virgil up. This time, Virgil was able to finish one and a half bowls of soup, along with a piece of garlic bread and several slices of cheese and crackers.

“You did so good Virgil! I’m so proud of you!”

Virgil sighed contently as he laid back. Roman had moved the pillows again so Virgil was sitting up. As Patton and Roman worked on putting everything away, Logan apologized and stated he had to return to work. Just as Virgil had waved him off and he was leaving, Virgil smelled the distinct scent of a caramel frappuccino.

“What’s up bitches?!”
Chapter End Notes

You all have stuck with me a lot of hurt, so I give you comfort and Remy!

You know you're a Remy fan when you're the author but when you finish typing that last line and re-read it, you shout "Remy!" and confuse your cat.

Also, odanestrion is a friggin' life saver! I have it for my migraine nausea and OMG it works so well!
Several things happened at once. Patton waved excitedly and shouted, “Hi Remy!”, Logan sedately said, “Salutations,”, and Roman summoned his sword.

“STAY BACK!” Roman thundered.

Virgil jumped and winced. “Dammit Princey it wasn’t him. He’s a Neutral Side, remember?”

Roman’s grip didn’t falter. “How do we know he’s not one of them in disguise?”

That gave everyone pause. Virgil spoke up. “Remy, what’s your go-to drink order?”

Remy answered without hesitation. “Quad long shot grande in a venti cup half caf salted caramel frappuccino half whole milk and half breve extra foam extra whip extra caramel drizzle and add a scoop of vanilla bean powder.”

Roman and Virgil spoke at the same time, Roman saying, “What in the great name of Disney is that?” and Virgil saying “That’s him.”

Roman lowered his sword, but didn’t sheath it. “Why are you here Remy?”

Remy rolled his eyes behind his sunglasses. “Look babes I heard Virgie had been hanging out in Roman’s room, so I figured he had either tapped that gorgeous ass of yours or he got sick. Either way, I had to see my best girl.”

Roman and Virgil both turned bright red and Roman raised his sword. Remy raised an unimpressed eyebrow. “So, which one is it?”

Virgil nearly shouted, “I’m sick! It’s that one!”

Remy began moving towards Virgil, but Roman’s raised sword stopped him. “I still don’t trust you.”

Virgil could see Remy smile his dangerous smile. *Uh-oh.*

“As much as I love me a thicc, hard jock to ride around on, I’m not here for your overly-aggressive posturing, so why don’t you go ahead and put your dick compensation back in its package? Toxic masculinity is NOT a cute look on anyone.”

Roman gaped as an offended Princey noise escaped him.

Virgil knew a bruised ego when he saw it.
“Roman it’s fine. He’s cool, I’ve known him for a long time.”

Roman was still frowning at Remy, but he sheathed his sword with one last warning glare. As Remy walked by, he ran the fingers of his right hand down Roman’s chest appreciatively. “Always good to see you babe.” he winked. Then he turned his attention to Virgil.

“Oh sugar pie! Don’t you worry, Mama Remy’s here! You want some coffee hun?”

Virgil’s stomach nearly revolted at the thought of one of Remy’s monstrosities. “I’ll be fine with iced tea, thanks.”

Remy rolled his eyes and muttered something about “boring ass basic bitch”, but summoned the requested drink. Seeing that Roman wasn’t about to murder their guest, Patton and Logan excused themselves to go work. Remy turned to Roman.

“Would you be so kind as to give us a little privacy babe?”

“No.”

Remy sighed. Virgil, sensing an argument, stepped in. “Ro, it’s fine, really. Besides, you work in your room, right? You can work while Remy and I hang out.”

Roman glanced between Remy and Virgil. Eventually, he straightened his back. “Fine. But I’m staying in here.”

“Allright.”

Roman turned to go to his desk. Virgil noticed he hadn’t vanished his sword or sheath yet. He took a drink of his iced tea and almost moaned at the soothing cold sensation.

“Mind if I sit down hun?”

Virgil looked at Remy, and then away and took another sip. “That’s fine, but you’ll have to get in on the other side. I’m, uh… not very mobile right now.”

Remy did so. He leaned over to Virgil and said in a low voice, “It looks like more than just being sick. Who did this to you?”

Virgil hung his head. “Dark Sides, and I don’t want to talk about it.”

Remy sighed. “Alright sugar, just let me know.”

“Yeah I will.”

Remy turned his coffee cup in his hand, which Virgil knew was a nervous habit.

“I know you didn’t tell me everything about the Dark Sides before you got out of there and that you didn’t tell us for a long time. And that’s okay, you don’t have to tell me! I just want you to know that Saul and I will protect you if you need to get away from the Light Sides. We’ll figure something out. I have no problem cutting a bitch.”

Virgil was surprised. Remy actually thought the Light Sides were hurting him?

Virgil shook his head. “No Remy, they’ve been way nicer than they have any need to be. They haven’t hurt me, and they definitely didn’t do this.”
Remy nodded, still worried but accepting it for now. He continued in a louder voice. “So, you haven’t gotten to take a joystick joyride on that hot piece of ass yet?” Roman and Virgil choked while Remy chortled.

“Sorry babes it’s just too easy!”

“Remy!”

“I know, I know, I just love getting my favorite little bean all flustered! I’m heading back to my boo anyways. Let me know if you need anything, ‘kay Virge?”

Virgil looked at Remy. “I will Rem.”

Remy smiled. “Good. I’m off like a top at Pride!”

And just like that, he was gone.

Roman turned in his chair to appraise Virgil. “Are you alright?”

Virgil rolled his eyes. “Yeah Princey I’m fine.”

Roman nodded. “I just wanted to make sure. I don’t want those Dark Sides to fool us. I swore to myself that I won’t let any more harm befall you.”

At Roman’s concerned and mournful look, Virgil softened. “I know Princey.” He laid back and closed his eyes. Don’t make promises you can’t keep. He thought to himself. He heard Roman get back to work as he fell asleep.

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Roman looked back at Virgil, who seemed to be sleeping peacefully. He hoped that it would stay that way and that Virgil wouldn’t have any more nightmares. Roman could fight enemies with his hands and his sword, but dreams and fears are often incorporeal, no more vulnerable to a sword than a spirit. Roman sighed. The things Virgil had been forced to endure were unimaginable, and Roman hadn’t had the slightest inkling that anything was amiss until yesterday.

Roman cringed. Looking back, he wanted an enemy to fight, to punish, and he may have taken it out on Remy. He may owe Remy an apology. He wasn’t the one who hurt Virgil.

Roman felt himself burning up in rage. Those Dark Sides would pay for what they did to Virgil! He wanted to run each of them through with his sword oh so badly, but knew that the effect on Thomas could be severe. He growled. If it wouldn’t have hurt Thomas, Roman would have already killed the Dark Sides for hurting Virgil.

He was brought back to the memory of Virgil’s nightmare. Virgil had started twitching in his sleep. It was cute until they noticed the furrowed brow. Virgil started whimpering after that, and then full on crying, begging someone to not hurt others. Logan had tried to wake Virgil up by calling his name, then pressing his knuckles on Virgil’s sternum. After a few moments, it seemed to work, but Virgil was terrified. He found the strength to push Logan away and fall off the bed. His crying, his screaming, the way he tore at his own skin like it was made of poison… Roman was sure he’d never be able to close his eyes without hearing those heart-wrenching sounds ever again. The way he had begged them not to… not to violate him, like he thought they wanted to… Roman felt sick. He would kill the Dark Sides so many times over if he could, and it would never be enough.

Roman snapped back to work when he realized Thomas was hitting a creative block due to his
wandering thoughts. He did a few of Virgil’s breathing exercises (*holy cannoli they work really quite well!*) and refocused on helping Thomas edit.

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Patton was running between stations, helping push the right memories forward so Thomas could remember which shot would be best for which scene, keeping his emotions under control and balanced, making sure Thomas wasn’t neglecting his needs. He was exhausted, and not just from running around for the past 6 hours.

Patton trembled. It was so hard to be feeling Thomas’ emotions and some of the other Sides’ emotions and his own big feelings on any given day and dealing with issues of morality, but the last 36 hours had been... well, it had been hell, pardon the language. Patton felt as though he had been sprinting for a week straight and hadn’t slept or eaten at all during that time. He wanted so badly to help his little bat-winged cherub, but this was so out of his depth. Thomas had a few friends who had been- Patton winced. He could hardly bear to even think the words, it made him so heartsick! Several of Thomas’ friends had been sexually assaulted, and Thomas was so amazing at being a supportive friend. But it was so much harder when it was one of your kiddos!

Patton tried his best, he really did, but he started getting losing control of his emotions. Even as he hurried between stations, tears were flowing freely from his eyes. The way Virgil had looked, the way he sounded, the things he *said* after his nightmare…

Patton fell to the ground, unable to hold in the emotions any longer. He lay there and sobbed into his hands, getting them messy with tears and snot. Where had he gone wrong that his sweet child thought that Patton would *force* and *hurt* him?! Patton felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up, ashamed he couldn’t keep a better handle on his emotions. He saw Logan’s inquisitive eyes looking down at him.


“Darling, you have nothing to be sorry for. It has been a trying time for all of us, and you’ve done so well at keeping Thomas balanced while struggling with your own feelings. You’re truly amazing my dear.”

Patton started crying harder, which made Logan pull him into a hug. Patton held onto Logan for dear life as he cried out all of his sorrow. After a good 20 minutes of crying, Patton’s sobs petered out. Logan pulled back and conjured a handkerchief to start cleaning Patton’s face. When he was mostly done, Patton took the handkerchief and blew his nose. Logan kissed Patton’s forehead chastely.

“You’ve worked so hard. Let us get you to bed, hmm?” Logan asked.

Patton nodded. Logan lifted him up with some difficulty and laid him down on the unmade bed. Logan caressed Patton’s face. “Rest well my heart.” And kissed him.

Patton kissed back tiredly. He smiled. “Thanks Logie Bear.”

“Of course. Please don’t call me that.”

Patton giggled and nestled into his bed.

Logan turned off the light as he left Patton’s room. He headed to Roman’s room, intending to tell him that Thomas was too traumatized today to continue editing. However, as he neared Roman’s room, could hear voices coming from the commons that he couldn’t immediately place. Logan had
a jolt of fear that they may be Dark Sides. He quietly moved to the landing to try to eavesdrop and figure out who the Sides were, feeling very much like Sherlock Holmes.

“You didn’t see him! He had bandages all over his body! I could see it even through that oversized hoodie he insists on wearing! I could barely stay in there a few minutes without wanting to cry all over my gloomy baby!”

“Rem, I’m sure that if Virgil was in trouble or needed our help, he’d tell us.”

*Lust and Sleep are here. They seem to be talking about Virgil. Interesting.*

“But what if he won’t?!”

“We need to trust Virgil. If we don’t, we’ll be constantly worrying about whether or not he’s keeping something from us.”

“You know how he was when he was with the Dark Sides! Before the Light Sides accepted him, remember?!”

A sigh.

“If we go down that road, we’ll run ourselves into the ground. If he is being hurt, we’ll just have to wait for Virgil to give us a signal. That’s all we can do. There’s only two of us.”

“I know Saul. I just hate being so helpless!”

“It’s okay Rem. Let’s go back and distract ourselves, hm?”

“Not with sex, I don’t feel like it tonight. Sorry.”

“Fine by me bae. Alcohol, nail polish, and trashy movies?”

“Yaaasss.”

Logan sensed them sink out. He continued on to Roman’s room. Roman was pacing by the foot of his bed, Virgil asleep in it.

“Roman.” Roman acknowledged him with a grunt. “I have come to inform you that Thomas is too emotionally traumatized to continue editing today.”

Roman looked up at that. “How is Patton?”

Logan’s face fell. “He’s exhausted and overwhelmed. I put him to sleep.”

Roman nodded. “Good. I could tell Thomas’ thoughts were heading down the direction of what happened to Virgil, and since we can only imagine what might have happened I decided to step away. Should I have done that?” Roman’s speech was getting faster and faster the longer he spoke.

“You did well Roman. That was a good decision.” Roman deflated, letting all of the air in his lungs out in one whoosh. Logan looked at the smaller Side on the bed.

“How is Virgil?”

Roman’s eyes dimmed. He followed Logan’s gaze. “About as well as we could hope for I suppose.”
Logan nodded. “Good. Healing from... something like what Virgil went through is a long process. It’s not going to occur overnight.” He tore his eyes away from Virgil. “I believe that it is a good idea to stay with him, to ensure he isn’t alone.”

Roman looked at Logan. “Do you think the Dark Sides will try something? I thought the mindscape was locked.”

Logan sighed through his nose. “There is always that concern. I don’t believe that we should put anything past the Dark Sides. They may very well be able to circumvent the walls that were put up to keep them out. However, I am more immediately concerned by Virgil’s probable self-harm injuries.”

Roman flinched. “Do you think he would try to hurt himself?”

Logan nodded gravely. “Yes. Evidence points to doing so in the past, and several of his injuries were recent. In addition, his instinctive method of coping after a” Logan shuddered “horrendous nightmare was to scratch himself, which indicates that his brain has learned to associate self-harm with soothing endorphins. With everything he has gone through, and the fact that he is safe enough to begin healing and processing, I would be very surprised if he didn’t self-harm.”

Roman bit his lip to keep from crying. He had to stay strong for his loves, but hearing all of this and remembering what Virgil had been through felt like rope was being tied around his chest and slowly tightened. He hated to ask, but, “Do you think Virgil will try to kill himself?”

Logan looked up and saw the troubled look on his prince. He furrowed his brow and placed a hand on Roman’s shoulder. “While self-harm is not always demonstrative of suicidal ideation, I believe that with the extreme trauma Virgil has suffered, we need to be prepared.”

A choked cry escaped Roman at that. Logan used the hand already on the royal’s shoulder to pull Roman towards him. Roman held on to Logan and bawled. Logan held on just as tightly, rubbing Roman’s back in what he hoped was a soothing manner, quiet tears escaping him. They held onto each other, like two castaways in the open ocean.

Once their tears slowed down, they pulled back from each other.

“Come Roman. Let us rest. Perhaps after some rest Thomas will feel well enough to continue editing.”

Roman nodded mutely. He went over to the bed, pulling Logan behind him. Once they were there, they curled up next to Virgil, Logan’s head on Roman’s chest and Roman having wrapped protective arms around him.

Chapter End Notes

Is angsty fluff a thing? Cuz I feel like that’s what I just did.

I also wanted to clarify that the reason Remy told Lust that he didn't want sex was twofold: 1) Lust’s main distraction strategy is sex, and 2) if Lust gets excited it tends to affect Thomas, and since Remy wasn't feeling up to it that night he didn't want Thomas to be, ahem, frustrated.
Finally, I headcannon that Remy is a minor chaos deity that has taken up residence inside Thomas' head.
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Hey y'all! The only thing I have in the beginning's author note is this: with the online store closing sale as Thomas Sanders and Co are switching distributors, should I go in and buy the Logan’s Berry jam? I haven't yet because I'm poor and cheap, but Thomas said that a lot of the stuff in the current store wouldn't come back and I don't want to miss my opportunity. Do you think that they'll stop selling Logan's Berry with the new store switchover? It sounds so good!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Virgil woke up. He felt nauseous and had a headache. Damn, is this what waking up after sleeping normally is like? I'll pass, thanks.

Turning his head to the side, Virgil saw Logan and Roman curled up next to each other, cuddling and asleep. His body was screaming at him to go join them, to be wrapped up in them, the compulsion like lava under his skin that would only be cooled with touch. Virgil noticed red eyelids and tear tracks down their faces. He closed his eyes against the sight, aggrieved at the knowledge of having caused the two Sides even more pain.

It’s all my fault.

Virgil felt a stabbing sensation in his chest that he knew wasn’t due to broken ribs. He could hear Roman and Logan breathing deeply next to him, obviously deep in sleep.

Look at how you exhaust them. And Thomas has so much work to do! You’re hurting and draining the Light Sides of all their energy and destroying Thomas’ career. You’re worse than worthless.

Virgil decided then and there that he won’t have the Light Sides help him anymore. They had enough to deal with, especially with him around, and he wasn’t going to add to their workload. With great effort, he pushed himself into a sitting position. He could tell the morphine had worn off by the pain he felt as he was sitting. Virgil sat there for a few minutes while he waited for the lightheadedness from the shift in position to subside. He turned to the side of the bed and carefully, carefully, stood up with the support of the bed. He could feel his legs want to give out, but he concentrated on flexing his muscles to stay upright. Virgil slowly, heavily limped to the bathroom but collapsed by the sink. He bit his wrist to muffle the cries of pain. After gathering himself for a few minutes, he grabbed the edge of the sink to shakily lift himself up. Breathing heavily, he used the wall to support himself as he went to the bathroom.

While he was washing his hands, Virgil saw several bottles he hadn’t noticed before on the sink. Upon inspection, they were bruise cream and antibiotic cream. Virgil cringed, knowing that he had put poor Logan through taking care of him and his injuries. Virgil figured it was probably time to change his bandages. He grabbed a wad of toilet paper, wet it a little under the faucet, and went about removing the gauze from the scabs. Once he had flushed the used gauze down the toilet and sent a silent apology to the plumbing system, he applied the bruise cream wherever he could reach. He winced and sucked in air when he went over some of his more tender injuries.

Virgil hesitated, knowing he left the worst part for last. Steeling himself, he grabbed the antibiotic
cream and applied a hefty amount to his fingers. Virgil’s ass was still protesting from his removal of the gauze, but Virgil knew that this was his best chance at healing faster so he could get out of the Light Sides’ hair. Virgil felt he started out strong as he worked on some of the more external injuries, but by the time he got to his internal injuries he was close to hyperventilating. Deciding he had done good enough, he folded up a wad of toilet paper, smeared some more antibiotic ointment on it, and placed it as carefully as he could.

Virgil pulled his boxers and sweatpants back up and sat on the toilet for several long minutes, breathing through the pain. Once the worst of it had died down and he didn't feel like passing out anymore, he used the wall to support himself back to the sink. He washed his hands and the sides of the bottles. He was exhausted from going back and forth between the toilet and sink, but he knew that if he could make it back to the bed he might be able to convince the Light Sides that he didn’t need as much help.

Giving himself a small mental pep talk in the mirror, Virgil began the long journey back to the bed. He made it into the bedroom, but had to sit on an armchair by the window before his legs gave out completely. He felt tears of frustration building up behind his eyelids but refused to let them out. Virgil looked out the window and saw what Roman must see when he looked out of his castle in the Imagination.

Damn that’s beautiful. He thought to himself.

Virgil decided that he had stared enough at the ceiling and wanted a change of scenery. Although his stab wound in particular was screaming, he was getting used to the pain. After a while, the pain became a constant, like white noise. He watched birds fly by, clouds move slowly across the heavens, and tiny moving dots in a nearby village that must be people. Virgil felt he could watch the stunning imagery all day. Of course, that’s when his stomach decided to sing the song of its people.

Virgil grimaced, hating that his peace had been broken. He looked over at the minifridge and microwave, which were thankfully close together, and tried to calculate the distance.

Okay, I can make it. It's just 10 feet to the chairs by the fireplace, and another five to food.

Popping his back, he stood up and held onto the arm of the chair while the immediate, sharp pain lessened and the dizziness passed. Once he felt he wasn’t about to pass out, he limped to the chairs by the fireplace. Virgil didn’t think he needed to sit down, but he didn’t want to risk it. After he felt some strength return to him, he made his way to the minifridge. He tried bending down, and NOPE NOPE NOT HAPPENING he screamed internally.

After swallowing his dry heaves and debating with himself, he decided to kneel next to the fridge. He prayed it was stable enough to support him standing back up. He withdrew some cheese and a bowl of soup, and grabbed some crackers that were on top of the fridge. Thankfully, the microwave was only a few steps away on the top of a small wooden dresser. He heaved himself up, thanking any deities that may or may not exist that the mini fridge didn’t topple over, and carefully balanced his bowl of soup. Once the microwave was done, he placed his cheese, soup, and crackers on a tray and very carefully limped over to the chair by the window. He set the tray down on a small table and sat in the overstuffed armchair. He breathed a sigh of relief, glad he was able to get food for himself. After relaxing for a few minutes, he ate his food leisurely, watching the scene outside the window.

Virgil heard footsteps coming towards Roman’s room as Patton came in. When Patton saw him, Virgil could see the inhale Patton took before one of his squeals. He quickly put a finger to his lips and pointed to where Logan and Roman were sleeping on the bed. Patton forcefully closed his
mouth and nodded. He came over to where Virgil was sitting.

“Oh Virgil! I’m so happy to see you’re up! And did you get yourself food?! I’m so proud of you!” Patton whispered excitedly.

Patton’s happy energy was contagious and despite the white noise of pain, Virgil felt a half-smile on his face. “Yeah, I guess I did.” He ducked his head shyly and snorted.

“Well I’m proud of you kiddo.” Patton lifted a hand and paused. “Virge, is it okay if I touch you?”

Virgil sunk into himself. His ache was coming back, and he wanted Patton’s touch so badly, **desperate tears didn’t see you there**, but he couldn’t do that to the other Side.

“Not right now Pat. Sorry.”

Patton’s smile became sadder, but he nodded. “Thank you for telling me Virgil. I know that’s not easy. I’m about to make some tea! Do you want some?”

Virgil did his best to smile. “Yeah, that sounds good.”

Patton beamed and went about fixing them both cups of tea. Virgil leaned back in the armchair and went back to looking out the window. He looked up and gave an appreciative smile to Patton when he came over with the tea. Virgil grabbed his tea and gazed out the window.

“It sure is something, isn’t it?” came Patton’s soft question.

Virgil hummed in response.

Patton continued, speaking quietly so as to not wake the others. “Roman made it as a window to the Imagination. It helps him keep an eye on the people and characters there, as well as Thomas’ dreams. Roman had had issues in the past where some of his characters would start taking over and giving Thomas nightmares, and Roman wasn’t even aware until morning. It was quite the imaginative solution, don’t you think?”

Virgil snorted and smiled.

“The rest of us need to be careful. Roman said that we can get lost staring out the windows. Heck, I was watching the Imagination for 3 hours once before Roman found me! Poor Thomas.”

Virgil smiled serenely at Patton’s story. He tore his eyes off the window and looked at Patton. Patton was watching Virgil with a small smile. Patton took a deep breath.

“So how are you feeling Virgil?”

Virgil pursed his lips and looked down. He wanted to be independent, but he knew he couldn’t lie and potentially summon Deceit. He shuddered at the thought.

“I’m doing fine. Getting better I think.” Virgil said softly, mindful of the exhausted Sides in the bed.

“Oh good! I’m glad you’re feeling better! Do you need anything? You know you can just ask, right? I love taking care of my kiddos!”

Virgil could sense Patton was about to start gushing (how did he manage to sound so excited while whispering? God he’s adorable), so he cut him off. “I’m good Pat. If I need something I’ll let you know.”
Patton smiled at Virgil, not quite believing him but not wanting to push the issue either. “Well then, mind if I clear away these dishes?”

“Knock yourself out.”

Patton busied himself with clearing out the dishes and bringing them downstairs to be washed. Virgil glanced back at the Imagination. He understood how a Side unused to its effects could get lost in it for hours. He chose to look at Roman and Logan instead. He craved the contact the other three had. But he knew it was better to abstain from touch entirely. He could already feel the hurricane building inside of him, the one that lashed out when it got a taste of touch and didn’t get its fill. Virgil was thinking of ways to let the other Sides leave him alone in his room so they wouldn’t have to see his meltdown. Touch was like a drug, and the more of the drug he got the worse the detox was.

Patton re-entered the room. “Alrighty Virge! Got all that taken care of! Do you need anything?”

“No, I’m good. Kinda bored honestly.”

“We can watch movies! Or color! Oooooo do you want to help me make cookies? If you don’t wanna do that we can read! Or look at YouTube videos!”

“Might want to let him answer padre.”

Virgil nearly jumped out of his skin at the sound of Roman’s sleepy rumble. His eyes shot to the duo on the bed to find them both awake and staring at Virgil. He had completely forgotten about them while staring out the window and speaking with Patton. Whoops.

*Good job. You woke them up while they were trying to recover from you. You really are a selfish, greedy leech, aren’t you?*

“Sorry guys.” Virgil muttered.

“Don’t worry ‘bout it.” Roman stretched and cracked his back. Virgil winced in sympathy at hearing the pops.

Virgil was panicking. He needed to get back to his room, but that clearly wasn’t going to happen any time soon. He scanned his brain for what he used daily in place of touch, like when he would see one of the Sides get a hug and the touch ache acutely became a storm.

“Hey Roman, I’m garbage at conjuring stuff. Would it be alright if you summoned a heated blanket? You don’t have to, don’t do it if you don’t want to or are tired, but-”

“Of course! It is no trouble at all!”

Virgil was silently grateful for Roman cutting him off. He was starting to ramble and spiral. Sure enough, a few moments later, a heated blanket appeared on his lap.

“Thanks Princey.” Now he might be able to survive until he could get back to his room.

“My pleasure! I *did* hear some mention of movies? Of the Disney variety perhaps? We could get hot chocolate and popcorn and candy and I can set up a projector with blankets and fairy lights!” Roman said, excitement shining in his eyes.

Virgil rolled his eyes fondly. “Patton mentioned movies as an option. Doesn’t mean we’re going to be watching Disney.”
They ended up watching Disney.

Chapter End Notes

What's this? I gave you more fluff and a quiet moment with Patton and Virgil, all with fairly minimal angst! Has my muse relented?

*hears evil laughter echoing off the walls*

Me: Who's that?

My muse: 3>:)

*dun... duuuh-dun... dun... duuuh-dun...*

The reason Virgil feels awful after waking up is because with chronic and severe sleep deprivation, I know firsthand that the first couple weeks of somewhat real sleep makes you feel like a raging dumpster fire. Your body just doesn't know what to do with the different chemical and hormone fluctuations that the sleep cycle generates so it kinda freaks the fuck out.

Also, one way to get gauze loose from an injury that it's attached to by scab is to use purified water and soften the parts of the scab holding on to the gauze.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Hey y'all! After this chapter, the next update(s) will be up on Sunday. I'm hanging out with my sister tonight and working on front-loading a bunch of chapters tomorrow so I can keep up a good pace for y'all.

Enjoy!

Edit: There is a description of Virgil using cutting as self-harm when he goes back into his bedroom the first time, which ends at "Virgil stopped and cringed.", so feel free to skip that if you need to!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next week passed in a similar fashion. Virgil was slowly gaining strength and independence back while the Light Sides kept doting on him, making sure he had everything he needed. He had nightmares every night and several panic attacks per day, but they were nowhere near as bad as the first day and he could usually hide them from the other Sides. Thomas would pop in usually about once a day and watch a movie with Virgil, and Remy would come in around 2 to gossip and paint Virgil’s nails. Virgil was forever grateful for the accelerated healing process Sides had. He couldn’t imagine how long it would take a normal human to heal from his injuries. He was still in a fair amount of pain, but it was less pain than he can remember having for the longest time. Virgil clung to his heated blanket like a lifeline, and he noticed the other Light Sides always asked before touching him. He always said no, and they did their best to respect that. They had to touch him a few times to care for the wounds on his back.

*Making sure I can heal fast enough to get out of their hair as quickly as possible so they can stop pretending all the time.*

Logan came into Roman’s room one week after Virgil had collapsed, wearing a very neutral expression on his face.

*He’s going to tell me I’ve been to much work they’ll banish me back to the Dark Side he hates me they all hate me the Dark Sides are gonna hurt me-*

“Virgil, do you remember when I told you about your stitches?”

*Oh. Okay then.*

“Uh, yeah?” Virgil asked, his voice slightly rough from trying to hold back tears post-panic.

Logan nodded. “Due to the location of your injuries, it was not safe for me to use dissolvable stitches. I do need to remove them.” And he waited for Virgil’s response.

Virgil was mortified. Logan didn’t deserve to have to do that.

“Logan, I…” Virgil had no idea what to say.

“Virgil, I do not mind. Yes, it pains me to see your injuries. However, it does... increase my
dopamine levels to care for you. Removing stitches should be painless. However, I can imagine that the process could be quite distressing for you. Therefore, I would like to suggest that I can either remove your stitches while you’re conscious or while you’re sedated. Is there one that you’d prefer?”

“Sedated.” Came Virgil’s immediate reply.

Logan nodded like he had expected the response. “Very well. I will set everything up and then use the tranquilizer on you that I had before since you seemed to have a positive reaction to it. Is that satisfactory?”

Virgil winced at the memory, then nodded. “That sounds good.”

“Good. I shall begin preparations now.”

Logan stood up to go retrieve whatever equipment it was he needed, and Virgil laid back and focused on his breathing exercises. He could now breathe deeply with pain only when his lungs were half full. A few minutes later and far too soon for Virgil, Logan returned with a syringe.

“Alright Virgil, try to think of a memory that makes you happy. When you’re fully sedated, the emotion you go under with is the one you wake up with.”

Virgil closed his eyes and thought. It was difficult to find an interaction that wasn’t at least bittersweet, but he eventually landed on something: his name. When he told the Light Sides and Thomas his name, he felt so accepted and elated at the time. Smiling, Virgil nodded. He felt a prick in his arm, then his muscles began feeling heavier and heavier. Although Virgil was scared by the sensations, he held fast to his memory until his thoughts were no more.

///// 

Virgil woke up with minimal mortification and did his best to steer his thoughts away from what he had put Logan through whenever they’d pop up.

The following day, when he had mostly recovered from his sedation, Patton came in to check on him and eat lunch together. Even though Roman was staying in the room most of the time, he and Logan had gone down for lunch.

“Heya kiddo! How are you feeling today?”

Virgil smiled. “Mostly healed.” he answered honestly.

Patton grinned widely. “Yay!! That’s awesome! What do you want to do today?”

It’s now or never, Virgil thought to himself. “Actually Pat, I’m thinking of moving back into my room. Get out of your guys’ hair and all that.”

Patton pouted. “Virge, we really don’t mind having you around. We actually love it!”

“What our Wholly Wholesome Father said.”

Virgil turned to look at the doorway. Both Roman and Logan were standing there. Virgil cursed inwardly; now his job was going to be that much harder. Time to change horses midstream.

“Yeah, well, I uh need some personal space. Alone time and all that.”

Logan frowned and Roman and Patton stiffened. Uh oh, Virgil thought to himself.
Surprisingly, it was Roman who spoke first. “Virge, I think it’s time we talk about some of your other injuries.”

Virgil balked. There was no way he was going to talk to the Light Sides about the Dark Sides’ abuse. “I’d rather not.”

Patton stepped in. “Virge, we love you, you know that right?”

Virgil replied automatically, “Yeah, of course.” He didn’t believe it, but he wasn’t about to say so.

Patton frowned, seeming to catch onto the lie but not calling Virgil on it. “Kiddo, one of the types of injuries you had looked like self-harm.”

Virgil felt his blood turn to ice. He had hoped the other Sides hadn’t noticed. When everything became too much during the past week, he had excused himself to the bathroom and scratched. It wasn’t as good as a razor, but it worked.

Patton continued. “We’re worried about you. We don’t want you hurting yourself.”

“I’m not going to.” Virgil shot back. Patton flinched and Virgil hated himself a little more.

Logan piped up. “We would like to search your room for self-harm supplies before you return back to it. We can’t-” Logan cut himself off, suddenly overcome by emotion.

Virgil thought back to the dismantled razor that was still gathering rust in his shower. “Go ahead then I guess. Doesn’t really seem like I have a choice.” He leaned back and crossed his arms, feeling angry and defensive. The Light Sides flinched as though physically struck, but silently filed out of Roman’s room. Virgil forced himself to keep a straight face until they were gone. Then, he allowed himself silent tears and cries. An indeterminate amount of time later, they came back. Logan’s face was neutral, Roman looked angry, and Patton had obviously just stopped crying.

Logan spoke for them. “You may return to your room now if you wish.”

“I do wish.” Virgil stood up and moved past the other Sides, not looking at them as he made a beeline for his room. Once there, he closed the door, locked it, and looked around. He could tell the Light Sides had been in his room and tried to put everything back the way it was, but he saw things out of place. Virgil looked at the floor and the bed, years of memories threatening to take control.

At least now I can finally do it.

Virgil reached under his bed, pulled up a square of carpet, and grabbed an envelope with razors in it. He took out one of the razors and examined it, appreciating the shine and the sharp edge. He could barely wait. Virgil quickly put the envelope back.

Virgil went into his bathroom, closed and locked the door, and took his shirt off. He decided to use his upper arm so he could wear t-shirts around the other Sides and make it look like he was fine.

At least I don’t have to hide other injuries.

Virgil began with a slow cut, then sped up as his anger and pain boiled over.

This is the one thing that fucking works! I need this! How dare you try to take it away from me!

You want touch? Here’s some touch for ya!
No, no, stay back stay back! I don’t want-

Get it off get it off get it off get it OFF!!

Virgil stopped and cringed. He had done way more than he had intended, but he supposed that he had a lot of time to make up for. Despite his lack of access to proper sharps, he felt somewhat safe, especially after he learned what Thomas and Patton had done. Surely the Dark Sides couldn’t get through those walls. Virgil went over to his medicine cabinet and found that the Light Sides had taken his bandaids as well. Clever.

Virgil took one of his washcloths and ran it under hot water. He hissed but relished the burn as he applied it to his cuts. His skin itch and touche ache had evaporated and he felt more even-keeled. After drying himself off, he took toilet paper and folded it into a square that covered most of the cuts. He took more toilet paper and wrapped it securely around the square. Finally, he went to his desk and secured it with scotch tape.

Throwing his shirt and hoodie back on and unlocking his door, he fell onto the bed and started scrolling through Tumblr. He started feeling a little more normal. The pain in his arm helped to ground him as he fought the memories. He realized with a start what was out of place.

My bed is made. And yep, those are clean sheets. Shit.

No wonder Patton had looked awful. And no wonder Roman had been pissed.

You made his sweet boyfriend cry because you were too weak. Of course he hates you. Logan and Roman both probably hate you. Logan’s face wasn’t neutral because he was upset that you’re a cutter. It’s because you hurt his boyfriend. And you were rude as hell.

Despite his best intentions, Virgil felt tears coming on. It had been so nice to have the Light Sides pretend to care so much about him, but he couldn’t lie to himself anymore now that he was out of their care. I do have to admire their patience and tenacity. They’ve always been too good for me.

Virgil drew his knees to his chest, buried his face in his knees, and cried.

///// The rest of the day passed in silence for the Sides. Roman, Logan, Patton, and Virgil went about their work, trying to help Thomas get caught up. He wasn’t terribly far behind, but they wanted to keep as little stress on their Host as possible. As Thomas ordered pizza and called his friends over for a movie night, Patton took a break and decided to make supper. Once supper was done, he knocked on Roman and Logan’s doors and let them know that dinner was ready.

Patton hesitated at Virgil’s door. He knew that Virgil was upset about them taking away his self-harm supplies (there were so many, oh god Virgil how much have you been suffering?), so he wasn’t sure how well he’d be received. He also wasn’t sure if Virgil would be sleeping or not, as he had been sleeping quite a bit the entire week. Roman had snapped his old sheets out of existence once they had seen the huge patch of darkened fabric (My poor baby!!) and gave him new sheets, as well as a new mattress once they had seen the many different types and ages of stains on it. Roman had been furious with himself, convinced he had been the cause of some of Virgil’s cuts and that he should have noticed something was wrong sooner. They were all mad at themselves.

Patton worked up the courage to knock. “Virge?” he called.

“Come in.” Came the reply. Patton slowly opened the door into Virgil’s room. The spiderwebs still gave him the heebie-jeebies, but he did his best to hide his discomfort. Patton was relieved to see
Virgil in his usual spot, on his phone leaning against his headboard.

“Do you feel like coming down to supper?”

Virgil looked at him. Were Virgil’s eyes red? Before he could analyze it any longer, Virgil replied, “Yeah, I’ll be down in a minute. Thanks Pat.” Virgil sent a half-smile Patton’s way. As upset as Patton was, he felt his heart soar and he beamed.

“Great! See ya in a bit!”

Patton practically floated downstairs. Upon seeing their boyfriend so happy, Roman and Logan asked what had happened.

“Virgil’s coming down for dinner!” Patton chirped.

Roman and Logan smiled. After a few minutes, Virgil came downstairs with freshly-applied eyeshadow. As Patton went about serving everyone their shrimp carbonara, Virgil spoke up.

“I’m sorry for being rude this morning.”

Everyone at the table looked surprised. Patton, of course, replied first.

“Awww, look at my kiddos being all responsible! You guys make me so proud!”

Logan cleared his throat. “Indeed, there may have been a better way for us to handle that differently.”

Patton glowed with pride. “Awww, look at my kiddos being all responsible! You guys make me so proud!”

Virgil flushed. “Wh-whatever.”

The rest of the dinner passed as it would have prior to Virgil’s collapse and the other Sides’ discovery of Virgil’s trauma. When dinner had nearly ended, Logan decided to risk a question.

“Virgil, you seem to be doing quite well.”

He could tell Virgil was surprised by the statement.

“Uh, yeah I guess so.”

Logan adjusted his necktie and his glasses.

“Roman and I have been talking, and we were wondering if you might be open to visiting with Dr. Emile Picani at some point in the future?”

Logan saw Virgil pale. “Um, I don’t know, I-I guess so?”

“Wonderful. There is no rush. Whenever you feel comfortable speaking with him. Just let Roman know when, and he’ll open a path to Emile’s office in the Imagination for you to use as you wish.”

Virgil nodded and hid his eyes behind his bangs. “Yeah, okay, cool.”

Logan nodded to himself, satisfied. He knew that Virgil may need some time before he saw Emile, but he trusted that Emile could greatly help Virgil heal. With that, they went back to their respective rooms to help Thomas through his night with his friends.
Virgil escaped upstairs once he had helped Patton with the dishes. The thought of talking to someone about his problems and his past with the Dark Sides was terrifying. He shivered and pulled his hoodie more tightly around him, fighting back memories that wanted to come to the surface. Virgil could still see Deceit towering over him, he could feel his chubby toddler legs quaking in the presence of someone who had hurt him for as long as he could remember. He started feeling like a scared little kid all over again.

No, no, now is SO not the time.

Virgil made it to his room and nearly hit the ceiling when the music that he had accidentally left on suddenly hit his ears.

Wha- why didn’t I hear that outside my door?

Virgil heard his door slam shut behind him. He froze as his own hand slapped over his mouth against his will.

“Did you miss us darling?”

Chapter End Notes

Oh wow, it's almost as though I intentionally chose this chapter to be the last chapter until Sunday. I wonder why I would choose this chapter?

3>:D
Greetings fellow citizens! I hail to you from my broken laptop in my family's bathroom! I didn't want y'all to have to wait until late this evening.

This chapter does begin with sexual assault. My asshole lovely foster birds decided to escape their cage and pluck several keys off my keyboard, including the tilde key. Instead of having a line of tildes mark where the sexual assault scene ends, look for the paragraph beginning with: "Virgil jumped at the loud crash."

Edit: thank you to Lop90804 for alerting me that my content warning wasn't clear and helping me fix it!

Virgil was paralyzed with fear. The only movement his body seemed capable of making was a constant, violent shiver and hitched breaths. He heard several pairs of feet move forward and breath ghosting across his ear.

"We certainly missed you."

Virgil felt a particularly violent shudder go through him. How did they get in how did they get through the walls how did-"I’m sure you’re wondering how we got back to our favorite little slut."

Virgil nearly puked at the sentence but forced himself to nod. Keep him talking, figure out what happened, buy some time.

“Stupid whore. I’m definitely telling you. Now you’re quite exhausted, aren’t you? It’s after dinner after all. No one will even come looking for you until the morning and by then it’ll be too late for any pathetic rescue attempts. Not like they’ll actually try. I’m sure they’re not tired of you at all.”

Virgil whimpered. He knew they were sick of him, but did Deceit have to rub it in like that?

“You’ve got a lot to make up for if you don’t want us to go after your precious Light Sides. Unless you want us to go after them? Show them what you’ve gone through to keep them safe?” Virgil shook his head. “Awww, are you sure? It would be so much fun!” Virgil shouted through his hand and shook his head more violently.

Deceit sighed. “Very well. Are we going to do this the easy way or the hard way?”

Virgil sobbed but didn’t move. He heard another set of footsteps approach him.

“Get down you bitch!” Rage bellowed. He pushed on Virgil’s shoulders. Virgil’s knees slammed on the ground first, followed by his upper body. His hand was removed from his mouth, only for Rage’s sweaty bandana to be stuffed in its place. Virgil was openly sobbing at this point. He thought he had been safe.
Virgil realized that was probably true. Though crying, he figured he may as well try to fight back. They were going to do what they wanted anyways, it didn’t matter if he was compliant.

Virgil kicked his legs up and started trying to push up with his arms. Several surprised shouts came from the Dark Sides as Virgil was able to shake off Rage. Unfortunately, Virgil’s victory didn’t last. The other Dark Sides rushed him. He felt someone hold down his legs, probably Rage since it was only one Dark Side. Greed had one arm and Jealousy had the other, holding them out to his sides like a pinned insect. He felt someone sit on his hips. Malice kneeled in front of him. Virgil hated being pinned down and surrounded like this. It was too much like when he was younger.

“Apathy will you get your lazy ass over here?!” Deceit shouted.

“Nah, I’ll just wait my turn. It looks like you’ve got it under control.”

Virgil shuddered. He felt Deceit shift on him and his hardness pressing into his backside.

“Malice, would be so kind as to help me remove Virgil’s clothes? It seems our fuck toy needs to be taught a lesson.”

“Aye aye captain!”

Virgil was confused. Why don’t they just snap my clothes off?

Deceit leaned over, grinding into Virgil’s clothed ass and whispering into his ear. “I figured it’s been so long since you’ve seen been with your lovers that we’d take everything nice and slow. Except for the fucking of course.”

Virgil sobbed. He was trapped. It was hopeless. He knew it. He wanted to blink out but knew it would likely get him more punishment.

Deceit kissed the back of Virgil’s neck gently. Virgil shuddered in revulsion.

“Yo man, bro-ham, I can’t exactly get his clothes off with you like that.”

Deceit smiled against the back of Virgil’s neck and chuckled. “Very well Malice.” Deceit pushed on Virgil’s shoulders unnecessarily rough to lean back up. “There you go.”

Greed let go of Virgil’s left arm as Malice removed that sleeve. I can make them think I’m cooperating. The next arm I’ll fight back. I might be able to get help. As soon as the sleeve was off, Greed grabbed Virgil’s arm in a bruising grip and slammed it to the floor. Malice pulled the entire hoodie down Virgil’s right arm. The second Jealousy let go, Virgil swung his right arm as much as he could. He was quickly recaptured by Jealousy and Malice.

Deceit leaned down again, speaking louder this time. “Are you that excited for Malice to change you again that you’re looking to enrage us? Are you truly that desperate to be with child?”

Virgil used all of his self-control not to vomit, though he did dry-heave several times. He knew that one of the punishments for the Light Sides finding out was to have Malice change him again, but he wanted to hold on to the hope that he’d be rescued before they could do that. Virgil was sucking harsh breaths in through his nose, the bandana completely filling his mouth.

Deceit, in the same position as before, said, “Good boy.” and licked the shell of Virgil’s ear with his forked tongue. Virgil shuddered as the tongue went up and down the outside of his ear, the two
halves of Deceit’s tongue on either side of his ear. Deceit used his hands, one human and one scaled, to push Virgil’s t-shirt up to his armpits. He rubbed his hands up and down Virgil’s exposed back leisurely, relishing the control he had over Virgil, then slowly dragged his nails down Virgil’s back, making cuts with the nails on his scaled hand. He began gently tracing the skin just above his waistband with both hands, eventually dipping a finger just below the waistband. Deceit was grinding more insistently into Virgil’s ass and hot breath was coming faster against Virgil’s neck as Deceit grabbed the front of Virgil’s jeans to unhook the button. Suddenly, they all paused.

“Kiddo? You okay in there?”

Deceit leaned up and cleared his throat as he snapped. “Yeah Pops, I’m fine.”

“You sure? I know it’s your first night back in your room and I wanted to make sure that you’re settling in okay.”

“I’m good. I just want some time to myself.”

A pause.

“Virge, sweetie? Can I come in?”

“No!” Deceit barked in Virgil’s voice. “Jesus Christ, haven’t you seen enough of me? Leave me the fuck alone!”

Virgil heard a pause, then Patton walk away from his door. Deceit leaned back down, snapped, and put his hands on Virgil’s sides just above the waistband of his jeans.

“Now, where were we? Oh, right.” Deceit reached around and popped the jean’s button out of the hole. He groped Virgil’s crotch over his jeans, gripping him tightly and rubbing his thumb up and down. “Oh dear, where on Earth is that zipper? I can’t seem to find it at all!” Virgil heard dark laughter from all around him. Deceit kept palming him, occasionally curling his fingers to dig in painfully.

“Virgil, which movie did we watch last night?”

Virgil could have cried at hearing Roman’s voice. Deceit snapped and cleared his throat again, changing into Virgil’s voice. “Can you imbeciles not leave me the fuck alone for five fucking minutes?!”

There was no sound outside the door. Virgil sobbed into his gag. They left. Deceit convinced them and they left. He felt his spirit break. The visual his mind’s eye assigned to the feeling was a building crumbling into dust, and then nothingness. Huh. So that’s what it took.

Virgil jumped at a loud crash. He opened his eyes just in time to see the door that was kicked in fall over. Roman was silhouetted by the light coming from the hallway, in a fighting stance, his sword raised. The light shone through his hair, giving him a halo, like an avenging archangel. Virgil sobbed in relief.

Roman let out an enraged scream and charged. The Dark Sides scattered like cockroaches. Roman got to Apathy first and knocked him out by hitting him in the temple with the pommel of his sword. Virgil tried to get up, but felt like each limb weighed a metric ton. He felt hands on him and began struggling, his crying increasing.

“Virgil! It’s okay, it’s Logan!” Logan reached around and pulled the bandana from Virgil’s mouth. Virgil sucked in air desperately, still tasting the saltiness and musk but grateful to be able to
breathe. He gasped in massive breaths and sobbed uncontrollably as the air escaped him. Logan was kneeling as he pulled Virgil up, holding Virgil’s limp body protectively against his chest.

Jealousy, Greed, and Deceit managed to sink out before Roman got to them but Malice and Rage weren’t so lucky. Roman was busy fighting Rage, who had summoned a shield, and Malice was fighting… Patton?!

“**How fucking DARE you! You stay the FUCK away from my Virgil you sick fucking BASTARDS!**” Patton roared. He landed a punch that brought Malice to his knees, then summoned rope and bound him. Patton visibly restrained himself from kicking the giggling Malice, then went to the unconscious Apathy and restrained him as well.

Virgil stared in awe. *Holy shit remind me not to piss Patton off.*

“Patton would never strike you Virgil.” Logan whispered harshly.

*Oh great, thanks internal monologue for staying internal.*

Roman was evenly matched against Rage. They had both been disarmed and were fighting hand-to-hand now. Roman had a cut on his upper cheekbone that was oozing, and Rage’s lip was split and bleeding. Roman kicked the inside of Rage’s knee, twisted his upper body, and slammed Rage to the ground, holding him there and punching him until Rage stopped fighting back. He spat, then stood back so Patton could restrain him as well.

Virgil was still limp, his muscles liquid as he sobbed in Logan’s arms. He was so scared. Roman and Patton rushed over to Logan and Virgil. Roman’s chest was still heaving with fury, so Patton spoke first in a surprisingly gentle voice.

“Oh Virgil baby, it’s okay now, it’s over, you’re safe, we’ve got you. Did they hurt you?” Patton asked.

Virgil jerked his arms up to show the already-forming bruises.

“Oh baby I’m so sorry. We’ll get some bruise cream on that right away honey. Do you have any other injuries? Any broken bones or sprained joints?"

Virgil was confused, but shook his head. Roman shifted.

“My love, I must go and detain the other Dark Sides and put these foul creatures in their cells. I will return very shortly."

“How?!” Virgil whimpered.

“Yes, you are now I promise you are.” Roman said.

Virgil shook his head. “No, you?” he pointed at Roman.

Roman smiled sweetly. “I am my love. The dragon-witch helped me build those cells, and she’ll help me capture the rest of the rats and transport everyone to their cells. They’ll be able to see and hear each other but they won’t be able to get to each other. Those cells can hold the dragon-witch during our daydream scenarios, it can certainly hold them.”

Virgil nodded, still crying but calming down somewhat, cradled in Logan’s arms. He pressed against Logan’s chest and kept his arms curled.

Virgil started crying again at the memory, the violation, and having to tell Patton. He felt Logan’s arms tighten on him. Virgil could only get out a shaky, “T-t-touch,” before sobs rendered him speechless again.

“Oh sweetie, oh my baby.” Patton leaned forward. “Can I…?” Virgil nodded and reached out a little. Patton dove in, hugging him as tightly as he could with Logan still holding him.

Roman ran a hand through Virgil’s hair. “I’ll be back soon my love. I promise no longer than an hour, okay?”

No, it WASN’T okay but Virgil knew deep down he had to let Roman do what he needed to do. Virgil nodded shakily, still crying. Roman brushed Virgil’s bangs away from his forehead and stood, his body becoming a hard line of retribution.

Roman cast one more glance toward his loves, then closed his eyes and sunk out directly into the Imagination. He had to avenge his raven.

Chapter End Notes

The description of Virgil’s spirit breaking is from my own experience (I’m better now). It’s really really hecking hard to describe, so I hope I did okay!

Just to be clear, Logan can and will cut a bitch, but he wanted to stay near Virgil in case one of the Dark Sides tried to hurt or abduct him.

Also, I don't think I ever explained this: I call dissociation "blinking out" since that's how I've always referred to it and Virgil wouldn't have had anyone to talk to about what was going on, so he'd use his own term for it most, but not all, of the time.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! This'll be the last chapter for today. I'm going to try really hard to get another one out tomorrow, but I'm not positive I can. The wait definitely won't be any longer than a week! Honestly, I'd be surprised if the chapter didn't go up the day after tomorrow if it doesn't make it tomorrow.

I headcannon that in the mindscape the dragon-witch has a Cockney accent, don't @ me I'm soft.

Also, if Virgil seems a little OOC, that's intentional! I explained it (hopefully cogently) in the end author's notes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Once Roman had informed the dragon-witch of what had happened, she grabbed her satchel immediately and they rose up in Virgil’s room. Roman saw Virgil still being held by Logan and Patton. Virgil looked up when he sensed people coming into his room.

“Who’s that?” Virgil asked. Patton frowned. Virgil’s tone and cadence seemed to be off somehow, but he couldn’t quite place it.

“This is the dragon-witch. She’s going to help me transport these vile creatures down to their holding cells.” Roman answered.

“She looks like Madam Mim.” Virgil quipped.

Roman laughed. “Indeed! I created her during a spike of creative energy after Thomas watched The Sword in the Stone.”

“Oh, Hi Madam Mim.”

“‘Ello there bug! If you’ll excuse Roman and I, we’ll be finishin’ up ‘ere shortly.”

The dragon-witch turned and waved her hands. Apathy and Malice were raised into the air. Roman stalked towards Rage and heaved him up roughly.

“Ow! Fuck you, you didn’t have to do that!”

“Fuck you, yes I did.”

Rage smirked. “Speaking of fucking, how’s our little Virgie doing?”

Virgil whimpered and shrunk into Logan, his crying starting back up again.

Roman lost it. He turned around and using all of his strength and momentum, punched Rage in the jaw. Rage crumpled like a paper bag, knocked out cold.

“That’s one way to get ‘im to shut up.” the dragon-witch commented.
Roman could feel himself getting angrier and angrier the longer he saw and listened to his loves, so he nodded to the dragon-witch and they sunk down into the Imagination.

They reappeared in the dungeon Roman had initially built for his scenes with the dragon-witch, but had her modify to hold the Dark Sides. They each threw their cargo, one at a time, into their respective jail cells. While the Dark Sides could still influence Thomas to keep him healthy and balanced, they could never hurt another Side or figment ever again.

Satisfied, they turned to each other. Roman grinned darkly. “Ready?”

The dragon-witch smiled back. “Ready.”

Finding Greed and Jealousy wasn’t too difficult; they were both holed up in Jealousy’s room. They put up a fight, but weren’t any match for an enraged Prince and a powerful dragon-witch. The dragon-witch found she didn’t need to do much in this particular fight. Both Greed and Jealousy surrendered quickly, their faces swollen with bruises and cuts. After depositing them in the dungeon, Roman and the dragon-witch reconvened in Roman’s castle.

“That fucking snake is hiding from us.”

“Careful dear, you spent too much time near Rage.”

Roman closed his eyes and focused on the breathing exercises Virgil had taught him. After several minutes of just breathing, Roman felt somewhat more in control. He opened his eyes to see the dragon-witch tapping a map with her wand in one hand and swaying a pendulum with the other. Eventually, the pendulum chain went stiff as it pointed to an area on the map.

“He’s in the main mindscape still! But where?”

The dragon-witch put her index and middle finger on the map, then spread them to zoom in like a smartphone. She paled.

“He’s in Virgil’s room.”

/////

Logan and Patton were trying to comfort a still-crying Virgil. Remy had come in, sensing the chaos in the main mindscape. As soon as he saw the state Virgil was in, he went into full mama bear mode.

“Oh coffee bean! Who did this to you?!”

Virgil clutched Logan’s shirt tighter. “D-d-dark S-sides.”

Remy sighed. “Oh sugar…”. With Patton’s nod, he came around the other side of Virgil and started petting his hair. Logan was becoming more and more distressed at Virgil’s continuous crying, but Patton reassured him and Virgil.

“It’s okay Virgil. I think you’ve needed a good cry for a long time.” Patton said, keeping eye contact with Logan. Logan simply hugged Virgil tighter. Virgil’s cries at least seemed to be decreasing in volume and intensity. Patton felt that something was off, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on it. Something about the way that Virgil was speaking wasn’t right…

“Hello lovelies.”
Patton spun around as Logan’s head snapped up. Deceit was standing there, sans his gloves, smirking down at them. Virgil’s cries became louder as he seemingly tried to crawl into Logan’s chest.

Patton stood, protective of his boys. “Stay the *FUCK* back Deceit.”

“Girl, you do NOT want to see what I want to do to you.” Warned Remy, coffee vanished and posture tense with anger.

Deceit waggled a finger a tutted. “Language, language Patton. You wouldn’t want to lead Thomas down the wrong path now would you?”

Logan had enough. “You *sick BASTARD*! Leave us alone!”

“Hmmm… I think not.”

Patton shifted into a fighting stance. He will *not* let Deceit hurt his Virgil ever again!

Just as Deceit stepped forward, Roman and the dragon-witch appeared. Deceit sent snakes to attack the other Sides and the dragon-witch. Roman slashed at them, the snakes turning into clouds of yellow, and the dragon-witch fired spells as fast as she could to protect the other Sides. Before Deceit could summon any more, Roman had charged forward. He used his shoulder to slam into Deceit, knocking Deceit back into the wall. Roman didn’t stop running, meeting Deceit’s stomach with his knee. Deceit buckled, and Roman used every ounce of willpower not to do more damage to the now-defenseless Side. The dragon-witch wasted no time in binding Deceit.

Patton let out a sigh of relief. “Thank goodness! How did you-?”

Roman gestured to the dragon-witch. “She used her map to locate him. Apparently, he was transformed into a snake, hiding in the closet.”

“Is that why you dislike me so? You don’t like people who have to hide in closets? I never took you for the type!” he asked with a shit-eating grin, poorly feigning hurt.

Remy sneered. “Oh honey no. It’s not homophobia. Everyone hates you.”

Deceit hissed. Then smirked. “Don’t you want to know why Virgil had a bandana in his mouth if the room was sound-proofed?”

That gave everyone pause. Deceit snickered.

“We had to find some way to keep the cock sleeve’s mouth open!” he laughed, deranged.

For the second time that night, Roman put all of his outrage, frustration, and vengeance into his fist. It collided with Deceit’s jaw and Deceit was unconscious. Virgil had curled further into Logan’s chest, crying louder and hiding his face in shame. Roman flexed his hand and winced.

“I may need Logan to bandage my wrist once Virgil is taken care of,” he said sheepishly. Patton walked up to him and pulled him into a passionate kiss.

“I love you. You did so well. You were perfect.” Patton murmured against Roman’s lips.

“As were you my love.”

The dragon-witch cleared her throat. Roman and Patton moved apart, slightly embarrassed.
“Prince Roman, let’s deposit this last piece o’ shit, shall we?”

Roman nodded gravely. “Let’s.”

He turned back to his loves and Remy. “I’ll be back as soon as I can.”

Roman and the dragon-witch sunk back down into the dungeon. They threw Deceit’s unconscious body into a cell and locked the door. Roman appraised his work, then turned to the dragon-witch.

He took her hand. “Thank you so very much m’lady. It was an honor to fight alongside you and I am truly in your debt” He kept eye contact with her as he kissed her hand.

She blushed darkly and giggled. “Oh, you! Why don’t you make it up to me by having tea with me sometime? We hardly see each other out of fighting, fake or real.”

Roman stepped closer and smirked down her. “That’s sounds lovely.”

The dragon-witch’s face turned an even deeper shade of red as she giggled again. “Perfect.” Her face became more serious. “Take care of that boy will you? He’s hurt, in more ways than the physical I’m afraid.”

Roman grimaced. “I know. I will. I swear it.”

The dragon-witch smiled softly. “I believe you.” Feeling bold, she put her hand on his right cheek and kissed the other. Roman didn’t move, except to send a positively dastardly smirk her way. She flushed once more, then turned and disappeared back to her cottage. Roman sighed. He looked up and sunk back into Virgil’s room.

When Roman rose back up, he realized how exhausted he was. Even seeing his loves didn’t restore his energy. Remy was stroking a hand through Virgil’s hair, with Logan still holding him and Patton wiping tears and snot off his face. Remy had grabbed Virgil’s hoodie from off the floor and managed to put it back on him. Virgil seemed to have settled quite a bit, just hiccuping breaths.

Roman had unfinished business. “Thank you for comforting Virgil Remy.” he said softly.

“Don’t worry about it girl, I’m always down to help out my extra-dark roast coffee bean.”

Roman’s expression remained serious. “I want to apologize to you for how I treated you when you first came to Virgil’s room. I needed a villain and you were there. I hope there’s something I can do to help you forgive me.”

Remy waved him off. “Water under the bridge hun. It was an intense situation.”

Roman nodded. He turned to catch the eyes of his boyfriends. “My room?” They agreed.

Patton carried Virgil into Roman’s room and set him on the bed after Logan pulled the sheets and quilt down. Logan grabbed the bruise cream, gently pulled up Virgil’s sleeves with Virgil’s nod, and began applying it to the handprints on Virgil’s arms.

Remy spoke up. “It looks like you girls have everything under control here. I’ve gotta get back to my bae. I’ll be by tomorrow if Virge is feeling up to it. Let me know if there’s anything I can do, okay?”

“We will. Thank you Remy.” Logan said.

“Sure thing babe.” he winked, and was gone.
Virgil had resolutely settled into the middle of the bed. Everyone snapped into pajamas. Logan quickly wrapped the prince’s wrist to help support it and got both Roman and Virgil some ibuprofen.

Roman hesitated. “Virgil, love? Would you like me to stay with you? You can say no if you’d prefer some space.”

Virgil pulled the blanket up shyly. Roman crawled under the sheets and went to him. He laid down next to Virgil and put his arm up, offering. Virgil nuzzled into Roman’s chest, one hand grabbing at his shirt and the other laying next to it on Roman’s chest.

Logan spoke up next. “Virgil, would you like Patton and I to join, or would you prefer to stay with just one person tonight?” Virgil extended an arm to Patton and Logan. Patton barely kept himself from squealing at how cute it was. They got into bed on either side. Patton came up behind Virgil with permission and spooned him. Logan laid down next to Roman and threw an arm over him, holding onto Virgil’s free hand.

They were finally free from the Dark Sides.

Chapter End Notes

I gave you the other Dark Sides, including Deceit, getting clobbered, fluff, and Remy! Do you forgive me? (plz forgive me for making you suffer (_;_;) )

If you remember The Sword in the Stone, you'll know why I chose her character to be the dragon-witch. ;)

So here's the chapter with the remnants of the plot point that was going be a lot bigger and have at least a couple more chapters down the line. Virgil does experience a little bit of age regression in this chapter and the last half of the previous chapter, and like so many things in this fic it's based off my own experiences. It was a minor, temporary thing because my/ Virgil's brain was trying to figure out how to cope with the trauma that had just happened. Since I/ Virgil thought he/ I was safe, his brain was at a bit of a loss so tried on regressing for size. In my experience, it was hard to understand things and Virgil doesn't care about the Light Sides faking affection or touching him because he didn't worry about that as a kid. I hope that makes sense and explains a few things about Virgil's actions!

Initially, I was going to have Virgil regress and be a smol bean with the other Sides taking care of him and Patton cooing at toddler!Virgil, but it just didn't feel right with this story. I'm sure I'll make it its own fic, but it really didn't fit in this particular fic.

And don't worry, Roman isn't cheating with the dragon-witch! He's just a big ol' flirt. His boyfriends know and it's totally harmless.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

Whew! I'm glad I was able to get a chapter out today! I was planning on front-loading more chapters on Saturday, but my Roman did not have good working conditions due to several bad mental health days. Also, just so y'all have a little insight on why the speed of updates might change: I do free-lance work, so there are times when I'm busier than others. I can absolutely guarantee updates no less than once per week, but it may be closer to that if I'm really busy. I want to maintain the quality of the fic, and that takes a lot of time. I just wanted to let y'all know that if the updates don't come as fast as they first were, it's not because I'm stuck or abandoning the fic, it just means I'm bringin' in the dough! \ (~o~) /

Also, this chapter contains descriptions of traumatic catatonia. Each experience of catatonia is really different so I'm drawing from my own experience with it and coming out of it here. It's really hecking hard to describe, so I hope I did okay!

Edit: I thought I should explain myself because the catatonia might seem kind of random. In short, it makes sense to me that Virgil might experience traumatic catatonia, given the duration and nature of Virgil's trauma (which will be explored in later chapters).

On to the fic!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil could feel the Dark Sides' hands on him, holding him down, grabbing him, touching him, forcing him. He heard their laughter, the grunts and moans, the yelling, the ordering. He could smell the scent of sweat that inevitably happened every time they captured him. He felt the pain, the tearing, the nausea…

“Virgil?”

Virgil despaired, not bothering to move. He felt their bodies all around him. He just wanted whatever was going to happen to happen already. I'm surrounded they're here they're here they're here they're here they're here they're here they’re here they’re here they’re here they’re here they’re here they’re here…

“Virgil sweetie, it's okay. You’re safe. It’s Patton, Roman, and Logan here. No one else.”

Virgil wasn’t about to fall for Malice’s or Deceit’s tricks again. Once bitten, twice shy. Isn’t there a song about that?

“Can you open your eyes for me honey?”

Virgil obeyed immediately. And found himself staring into the milk chocolate eyes of Patton. Patton was looking at him with such concern, still bleary-eyed, and neither Deceit nor Malice had ever bothered to make their clones bleary-eyed.

“Patton?” Virgil asked, his voice rough.
Patton nodded. “It’s me kiddo.”

Virgil only bothered to move his hand to cover his mouth before he started crying. He certainly didn’t bother trying to stop himself from crying. He hardly had the will for that.

“Oh sweetie, would you like a hug?”

Virgil nodded, no longer caring about… well, anything, just surviving in the moment, needing every drop of comfort he could get.

Patton carefully wrapped his arms around Virgil and rested his chin on top of Virgil’s head. He rubbed his hands up and down Virgil’s back.

“Shhhh, it’s okay, let it out baby.” Patton whispered.

Virgil felt someone shift on the bed behind him. He froze, save for a frightened whimper.

Patton squeezed him. “It’s okay Virge. It’s just Roman and Logan.”

Virgil grabbed the front of Patton’s shirt and nuzzled his head into the chest there, begging him to understand.

“Do you want them to leave?” Patton asked.

Virgil shook his head. No, he wanted them to stay!

“What is it sweetie?”

Virgil breathed for a few moments, gathering his strength.

“No one behind me.” He forced out.

He felt them move away as Patton said, “Okay, you did so good telling us that Virgil. I’m so proud of you. I know that was hard.”

Virgil felt his anxiety tearing at his mind, but he didn’t have the strength to pay attention to it. It just slowly ate at him, Patton helpless to know what was wrong or how to stop it. The anxiety and fear and trauma was telling Virgil that touch was bad! That was battling the touch ache that was screaming at Virgil to grab and pull Patton closer because need more can’t get enough need more need more need MORE!! He began crying again.

“Oh Virgil, what’s wrong? Talk to me.” Patton begged as he held Virgil tighter. Virgil shook his head. He couldn’t explain.

He felt them move away as Patton said, “Okay, you did so good telling us that Virgil. I’m so proud of you. I know that was hard.”

Virgil felt his will leave him again, making him feel empty. He felt like his muscles were made of lead. His mind faded so everything around him was a silent buzz. He knew distantly that it was due to what he had experienced in his room, his spirit breaking, but he had no reaction. Virgil could hear things but didn’t catalogue what they were. He didn’t care. He was just existing. He’d occasionally pick up one of the Sides’ voices, but he didn’t bother to remember the words. It was too exhausting. He simply existed, not thinking, not processing anything.

Virgil knew that little time was passing. He knew he wasn’t in control, but he didn’t care. Nothing mattered at that moment. Trauma would rise up from where it was bubbling in the depths of his mind, where it was causing this half-dead state, but Virgil barely registered it. Whenever his mind would consider trying to move or think, that very notion felt too exhausting to consider for a
moment longer. After what felt like no time at all, he felt awareness return to him. Virgil felt like opening his eyes to see what would happen.

“Virgil!”

Virgil turned his head to the side with difficulty. Why is everything so hard? Roman had paused in his approach.

Roman sat down where he had been crawling on the bed.

“It’s okay Virgil, I promise. Can you focus on your breathing for me?”

Virgil heard the words and understood them, but didn’t know how to respond to anything. He stared at Roman for a few moments before nodding slowly, his head barely moving a quarter of an inch.

Roman smiled sadly. “Okay Virge. In for one, two, three, four. Hold for one, two…” Virgil was always one count behind Roman, but didn’t particularly care. Occasionally more presence of mind would come into Virgil and he’d panic at having such little control over his body and mind, but it wouldn’t stay for very long. He followed Roman’s directions, even after Roman stopped.

Virgil felt his vision tunnel in on Roman. He didn’t feel like he was going to pass out, only that he was entirely focused on Roman.

“How are you feeling Virge?” Roman asked carefully.

Virgil stared at him, slowly blinking, not caring to or able to respond. Roman nodded as his face crumpled. That stirred something in Virgil. A want to act. He had no will to be able to act, but he wanted. The most he was able to push his chest in a little, making it twitch.

Roman spotted it. “Virge? Are you trying to tell me something?”

Virgil didn’t know what he was trying to tell Roman. He was just trying to communicate at its most basic level; send a message and have it be received and registered by the receiver, maybe with a response back. He felt something, though, something different from when he was just existing in that empty state. It felt like though he still had no will or energy to move his arms, it felt like there was life in him, in his limbs. He saw it as a thin, red cotton thread extending from his head and torso down through each limb. He stopped communicating with Roman but kept his vision on him. He focused on the life he felt. With it came emotional pain. He couldn’t identify what exact emotion it was, just that it was emotional pain. He found he could blink faster.

Roman looked hopeful, almost in awe. “Virgil?”

Virgil blinked rapidly back at him. He passed air through his vocal chords. The first couple attempts just made sounds like sighs, but then he was able to form it into a soft, gravelly, drawn out “O” sound. After a dozen or so repetitions of that, Virgil got the back of his tongue to make the exhaled sound into an “ohhh-ahhhhh” in an attempt to form Roman’s name.

Roman had tears streaming down his face, crying in happiness and relief. That made the life in Virgil feel stronger, like instead of tiny, singular threads the will was filling up more of his body. The emotional pain was also stronger, but Virgil felt himself trying to become alive again. He stopped talking, but before Roman could look too crestfallen, Virgil moved his shoulders, and life came fully back into him.

Virgil inhaled. He still felt like his body was made of lead, but he could move. He shifted on the
bed, closing his eyes and frowning. In addition to every action and thought being difficult, he felt stiff, like he hadn’t moved for hours. He knew he couldn’t have been out long, not more than maybe 15 minutes. He opened his eyes again and found his vision had expanded. He took one last look at Roman, who was smiling as wide as Virgil’s ever seen him smile while tears ran down his face in a steady stream, and turned to the end of the bed.

Logan and Patton were standing there. Patton’s expression was very similar to Roman’s, whereas Logan had one hand pressed to his mouth and the other holding him up on the foot board, tears dripping down his wrist as his body shook with sobs. Virgil closed his eyes and frowned as he tried to swallow, but his mouth was completely dry.

He tried to sit up, but found he didn’t have the strength. Logan came over to Virgil’s side with a bottle of water. He sat next to Virgil and leaned him against his body. He brought the bottle to Virgil’s mouth.

“Small sips.” Logan said, his voice trembling.

Virgil obeyed, slowly draining half the bottle. Logan’s body felt like the good fire where it was touching him.

Virgil sighed and leaned more heavily against Logan and closed his eyes. Logan set the bottle down on the nightstand.

He heard Patton walk to their side of the bed. “Virge, honey? Can you open your eyes for me?” Virgil opened his eyes easily and met Patton’s. Patton smiled. “There he is.” Virgil didn’t know why, but he sent a tired smile Patton’s way, which set off a new wave of happy tears from Patton. Logan’s chest still shook with silent sobs.

“Virgil?” Virgil turned his head to look at Roman. He still had tears streaking down face and looked nervous. “I, um…” Roman trailed off, not sure what to say. Virgil raised an eyebrow at him, which caused the sappiest look Virgil’s ever seen on the prince.

“Virgil, may I cuddle with you on your other side?” Virgil shrugged and nodded. Roman carefully came over and settled slowly against Virgil’s side, giving Virgil plenty of time to tell him to stop.

“How about me kiddo? Is it okay if I join you and Logan over here?” Patton asked. Virgil nodded, then found his voice. “Yeah, that’s fine.” Virgil winced; his voice sounded like the ghost of a garbage disposal. Patton didn’t seem to care, squealing in excitement and jumping up on the bed, nestling against Logan and grabbing one of Virgil’s hands to rub his thumb over. Virgil sighed and relaxed, feeling serenity with the Light Sides holding him.

Some time later, after Virgil felt much more normal with more will and life in him, he opened his eyes and shifted. The others must have sensed it as they also shifted.

Virgil’s consciousness came back full force. He had to breathe through the anxiety as it reoccupied his body. After a few moments, he realized what had happened… sort of. He knew that whatever that near-death state was wasn’t good or normal, and that he had been completely out of control of his mind and body.

“What the hell happened to me?” Virgil asked.

Roman seemed to jump in surprise at hearing Virgil speak. Patton’s face became redder and he looked like he was going to cry again.

Logan breathed heavily. “There are several things that may have been taking place. Can you tell us
what you experienced so we may better figure out what happened?”

Virgil frowned. “I guess… I just don’t know how to describe it.” he let out a frustrated grunt.

Patton smiled encouragingly. “Try your best kiddo.”

Virgil managed a half-smile. “I don’t know, it’s like, at first it was hard to move, and then I couldn’t move. I heard your guys’ voices sometimes, but didn’t even try to figure out what you guys were saying. It was like,” Virgil grunted in frustration, “like I didn’t want to do anything. God I sound like an asshole.”

Logan tightened his grip on Virgil’s arm and shook his head. “No Virgil. It may confirm a theory. I believe you may have experienced traumatic catatonia.”

Virgil didn’t know why, but as soon as Logan said it he knew that was what he had experienced. “That’s it. I don’t know exactly what,” he gestured as he faltered, “that is, but I’ve heard about people in catatonic states and that seems right.”

Patton covered his mouth with one hand as he let out a pained sound. Virgil felt Roman’s grip tighten on him. He frowned. “Yeah, it was weird, but I wasn’t out for very long.”

Virgil felt Logan freeze next to him. “Virgil, one of the symptoms and experiences of catatonia is a lack of awareness of the passage of time. How long did it feel like to you?”

Virgil felt fear creeping up his spine. “I dunno, like 15 minutes?”

Patton sobbed into his hand. Virgil saw Logan pull his arm tighter around Patton.

“What?” Virgil asked, confused.

Logan’s voice was strained. “Virgil, you were unresponsive for 52 hours and 37 minutes.”

Virgil felt the blood drain from his face. Holy shit, no wonder they were freaking out. He squeezed Patton’s hand. Patton brought his hand away from his face and smiled at Virgil. Logan and Roman both did their best to side-hug Virgil.

Virgil leaned back and let his face look towards the ceiling. “It’s over now.”

“It is.” Logan replied.

Chapter End Notes

I used one of the Sides as the trigger that helps Virgil fully come out of his catatonia because that’s how I came out of it (with the help of my twin bro). I myself was out for about 2 1/2 weeks. I just wanted to reiterate that this is just my experience with traumatic catatonia and that if yours differs from mine, I totally validate you and your experience!
They sat there, basking in each others’ presences in silence.

Patton, ever the dad, asked, “Is anyone hungry? I think we should eat something.”

“I agree.” Logan replied. “We’ll eat something light, perhaps sandwiches. We’ve all been through a lot. And Virgil, I presume you have a headache and don’t feel well?”

“Yeah.” Virgil said, surprised.

“Low blood sugar.” Logan said by way of explanation. “Virgil, do you feel strong enough to walk or shall we eat in here?”

Virgil did NOT want to go back to being helpless. “I think I can walk.”

Logan nodded. “Alright. Take it slow.”

Patton and Logan moved off the bed since that was the side Virgil was closest to. They stood near the edge, ready to catch Virgil if need be. Roman was behind him to help support him. Virgil swung his legs over the side (wow that didn’t cause me a massive amount of pain for once) and stood. The change in position had him swaying, but he was stabilized by three pairs of hands.

“I’m okay, I’m okay,” Virgil said after a moment. Once he stopped seeing double, he made his way down to the kitchen, the other three Sides close by. He sat down heavily in one of the chairs and winced. Note to self, still gotta be careful when sitting down. FUCK.

Roman put his hand of Virgil’s back after seeing him wince, and Virgil flinched forward out of habit. Roman removed his hand immediately and apologized. That reminded Virgil,

“It’s okay Princey, I just don’t feel like being touched right now.”

“Of course. I won’t. I’m sorry, I should have asked for permission.”

Virgil waved him off. “Naw, we were literally just cuddling, it’s fine.”
Virgil felt his touch ache come back, like a monster clawing at his insides. He wanted touch from them oh so badly, but he couldn’t. He’d never want them to do something physical with him that they didn’t actually want. Thinking back to the holding and cuddling on the bed gave him twin feelings of nausea and want. He wished he could have that with the other Sides, but he’d never do that to them. If he made them do something physical with him they didn’t want to do, all out of a sense of obligation to protect Thomas, then he was no better than the other Dark Sides. Blackmail is blackmail.

Patton quickly threw together a small pile of sandwiches. Virgil ate hungrily, quickly consuming two sandwiches. He slowed down, embarrassed, while he ate his third.

They ate in relative silence. Once they had finished, Logan pushed his plate forward and adjusted his tie.

“I was wondering what everyone would think about speaking to Thomas?”

Virgil suddenly wasn’t hungry anymore. He placed his half-eaten sandwich down and stared at his plate.

“What does he know?” Virgil asked.

Patton jumped in. “After you,” Patton had to pause to gather himself “stopped responding, Logan let Thomas know that you weren’t well and that we needed to focus on caring for you. We didn’t tell him anything. We wanted to talk to you first to see what you wanted to tell Thomas.”

Virgil tensed. He didn’t want to tell Thomas anything, but he had felt his Host’s anxiety about what was happening to Virgil since he came back to life. Virgil fisted his hands in his lap.

“We should probably tell him everything, right? I mean, it’s his head.”

Roman raised a hand to place on Virgil’s shoulder, but paused and withdrew it. “Virgil, you don’t have to tell him anything you don’t want to. It’s up to you. Thomas will understand. He’s a good man.”

Virgil sighed. “I know, but I’ve been feeling his anxiety about me ever since I woke up. He deserves to know.”

“Would you like to tell him now? He’s been awake for 57 minutes and his mind is clear.” Logan asked.

Virgil gripped the sleeves of the hoodie. “Yeah, let’s get it over with.” Everyone stood slowly, Virgil being the last up. Logan turned to Virgil, face soft.

“Virgil, if you don’t want to, you truly don’t have to. I can’t imagine how distressing this must be for you.”

Virgil shrugged, keeping his eyes down. “Nah, I’ve… I’ve got to.”

“Alright kiddo, go ahead and sink out when you feel ready and we’ll follow you.” Patton said, not wanting to rush the younger Side.

*When I’m ready? So never?*

Virgil nodded and closed his eyes. He inhaled deeply through his nose and focused on going to his spot on the stairs. He felt the pull of teleportation and felt his feet land on carpet. He looked up and
caught Thomas’ eye, who was looking at him in shock and joy. The other Sides had popped up near the staircase.

*Probably in case you pass out and puke all over the carpet again.*

“Virgil! Oh my god I’m so happy to see you! I haven’t been feeling as anxious lately and I was so worried about you! I’m glad I put on pants this morning!” Virgil felt Thomas mentally kick himself for that last statement.

Virgil gave him a half-smile, but quickly ducked his head when he felt the shame and hesitation at telling Thomas what had happened come back. He fiddled with the insides of his hoodie sleeves.

“Virge?” Thomas asked carefully.

Virgil berated himself. *Come one, you learned how to speak when you were two. It’s just words.* He cleared his throat. “I…” he couldn’t force himself to continue. He felt frustration bubbling up but pushed it back down. He shifted his balance. “I was…” *Dammit! Come on! Let’s see if switching tactics works.*

“The Dark Sides…” *Seriously dude?* “Well, the Dark Sides are locked up, which is why we’re up here.”

“That’s awesome!” Thomas exclaimed. “So you guys are safe now?”

Virgil shrugged. “Yeah.”

“That’s great!” At Virgil’s static posture and refusal to meet Thomas’ eyes, Thomas’ expression became worried. “Virge? Is there something else you want to tell me?”

Virgil reached up to grab his upper arms. He began shaking.

“Do you… would you like a hug?” Thomas asked, voice suddenly nearer.

Virgil looked up through his bangs. When Thomas took another step closer, Virgil shook his head as he backed into the wall, hugging himself tighter. Thomas stopped and raised his hands.

“Oh, okay, I won’t if you don’t want me to.” Thomas assured.

That made Virgil’s distress turn into frustrated tears. He wanted a hug *so bad*, to feel Thomas’ arms around him again. When Thomas had hugged him, it was like nothing he had ever experienced before. Just that thought alone made a few drops of moisture fall from his face. He couldn’t stop them.

“Kiddo?” Patton asked.

Fuck, he wanted all of them to touch him, to hold him, to *want* to hold him. He wanted to feel their hands and arms reassuring him. He wanted to hear them tell him that they didn’t think he was disgusting, that they loved him, that they cared about him, and for them to mean it. Looking back, Virgil knew that Thomas was just telling Virgil that he loved him so he could comfort him and get his Anxiety working properly again. Virgil knew he was delusional, but he couldn’t stop himself from wanting dammit.

Tears were falling more quickly, and he couldn’t stop the hitched breaths.

Patton’s gently voice broke through. “What do you need? How can we help?”
I want something that’s not possible. What I need is to get used to being tolerated and not loved again.

Virgil shook his head. “I just need time.” He looked up, intending to apologize to Thomas for being unable to tell him what’s going on in his head. Once he saw the concern in Thomas’, though, he broke. He fell to the ground, curled up in a ball and crying pitifully, pained gasps on the inhale and sobs on the exhale. He felt people join him on the landing, but he pressed himself harder against the wall.

“Virgil, it’s okay, I won’t touch you.” Thomas said softly. That caused a series of particularly anguished sobs to escape Virgil.

Patton felt as though a lightbulb went on over his head. “Virgil, do you want us to touch you?” A short pause in the heart-breaking sounds coming from Virgil confirmed his suspicions, but Virgil shook his head.

“No, I…” Virgil took a deep breath. He had to tell Thomas now to get them off his back about being touched. He would not, he refused, to do that to them. “The Dark Sides attacked me, but the Light Sides helped me before they got too far or did anything really.” he said through his sobs.

Patton frowned. “Virgil, they-”

Virgil cut him off, almost yelling, “It’s fine! It doesn’t hurt anymore, I’m fine, I’m fine. Then the Dark Sides got locked up. I passed out for a few days, which is probably why you felt weird, and I woke up this morning.”

Thomas felt his heart shattering. What did the Dark Sides do to Virgil? “I’m glad you’re awake now. I’ve missed you. Really, is there anything I can do?”

Virgil shook his head, still wheezing in loud gasps but his crying more under control. “No, I’m good. Can I go back to my room now? I need to be alone. ‘M overwhelmed.”

Patton jumped in. “Of course Virge! Just let us know if you need anything, okay? You know we’re more than willing to help you, right?”

That’s the problem, Virgil thought to himself. He made a noise of assent and rapidly sunk back into his room. Once there, he snapped his room soundproof and let out all of his anguish. The need to be touched was combining with the memories of being touched and the false hope of feeling loved to create a tearing sensation inside of Virgil. He wailed until he had no more strength to do so.

Virgil lay on his floor, his eyes, chest, and throat sore. The intensity of his despair kept him from moving.

Guess I was right. Detox is a bitch.

Virgil slowly pushed himself up into a sitting position. He gave himself a pep talk, focusing on the fact that these attacks would get better as he got used to not being touched or loved again.

You were never loved by Thomas, you worthless, disgusting, horrible Side. You were just stupid enough to think you were.

Virgil couldn’t argue with that. He checked the time and winced. It had been 4 hours. He got up and went into the bathroom to assess the damage.

Damn I look awful.
His face was red and puffy, eyes bloodshot and swollen, and his ever-present dark circles seemed to stand out even more. He wiped his face down and ran cold water over a washcloth. He laid down on his bed and draped the washcloth over his face, hoping it would help with the swelling.

Unfortunately, the wet washcloth on his face only served to remind him of when the Dark Sides would pour water over his face with a cloth to make him think he was drowning. He tore the cloth off his face and stared at it. He felt stupid; it was just damp fabric. He slowly laid down, breathing to fend off a panic attack, and draped it just over his forehead and eyes. In that position, he had to admit it felt pretty nice. By the time the washcloth had warmed up, his headache from crying was pounding, so he grabbed 3 ibuprofen and downed them with a full bottle of water.

He laid down, intending to scroll through Tumblr, but the light from his phone hurt his eyes and made his headache that much worse, even at the lowest light setting. Virgil grudgingly set his phone down on his nightstand and laid down to take a nap. Just as he had closed his eyes, someone knocked on his door. He fought back his irritation and answered.

“Yeah?” Virgil’s voice came out rough.

Patton’s voice filtered through the door. “Hey kiddo. Don’t mean to bother ya, but I was wondering if you wanted to come down for lunch?”

Virgil cleared his throat. “Yeah, I’ll be down in a few minutes.”

“Great! I’m making mac ‘n’ cheese! With hotdogs!”

Virgil snorted and let amusement bleed into his voice. “Sounds great Pat.”

He heard footsteps receding from his door. Virgil picked up the washcloth from the floor where he had thrown it and went into the bathroom to apply eyeshadow. He was relieved to see that the redness had gone down quite a bit, although Patton and maybe even Logan would notice.

He threw on some eyeshadow with a bit of glitter in it to hopefully distract from the redness and went downstairs. The other three Sides were happily chatting in the kitchen, but stopped and turned once Virgil walked in.

“Wow, you only have to be present to suck all of the happiness out of room? Impressive.”

“Salutations Virgil.” Logan raised his mug.

“How are you feeling, Virgil?” Roman carefully asked. Virgil loved how Roman’s gestures would be lower on his body when he was nervous. Once you knew how to read Roman, even his wildest gestures made sense.

Virgil shrugged. “I’m good. Tired.”

Patton finished serving up plates. “Well eat up! I made plenty!” Virgil smiled at the paternal figure. Patton felt everything so deeply, but wasn’t afraid of feeling. He seemed to have limitless love.

Virgil sat down much more gingerly than he had in the morning and began eating. Roman was excitedly talking about his newest idea for a video with Thomas’ friends (“A sleepover! And Thomas pranking each of his friends with classic pranks with a twist! Like putting their hand in pudding!”) and Patton encouraging him. After lunch, both Roman and Logan went to their respective rooms and Patton and Virgil worked on cleaning the kitchen.

“Hey Virge! Here’s the pot! I ran it under some cold water so it wouldn’t be too hot.”
Virgil took the pot from Patton, but almost dropped it when their hands accidentally brushed.

“Sorry Virgil!”

Virgil focused on keeping his breathing normal. “It’s fine Pat.” And resolutely went about rinsing and drying the rest of the dishes.

Once they were done, Patton turned to Virgil.

“We were thinking of having a movie night! Would you like to join us?”

Virgil looked at Patton. Virgil felt exhausted, but he couldn’t say no when Patton was looking at him like that. Virgil thought the ring of gold around Patton’s iris was the most beautiful thing. It was like the light that Patton radiated couldn’t be contained inside.

Virgil shook himself, realizing he had been silently staring into Patton’s eyes. If the expression on Patton’s face was anything to go by, he didn’t seem to mind.

“Oh, yeah, movie night, sounds great. See ya then!” And he fled upstairs.

“8:30 sharp!” Patton called after him.

Virgil closed his door with a little more force than necessary and leaned against it. The touch had reawakened the monster in his chest and it came back with a vengeance. His mind sounded suspiciously like Deceit whispering into his ear from behind.

Maybe you are a slut.

Virgil was still fragile from that morning, so the panic attack set in quickly. He stumbled to the middle of the room but collapsed on the floor, shaking and sobbing. He argued with his brain.

I’m not! I don’t want to do that with him yet, I just have a stupid, hopeless crush.

‘Yet’?

Well, ever, since he doesn’t want me.

Damn right. You think he wants a used up, disgusting, slutty wad of whatever pieces the Dark Sides left?

Virgil sobbed.

No.

You slut.

Shut up! I don’t want to be a slut!

And yet here you are.

I don’t want to have sex with Patton right now!

Awww what’s the matter Anxiety? Do you want a hug? You just want innocent little touches?

Shut up!
Oh ho ho! Found a sore spot.

I don’t want them to touch me. They don’t want to.

Ah, but if they did, you’d drink it up like a man dying of thirst in the desert, wouldn’t you? And soon you’d want more and more because you’re only good as a sloppy whore.

“Virgil, I’ve completed Thomas’ schedule for the next week and I’d like- Virgil, are you alright?”

Virgil knew that Logan was outside the door, but he was too deep in his panic attack.

“I’m coming in Virgil.” Virgil heard his door open. Instead of dark carpet and his room, Virgil’s vision was suddenly filled with Logan. “It’s alright Virgil, you’re safe. Can you focus on your breathing for me?”

Virgil could barely hear Logan over the cruel taunting in his head but nodded, determined not to inflict more emotional and time-consuming labor on Logan than he already was. Logan led him through at least a dozen rounds of breathing exercises before Virgil felt composed enough to sit up.

“Sorry ‘bout that.” Virgil mumbled, his voice even rougher than this morning.

“There is no need to apologize Virgil. You are not to blame for your panic attacks. May I get you some water or tea?”

Virgil felt himself tearing up at the kind offer, and the fact that it was all an act.

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

“Alright. Would you like to come downstairs? I would not mind reading on the couch with you.”

Virgil smiled. That sounded nice. “Sure.”

“Excellent.” Logan stood and extended his hand to Virgil. Virgil took it and pulled himself up.

Once they were settled, Virgil with mint tea, Roman came downstairs.

“Greetings fellow citizens, and you nerds!”

“Despite both of the nouns in your sentence being plural, there are only two of us present. Who else are you referring to?”

“Hello to you too Specs.”

“Would I be correct in postulating that I’m the nerd?”

“Yes.”

Virgil snorted.

“What are you laughing at Blackened Heart Parade?”

“You’re assuming I have a heart.”

Patton popped in from the kitchen.

“Awww look at all my kiddos hanging out together! What’s happenin’?”
Roman threw his arm against his forehead and flopped on the couch dramatically.

“My own family has betrayed me! This is worse than Game of Thrones!”

Virgil bit his lip to hold in his laughter.

Even with the beast clawing at the inside of his ribcage, he could get used to this.

Chapter End Notes

Just to be clear, what Virgil went through is a big deal, but Virgil’s more trying to convince himself than anyone else that it wasn’t. And after being under the thumb of the Dark Sides for so long, he couldn't help but internalize what they said. (esp. Deceit, because Deceit loves to hear himself talk). Poor Virge is just too hard on himself!

But hey, there's some fluff in there!
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

I know it seems like there's a lot of angst happening, but there's a reason for all of it, I promise!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I’m so fucked.

Movie night had started out seeming like it would be like something Virgil could survive. Patton was bustling around getting popcorn ready, Roman was singing Disney tunes in excitement, and Logan was attempting to organize their movie collection into something resembling a system. Virgil was hanging around the kitchen, helping Patton out and listening to the chaos.

Then came the time for everyone to sit down and watch the movie.

Normally, Virgil would have sat in a recliner next to the couch so the Light Sides wouldn’t touch him. However, Patton asked Virgil to join them on the couch, and he had this hopeful look in his bright eyes, and Virgil already felt bad for putting everybody through so much when they shouldn’t have known anything in the first place…

He sat on the couch.

Virgil sat at the very end of the couch, leaning against the arm. He hoped that it communicated to everyone that he didn’t want to be touched. Luckily for him, they seemed to accept that wordlessly. Unluckily for him, they all cuddled together, petting each other’s arms and stealing the occasional kiss. After the first movie (Moana, chosen by Roman), Logan went to put in The Theory of Everything. Patton leaned forward. “Are you sure you don’t want to join us? We’d love to have ya!”

Virgil wanted, he was near tears as the monster in his chest shredded his heart. “I’m sure Pat. I’m good over here.”

Virgil hated himself more for the slight dim he saw in Patton’s eyes. “Okay kiddo! If you change your mind just scoot on over!”

Virgil jerked his head and turned back to the television.

“Good Galilieo why on Earth do we only have VCR equipment?!”

“Nostalgia you plebe!”

“It is entirely impractical!”

“It is entirely necessary!”

“Boys! Settle down or you’re both on dish duty for a week!”

“Fine.”
Virgil smiled fondly at the two temperamental Sides. As he saw them settle back into their cuddle pile, though, all warmth left him. He felt chilled to the bone, despite being in sweatpants and his usual t-shirt and hoodie. He pulled the blanket covering him closer, hoping to replace human connection and touch with fabric.

As the movie went on, Virgil heard little murmurs and giggles coming from next to him. He didn’t dare look, knowing he won’t be able to stay if he did. In the middle of the movie, though, his stupid heart won and he looked over. Roman had maneuvered to the middle of the cuddle pile and was holding both Logan and Patton under his arms. Logan and Patton were leaning against him on either side.

Virgil’s heart broke knowing he’d never have that. Flipping his bangs to cover his rapidly filling eyes, he pushed the blanket off of himself and stood. He heard the movie pause.

“Sorry guys, I’m really tired. I think I’m gonna turn in.” He hoped that his voice didn’t betray his emotions.

Patton caught on. “Are you crying Virge?”

Virgil used all of his control to try to keep his voice even. “What? N-no, why would you think that? I’m fine, I’m just tired.”

“Can you sit down honey? I think we need to talk.” Virgil felt his anxiety skyrocket and cringed as he felt some filter into Thomas. “You’re not in trouble! I just want to make sure I’m understanding everything.”

Virgil sighed and did his breathing exercises as silently as he could. He sat back down and pulled his knees up, keeping his eyes hidden behind his bangs. All three Sides were looking at him in a mixture of confusion and worry.

Patton took a deep breath. “Kiddo, I’m hoping you can be honest with me.”

“Of course I am!” Virgil replied defensively.

“I don’t think you’re just tired honey.”

Virgil stopped at that. His lies came automatically as a self-defense mechanism. Virgil looked into their brown eyes, each a mirror of Thomas but oh so different.

He had to try.

“Okay.” Virgil mumbled into his knees.

“I’m glad kiddo. Why don’t you want us to touch you?”

Virgil felt cortisol and adrenaline flood his system. Roman and Logan were looking at Patton in shock. Maybe if I don’t answer he’ll ask a different question.

After about 30 seconds of silence, Patton broke it. “Are you afraid of us?” he asked, knowing that likely wasn’t it but also afraid it might be.

“No! That’s not it, I swear!” Virgil replied immediately. He saw each of the Light Sides breathe a sigh of relief.
“I’m really glad to hear that Virgil. Is it because of what the Dark Sides did?” Patton asked.

“I- yes, maybe? I d-dunno, it’s a little of th-that.” Virgil stammered, fresh tears gathering as he remembered them, how they made him disgusting, untouchable, and unloveable.

Patton softened his voice. “What’s the other part sweetie?”

Virgil ducked his head further into his knees, trying to hide the tears and his breathing coming more rapidly. He couldn’t tell them, he couldn’t, then they’d force themselves. He couldn’t live with himself if he made them force themselves. And that’s the rub, isn’t it? They don’t actually care about him, love him. They love Thomas, and they know now that keeping his Anxiety happy and healthy is what’s important. They don’t love me and they shouldn’t. I’m so awful, disgusting, so fucking gross, worthless, harmful, unloveable, I hate myself… He let out a pained sob.

“L-look I don’t want you to touch me just because you think you have to. I kn-know you’re worried about Thomas, but I know leaving would hurt him, s-so I’m not gonna do it. And b-before you do,” Virgil had to stop the false assurances, he’d completely break down if he heard the fake concern. He wanted real love, real concern, and hearing the fake concern would kill him. “I don’t w-want you to lie either. I can’t, I can’t take it. I don’t n-need you t-to t-t-touch me or pretend to like me for me to stay. It’s worse when you touch me. I promise I won’t hurt Thomas again.”

Another sob as he remembered how hurt Thomas was by his attempted suicide. “I really d-didn’t mean to. I didn’t know that it would hurt him. I thought it would help him.” Virgil was met with silence.

There. Now it was out in the open. Maybe they wouldn’t try and touch him now. It would definitely help the touch ache.

Knowing he had finally freed the Light Sides from their burden, Virgil sank out into his room and stopped trying to hold back the panic attack and tears.

Chapter End Notes

Healing takes a while, and there's gonna be ups and downs. I promise things will look up soon though! Virgil finally talking about his feelings definitely helps.
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

I never expected this fic to get such a following. Know that I love and appreciate every single hit, kudos, comment, subscription, and bookmark! Right now there are 174 kudos, 253 comments (holy flip!!!), 18 bookmarks, 60 subscriptions, and... wait for it, drumroll please... 2234 hits!!! LIKE WHAT?!?!?!

I was really nervous to put this fic out there because it mirrored so much of my own experience, but y'all have been so sweet and kind that I've teared up more than once! And for some folks, it's helped them process through some of their own stuff! I wrote this to get my experience out there anonymously, and seeing so many people accepting this story and being so nice to me about it has done wonders for me. Just the fact that it helped one person besides me blows my mind in the best possible way, and it makes me tear up everytime I think about it.

Thank you all so much!! I hope you enjoy the chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The three Light Sides sat there in shocked, heartbroken silence. Patton had a hand against his mouth and tears running down his face. Roman and Logan were staring at the place that Virgil sunk down in mute shock, neither of them able to even form a coherent thought. Roman was the first to break the silence.

“Virgil… he really thinks we don’t love him.”

Patton let out a broken sob. Roman tightened his arm around his heart, bringing the brown and faded purple hair closer to his chest.

“I-I knew there was more to him not wanting to be touched, it looked like he wanted to so many times, but I had no idea…” Patton trailed off. “I just wanted to understand why he wasn’t accepting something he wanted. And I got the answer out of him, but it’s so much worse than I thought!”

Roman tightened the hand that was on Patton’s shoulder reassuringly. “As… difficult as it was to hear what our love had to say, I think it’s good we know. Now we know what we’re up against and we can fight it!”

Patton nuzzled into Roman’s chest and side. “We need to figure out how to get our little shadowling to accept the fact that we love him. But I don’t know what to do! I’ve been trying to show Virgil love and support and make him feel comfortable, but he still doesn’t seem to accept it. And he said that something’s worse when we do touch him! What could that be? I don’t want to hurt my dark strange son! I’m supposed to know what to do!”

Logan swallowed thickly, his vision slightly blurry. “I must admit, while this is not my area of expertise, I do know that touch is essential for mental and physical health. A lack of touch can cause what is known as “touch starvation”. I am worried Virgil may be experiencing that. As such, when he is touched, it may feel painful and/ or it may cause his touch starvation to intensify for a short period of time.”
Roman frowned. “I’m confused. Weren’t the Dark Sides–” he cut himself off and inhaled through his nose, literally seeing red. “I’ll fucking kill them if I ever get the chance.” he growled. He noticed Patton didn’t scold him for language.

Logan adjusted his tie. “While Virgil may have been getting physical contact from the Dark Sides, he was likely dissociating during those times. Even if he wasn’t dissociating, forced and traumatic touch do nothing to aid touch starvation. If anything, it makes the sufferer more disoriented and unsettled regarding touch.”

Patton whimpered as he curled into a miserable ball. “My poor son… Virgil…”

Roman wrapped an arm around Logan and hugged two of his loves tightly. “We’ll figure out a way. We need a battle plan! If Virgil won’t accept our touch until he accepts that we love him, then that’s our first step! What is standing in our way of convincing him that we love him?”

“H-he kept bringing up the time when he tried to duck out. It sounds like he thinks w-we’re faking our love to get him to not duck out ag-ain!” Patton couldn’t help how his voice broke. He felt a ball of pressure inside his chest, knowing that Virgil thought their love was all an act. He sniffled. Roman tightened his arm around Patton, trying in vain to comfort his emotional boyfriend.

“Then that is the belief we start disassembling first. Science begins with questions. Why does Virgil believe that we began faking after we found out Thomas needed him? How was our behavior different after we accepted him?”

Patton curled into an even tighter ball. “We all started showing him more affection. But I’ve always shown Virge love! Why doesn’t he believe I love him?”

Logan paused. That was an excellent question. “That is a good question Patton. Your behavior has remained constant, yet Virgil remains resolute in his belief.” Logan pondered. “While this is all theoretical, I believe this may be a defense mechanism of Virgil’s.”

“A defense mechanism?! Why would it hurt Virgil for me to love him?!” Patton cried.

Logan hurried to answer before Patton became too upset. “Perhaps because it makes him vulnerable. To love someone and accept their love in return makes a person vulnerable, and Virgil was in,” Logan had to swallow the sobs trying to get out, “an impossible situation. I am not surprised that he has developed cognitive distortions in order to survive. In fact, I believe it shows an incredible strength of spirit.”

Roman puffed out his chest in pride. “I always knew Virgil was strong.”

Logan nodded sagely. “Indeed he is. I believe that since he believes the turning point was when he attempted to “duck out”, we need to list why and how we appreciated him before that event. When giving him compliments about his characteristics, it is important to be specific so he has a harder time refuting it. In addition, I believe we should make it clear that it’s okay to let himself be vulnerable. That may take time for him to actually implement, but as long as he knows it’s an option he’ll be more comfortable attempting contact in the future, which may lead to the resolution of his touch-starvation.”

Patton perked up at the hope of making Virgil feel better. “Virgil also brought up that he doesn’t want us touching him if we don’t actually want to touch him, which makes sense! And we’ll tell him that we won’t touch him if we don’t want to! We’ll make a deal and pinky promise and everything!”
Roman chuckled. “That sounds wonderful Patton. I think we’ll let you handle that.”

Patton beamed. All three Sides suddenly felt Thomas summon them. They went quickly, wondering what they would need them for so late at night. Once they rose up, though, they figured it out quickly. Thomas was holding a hand to his chest and hyperventilating. He looked up at his Sides with glassy eyes as they rose. Patton went over immediately, while Logan and Roman approached but stayed a few feet away.

Patton grabbed his Host’s hand and brought it to his chest. “It’s okay Thomas, breathe with me. In for four, remember? That good, hold for seven. You’re doing so good Thomas! And out for eight.” After several rounds, Thomas was more coherent.

“Thanks guys. That was a bad one.” He looked around. “Where’s Virgil? I summoned him too.” Thomas turned as white as a sheet of paper. “Is he-”

Roman stood. “We’ll go check right now. Will you be alright by yourself Thomas?”

Thomas nodded. “Yeah, I’ll be good. Guys,” Thomas grabbed Roman’s hand before he could leave. “The panic attack was about being alone and no one loving me anymore. Just in case it was Virgil.” Though his words were a little scrambled, the Sides knew what he meant. Patton enveloped Thomas in a bear hug.

“We all love you so much!”

Thomas snorted tiredly. “I know Patton. I’ll be okay. Just go and check on Virgil, okay?”

With one more squeeze, Patton let go of Thomas.

All three Sides were up in an instant and quickly made their way to Virgil’s room. They heard pained gasps and keens coming from inside. Roman looked ready to barge in, but Logan held him back, not wanting to startle Virgil.

“Virgil, it is Logan, Roman, and Patton. We’re coming in.” Then he turned the doorknob and opened the door. They were met with a sorrowful sight. Virgil was curled up on his bed, face in his pillow to muffle the sounds he was making. When Virgil looked up, he was staring at them with fear and mistrust in his eyes.

“Oh Virge.” Patton breathed. “Is it okay if I come near you?”

Virgil trembled and shrunk further into himself defensively. He nodded his head carefully.

“All right honey, I won’t come too close. Let me know when to stop, okay?” Virgil nodded, gasps becoming more desperate. Once Patton was 5 feet away, Virgil let out a particularly loud whimper and flinched. Patton stopped and crouched down immediately, putting his hands in a loose surrender position. “Alright Virge, can you see my chest moving?” Patton took an exaggerated breath. Virgil nodded. “That’s good! Now let’s see if we can breathe in for four? One, two, three…” Patton counted as he breathed, making sure his chest movements were visible. He wanted to run to Virgil and scoop him up, but he knew Virgil would only be more scared by that. After close to twenty rounds of breathing exercises, Virgil seemed steadier. Patton smiled gently.

“Hey Virge, you feeling any better?” Virgil nodded mutely. “Okay sweetie, can I get you some water or tea? Are you hungry?” Patton asked.

Virgil cleared his throat. “Water would be good if it’s not too much trouble,” he said, his voice raspy.
Roman spoke up, “Of course!” and quickly summoned a bottle of water. He approached Virgil slowly, who gingerly took the bottle from Roman and downed half of it.

Logan spoke next, wanting to establish to Virgil that it was indeed them and not the Dark Sides. “Would you like space or company Virgil? We would be more than happy to provide either.”

Virgil thought for a moment. “Space I think.”

Logan nodded. “Alright Virgil. Let us know if you want any of us at any time. We care for you and are happy to provide you with what you need.”

Virgil’s eyes were wide as he stared at Logan, but managed to nod and pull his blanket up. Patton, Roman, and Logan silently filed out of Virgil’s room, closing the door behind them. Patton was starting to sniffle already, so Roman put his hand on Patton’s back and silently led both him and Logan to his room.

“I think we should be together tonight.”

They laid down on the bed together, Patton in the middle. Logan and Roman both held Patton and had a hand on each other. Logan took his and Patton’s glasses off and kissed Patton’s forehead. Roman and Logan met over Patton’s head in a kiss as Patton let out a watery giggle. Roman placed his hand on Patton’s cheek and kissed the other side while Logan got comfortable.

“Goodnight my loves.”

Chapter End Notes

I decided that Logan would be super blunt about his compliments. Don't @ me I'm soft.
A little shorter, but very important, chapter today! I was going to get an additional chapter out to y'all lovely people before the end of the day today, but I was writing a much chapter in which Virgil experiences a depersonalization episode, and I think I described it a little too well because it made me depersonalize writing it! I'm fine, I actually found a little humor in the situation, but I'm v floaty atm and know I won't be able to make sure a second chapter is as good of quality.

All that is to say, if you see something funky with the editing or formatting, please let me know! I got all of the editing done before I started on that other chapter, but I always do a last read-through just in case I want to change something last minute.

Edit: thank you to CKTKat for pointing out a few errors!

Edit 2: The second paragraph contains descriptions of Virgil using cutting as self-harm. If that's not something you can read, feel free to skip it!

Virgil threw the covers back as soon as the door latched behind the Light Sides. He scrambled to his knees, pulled out the envelope underneath his bed, and grabbed a trusty razor. He went to the bathroom, closed and locked the door, and took his shirt off.

Virgil appraised his upper arms. They were already fairly covered in recent cuts, so he shimmied his skinny jeans off. His thighs had some yellowing bruises, but there weren’t any open cuts there. Virgil placed the corner of the razor at about mid-thigh, then slowly drew it up, savoring the distracting pain and looking forward to the rush of endorphins he’d get. Instead of his mind being filled with the tearing, agonizing longing for love and touch, it was filled with simple, singular pain. Focusing on the sensation, he drew another line from his mid-thigh to his hip, and another, and another. After a final cut, his mind was pleasantly buzzing with endorphins and flashes of pain from his thigh. Virgil squeezed his upper arm, relishing the slightly duller ache there. After breathing through the pain, he stood to get a damp washcloth. Once he had cleaned and bandaged his newest cuts with more toilet paper, he pulled on some loose sweatpants and put his t-shirt back on. After a moment, he put on his hoodie as well. His hoodie has always been his armor, making him feel safe, like he was more able to keep secrets from the Light Sides.

Making sure to lay down so his fresh cuts would have pressure put on them, he tried to settle in for the night.

Only to see the Dark Sides the moment he closed his eyes.

Virgil shot up and looked around his room, wide-eyed and panting. He knew it was ridiculous, but he got out of bed and took a lap around his room, checking for any hidden Dark Sides. After checking under and in every piece of furniture, he crawled back into bed. However, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t get comfortable enough to fall asleep. He could feel the Dark Sides’ presences around him, staring at him, could feel their hands on him, hurting him…
Virgil let out a frustrated growl as he threw off his covers once more and got out of bed. Deciding that tonight was going to be a sleepless night, he went downstairs to make himself some coffee.

///// 

The next morning, Patton came downstairs to find Virgil already up. He was sitting in an armchair in the commons, bobbing his head to some music that was blaring from his headphones.

“Heya kiddo!” Patton chirped.

Virgil jumped violently and whipped his head around to look at Patton with wide eyes.

Patton raised his hands. “Sorry, didn’t mean to startle ya! Didn’t expect to see you up so early!”

Virgil shrugged. “Yeah, I got up during the night and couldn’t get back to sleep.” Not technically an outright lie, but close enough. Goddammit Virgil you coward.

“Awwww kiddo I’m sorry! You know you can come get one of us if you ever need anything, right?”

Virgil allowed himself a small smile at that. Patton was simply too good. “Yeah, I know. Thanks Pop Star.”

Patton squealed. “You are SO welcome! I’m making blueberry pancakes and scrambled eggs this morning! Want to help?”

“Sure.”

Virgil helped Patton by cutting up bell peppers, onions, and mushrooms. Patton was talking excitedly about the meetup Thomas was planning with his fans and Virgil nodded along, anxious about everything that could go wrong but trying not to let that filter into Thomas until he was more awake. Once Patton had a few pancakes made and staying warm under a dome, Virgil cracked a half dozen eggs into a skillet and added the veggies. He added a generous pad of butter along with pepper and paprika. He whipped the eggs constantly to make sure plenty of air got into them to keep them fluffy. Once they were almost done, he added a pinch of salt.

“Thanks Virge! You’re always so helpful!”

Virgil sent him a two finger salute.

It’s the least I can do to make up for putting up with me.

Logan moved sluggishly into the kitchen, silently filling up his coffee cup and sitting down. Virgil had no idea how Logan looked so put together even before he had his coffee, but whatever he was doing he was doing it right. When breakfast was almost ready, Roman pranced into the kitchen.

“Good morning everyone! Who’s excited for today? I know I am! I have so many wonderful ideas I can hardly wait!”

Virgil and Logan both winced at the volume of Roman’s voice, Logan because he had just woken up and Virgil because he was exhausted.

“I’m excited for peace and quiet.” Logan mumbled.

“Too bad, for today I require your assistance!” Roman proclaimed.

Logan’s eyes widened as he realized that today he and Roman would indeed be working closely together. “Oh sh-” Logan covered his mouth to keep the expletives from leaving him. Virgil
snorted, knowing he could hide out in his room and maybe pass out for a few hours. His mood soured when he realized that Princey and everyone else was probably in a good mood because of what he had told them the night before.

“Alright, time to eat!”

Virgil served himself a pancake and a small scoop of eggs. He made sure to spread out his eggs to make it look like he took more than he actually did. The Light Sides would worry if he didn’t eat enough, knowing it could impact Thomas. Virgil felt the familiar curl of grief in his stomach at the knowledge, but forced it down with his food. During past meals, Virgil was either too tired, in too much pain, and/ or too traumatized to force down much food. Since it was only one factor today, he was able to get another half scoop of eggs down before he had to call it quits.

At least I can sit down and I don’t have to lean against the counter, Virgil thought wryly.

“Nope, Virgil made them!”

Patton’s remark brought Virgil out of his thoughts into the present. Logan raised his coffee mug, slightly more alert. “You did well Virgil. These are very good.”

“Indeed Donnie Darko! These eggs are delicious!”

Virgil blushed under the attention. “Y-yeah, well, it’s just eggs, it’s no big deal.”

“Give yourself some credit Edgar Allen Woe! Anyways, what do you have planned for today? Logan and I shall be valiantly fighting for Thomas’ success!”

Virgil was grateful for the change in subject. “Just hang out in my room, do my work. Might try to catch a nap somewhere in there.”

Logan trained astute eyes on Virgil. “Did you not sleep well?”

Virgil shrugged. “Got up and couldn’t get back to sleep.”

Logan hummed. “I’m sorry to hear that Virgil. I hope you know you can come to us if you require assistance.”

Virgil started feeling suspicious, but let it slide this time. “Yeah, I know. Just had insomnia, no big deal.”

Logan was about to refute the point that yes, it was a big deal, but Patton cut him off. “Okay kiddo! I’ll clean up here, why don’t you try to get some rest?”

Virgil frowned, uneasy. He should be helping Patton, not just loafing around. “You sure you don’t want help Pat? I don’t mind.”

Patton waved him off. “I’m good! There’s not that many dishes anyways. Thanks for offering though! You’re so thoughtful!”

Virgil blushed harder under the praise. “Wh-whatever. I’m gonna go to my room, get ready for Thomas.”

“Farewell sweet prince!” echoed after Virgil as he fled.

////
“I think that could have gone better?” Roman said, unsure.

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe that it went as well as our first attempt could go. I believe we should be cautious to not provide too many compliments to Virgil in too short a span of time. That may lead Virgil to become suspicious of us and question the sincerity of our appreciation.”

“Gosh, it’s just so hard! Ever since Virgil told us how he felt, I just want to give him all of the love!” Patton exclaimed.

Logan softened. “I know Patton. But we must stay the course. Similar to how you don’t want to put a victim of hypothermia in a hot tub, so too must we take things slowly with Virgil.”

Patton nodded sadly. “That makes sense. I hope he can understand soon. I just want to wrap my dark chocolate Twix up in a big hug and never let go!”

Roman chuckled. “Same here Padre. But, we have a battle plan and are executing it! While I too am eager to see the fruits of our labor, I am simply glad to be doing something.”

“Indeed.” Logan agreed.

Patton giggled. “Since you two are the last here, you get dish duty!” Twin groans came from the kitchen table.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! I should be getting that next chapter out to you tomorrow.
Buckle in gang, this one gets rough. It includes descriptions of self-harm.

The rest of the day passed in a similar fashion. Everybody was helping Thomas get a new video out a little ahead of schedule to surprise the Fanders, and the Light Sides made sure that Virgil got at least one compliment per meal.

Virgil had been able to get a nap in the afternoon, and even though he was woken by a nightmare and had to use his breathing exercises, the Light Sides didn’t find out and Virgil counted that as a win. He only had to fend off two panic attacks, and he also only had to make one additional cut so he would seem semi-normal for dinner. He was confused and frustrated by all of the nice things the Light Sides had been saying about him all day, but all in all, it was a good day for Virgil. He was even able to go to sleep at 3 AM!

After a week of the same routine, he began understand the saying, “It gets worse before it gets better.” Virgil had to fight viciously to stay in his body and grounded. Any time one of the Light or Neutral Sides would come within five feet of him or so much as look in his direction, Virgil would be terrified of being hurt again and have to retreat back to his room to panic and cry until he passed out. He knew logically that the Light and Neutral Sides would never hurt him like the Dark Sides had, but he couldn’t stop the fear he felt.

Virgil hated himself even more for thinking such things about the Light and Neutral Sides. Every time he felt his survival mode kick in, he cursed himself. The worried looks they gave him made the anger at himself boil over. He leveled himself out and punished himself by cutting, beginning to carve words into his skin where he could reach. His insults joined what the Dark Sides had branded on and cut into him.

Failure

Worthless

Burden

I hate myself

Disgusting

Useless

Hole

Virgil cut and cut, until it was only bad pain. He tried using matches, but fire didn’t give him the right kind of pain. He found slapping himself could help short-term if he just needed a quick fix, but he began needing to cut more and more to function and pretend that everything was okay. Virgil found he began hating the cutting more and more; the lingering pain that would follow him throughout the day was bad pain now, and it took so much more to make the act of cutting good
pain. He knew he was addicted, but he was too scared to stop and lose the one coping mechanism that still worked. He wasn’t sure which was worse, the flashbacks or the battle to stay in his body. Flashbacks caused Virgil to randomly lose track of conversations as he was either fully pulled back into the memory or was distracted by the sensations, sounds, and sights. He’d occasionally try to push hands away or he’d run a few paces before he realized he didn’t need to. The Light Sides were obviously concerned and Virgil had to use every ounce of self-control to not snap at them in irritation whenever they’d ask what was wrong. They were worried, it wasn’t their fault that they were too charitable to dump someone as damaged and damaging as Virgil.

Floating away from his body, derealizing, or depersonalizing made it beyond difficult to focus. Virgil fought to track the conversations and provide somewhat valuable input, but several times one of the Sides would say that they had just said something that Virgil had suggested. Virgil felt helpless as he knew he was losing his grip on reality. He kept waiting for the other shoe to drop, for the Light and Neutral Sides to realize that he was more work than he was worth and to banish him to a life of isolation in the Dark Side of the mindscape. He found himself sometimes wishing that they would revile him already. Having this false care and knowing that it wouldn’t last was more stressful than before they had accepted him.

Virgil vividly remembers a discussion they had regarding Thomas’ social life. Logan and Virgil were worried about getting things done on time, whereas Roman and Patton were insisting that Thomas spend the weekend with his friends to recharge.

As the discussion continued, Virgil felt himself get floaty. No, no, not again, not right now, please. He did his best to follow the conversation, but would find himself missing huge chunks of what was being said. He’d be staring blankly at a spot on the carpet when he’d come back. When Virgil was present, it was hard to hear what was being said and decipher it. It was like he was dropped in the middle of Spain when he only had 2 years of high school Spanish. Eventually, he couldn’t follow along anymore, and just made sure to watch who was talking to give the illusion of being present. Pretty soon, he started feeling hands and hearing the Dark Sides. 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sunk out to his room, where he was free to lose his mind.

The one nice thing that Virgil clung to like a shipwrecked man in a stormy sea was their compliments. Although at first Virgil fought accepting their kind words, it eventually became easier to just accept them. He still put up a facade, he had a reputation to maintain after all, but on the inside he felt something close to happiness whenever they’d praise him. It wasn’t nearly enough to overcome the negativity that enveloped his mind, but it helped.

Though Virgil was free from the Dark Side, he was still going through daily torture. His flashbacks were seemingly were making up for the time he’d usually spend at the Dark Sides' whim. Virgil's flashbacks typically involved all of his senses; during each flashback, he didn't know it was a flashback. The only thing he was experiencing was the real thing. Afterwards, he'd usually pass out from the power of the subsequent panic attack. Once he came to, if he didn't wake up in the midst of a nightmare, he'd realized that he hadn't been assaulted again, but godDAMN it felt like it. He'd sit in a boiling hot shower for hours, trying to get the hands and the film of grime off of him, but it'd never work. The only time he wasn't passed out or in a boiling hot shower was when he was absolutely needed or not in the present.

Virgil decided to start isolating himself. Even though Remy and Saul had seen him right after he had been accepted by the Light Sides, he knew that this time was different. He would NOT bring the Light and Neutral Sides down with him. The less they had to deal with him, the easier it would be for them. Besides, it meant that there was less time that he had to pretend that everything was fine. It was becoming increasingly more difficult for Virgil to pretend that he was okay.

It all came to a head two and a half months later, when Virgil found himself back in his bathroom, carving into his body again. He felt like giving up, but he held onto the fact that Thomas needed him. If it wasn’t for Thomas, Virgil would have ended his life long ago. Virgil had tried to pretend that he was fine, to both himself and the other Sides. He kept telling himself that since the Dark Sides were locked up, he could start getting better again.

Why am I not getting better? Why am I getting worse?! I feel so much worse!! Dammit!!!

Get off get off get off get off get off!!

Help! Somebody, please! God, I just want help!

I want to die.

Virgil froze, his body consumed by bad pain. The thought came so calmly that Virgil was terrified.

No! I don’t want to die! I don’t want to die!

Virgil began sobbing. Everything hurt, inside and out. He was tired of hurting. He didn’t want to die, he just wanted the pain to stop! He didn’t want to die, but he was scared he might if he lost himself and his mind to dissociation, panic, despondency, or the need to cut. He kneeled on the floor for an unknown amount of time. When he finally came back to himself, his legs were completely asleep. He looked in horror at what he had done to himself.

I… I don’t want to do this anymore. What they did to me is what's making me cut. I'm doing this because of the Dark Sides, and I'm tired of hurting because of them. I want to be myself, not theirs.

Virgil felt something he hadn’t felt in a long time: spite towards the Dark Sides.

They think they can keep hurting me when they’re locked up? Well fuck them! I’ll show them! They’re not gonna hurt me anymore! No!
After several minutes of flexing his legs, Virgil shakily stood, crying all the while. He couldn’t seem to stop the steady flow of tears and hitching shoulders. He needed to hold himself up on the sink. Once Virgil took stock of his body, he felt overwhelmed. Normally, he wouldn’t mind caring for his wounds, but he just felt so… done. He didn’t know what he had to do, but he knew he couldn’t go on like this. Virgil sobbed.

*Help! I need help!* he silently screamed into the cosmos. An idea came to his mind.

*Patton.*

Virgil didn’t know exactly why, but he knew in that moment that the only way for him to feel better was Patton. He knew he couldn’t just walk around the mindscape in his boxers, so he slowly and painstakingly went about putting on an old black t-shirt and sweatpants that he didn’t particularly care for. He checked the time and winced.

3:34 AM. *Dammit Virgil, you can’t wake him up!*

*I can’t survive another minute like this, either.*

Virgil made his way down the quiet hallway to the deceptively plain blue door.

*Once I knock, there’s no going back.*

Virgil stood in front of the door for 15 long minutes, fighting with himself, before he forced himself to knock three times in a burst of courage. He heard a loud snore, shuffling around, then soft padding over to the door.

*Last chance to run you coward.*

*No, I… I have to try. For them. For Thomas.*

Patton opened the door blearily, but woke up immediately when he saw Virgil hugging himself miserably and crying.

“Oh Virgil! What happened?” Patton wanted to reach out to him, but he hadn’t missed how flighty Virgil had become in the past few months.

“I…” How could Virgil say it? That he had been hurting himself? That he was so weak he was letting the Dark Sides hurt him when they weren’t even near him?

“Th-the Dark S-sides-” Virgil’s voice choked off with a sob.

Patton became terrified. He placed his hands on Virgil’s shoulders, noticing how he flinched but needing to hold him. “Did they hurt you sweetie?”

Virgil wasn’t sure how to answer, but he wanted to be honest. “I-I-I don’t kn-know, k-k-kind o-ot?”

Patton looked at Virgil seriously. “Do we need to wake up Logan and Roman? Did they get out or are they hurting you remotely?”

Virgil shook his head. “N-no! N-n-nothing like that, I… can I show you? Please? I’m sorry, my body is so d-d-d-disgusting, I’m s-so g-g-gross, y-you’re too good to h-ha-have to be exposed to that and *fuck* I h-hate myself…”

Patton cut him off. “Nonsense Virgil, you’re beautiful. And of course you can show me. Do you
want to be inside my room or outside when you show me?"

Virgil tensed further. "I-inside if that’s okay with you."

"Of course!" Patton kept one hand on Virgil and used it to gently guide him into his room. Virgil went straight to the bathroom. Patton had to swallow his nausea, terrified of what Virgil had to show him. If something happened to my sweet boy again I’ll never forgive myself.

Patton hesitated by the doorway. “Do you want me to come in or stay outside honey?”

“I-in please. I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry…”

“None of that. I don’t mind helping you at all. I don’t think your body is disgusting at all. Do you want to show me now?”

Virgil nodded, grabbed the hem of his t-shirt, and hesitated, looking fearful.

Patton softened. “You don’t have to if you don’t want to sweetie. I promise, it’s okay.”

With that reassurance, Virgil scrunched his eyes shut and pulled off his t-shirt in one swift motion. The gasp from the fatherly Side was enough to make Virgil want to punish himself, but he still had one more thing to do. Making sure he only had the waistband of his sweatpants and not his boxers as well, he pushed them down and stepped out of them as quickly as he could. His eyes still closed, he heard Patton, “Oh Virgil…”

Virgil couldn’t let him finish. “I-I’m s-s-sorry! I-I-I’m sorry! I know, I’m terrible for lying to you guys and you probably hate me right now but I’m tired of hurting and I want help and I figured you’d be the least pissed off at me for waking you up and being pathetic and—” Virgil was cut off in his ramblings by a crushing bear hug.

"Virgil Anxiety Sanders, I do not and will never hate you. I’m not angry with you. You’re so brave and strong. And of course I’ll help you.” Patton whispered roughly.

Virgil couldn’t stop two sobs of relief from escaping. He was too overwhelmed by Patton’s acceptance and the real hug! need! need more! more! After a few moments Patton let go and had to catch Virgil as his legs gave out.

“Virgil! Did you lose too much blood?”

“No, I’m just…” Virgil trailed off, his voice broken, too overwhelmed to say anything further.

“It’s okay, I’ve got you. Think you can sit on the toilet?”

Virgil nodded. Patton guided Virgil over and sat him down. As Patton gathered first aid supplies, Virgil was left to his own thoughts.

I don’t deserve any of this. Why did I get Patton? I deserve to suffer. I deserve to hurt. The Light Sides deserve better. Patton didn’t deserve to get woken up and have to deal with me. It’s all my fault. I hate myself. Fuck I hate myself so much.

Patton came back with cotton balls, antiseptic fluid, antibiotic cream, gauze, and medical tape. He kneeled down and looked up at Virgil. Virgil had a very strong feeling of wrong wrong this is wrong Patton shouldn’t be kneeling in front of me! flood his system. He flinched backwards.

“It’s okay kiddo, it’s just me. Do you want me to start on your arms, stomach, or thighs first
“Okay.” Patton got to work, efficiently cleaning all of the cuts on Virgil’s thighs, telling Virgil what he was going to do next at each stage. Virgil accepted the burn of the antiseptic fluid, knowing this was the least he deserved. Patton spread antibiotic cream over the wounds and bandaged them up.

“Can I start on your arms and stomach now?”

“Y-y-yeah.” Shivers were starting to take over Virgil’s body. Being clad in only boxers could only keep you so warm.

“Are you cold?”


Patton waved his hand and the ambient temperature rose. Virgil stopped shivering almost immediately.

Patton repeated the process on Virgil’s arms and stomach, telling Virgil what he was doing before he did it. Virgil was silently grateful; with flashbacks and dissociation becoming more and more common, he never knew what might trigger him. Patton bit his lip whenever he’d clean one of the words that Virgil carved into himself.

Once Patton finished, he leaned back and stood. “How are you feeling? Do you think you can walk?”

Virgil nodded, then used the sink next to him to push himself up. Patton hovered nearby, ready to catch Virgil if needed. Patton led him into the bedroom, then hesitated. “Virge, I’d feel better if I could sleep in the same room as you tonight. Is that okay?” Patton asked, hoping that Virgil would feel comfortable with it.

“Yeah, that’s… that’s fine.”

Patton frowned, worried. “Are you sure? I don’t have to if it’d make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.”

“No, it’s fine.”

Patton nodded, still worried. “Okay. Where do you want to sleep and where do you want me to sleep?”

Virgil felt like complete garbage. “I-I don’t know, Patton, I can’t make that decision!”

Patton wanted to ask why, but he reeled himself in. “Okay sweetie. How about I suggest things and you tell me if they sound good to you?”

Virgil could handle that. That was so much easier. “That works.”

Patton pondered his options for a moment. He really didn’t want to make Virgil uncomfortable, but he didn’t want to make Virgil feel like he wasn’t more than willing to give whatever comfort he needed.

“Let’s see… Want to sleepover in my bed?”
“That’s fine.”

“Alright. And let me know if you get uncomfortable at any time, okay? It’s okay to need to stop and do something else, I promise.”

Virgil felt himself getting choked up. “I will.”

They got into bed, Virgil more slowly than Patton. Patton carefully asked, “Do you want me to hold you sweetie?”

Virgil looked into Patton’s open face. The exhaustion, the emotional swings he’d been through, the care Patton’s shown him, and the hug he got earlier… it became too much. He could feel a painful lump in his throat. Virgil bit the inside of his lip to keep it from quivering, but his eyes filled and spilled over.

“Honey? What’s wrong? Did I make you uncomfortable?”

That’s what broke the dam. Virgil burst into tears.

“Oh no, sweetie! It’s okay, I’m sorry! I’m sorry!” Patton quickly reassured.

Virgil shook his head. He wanted another hug so bad (greedy selfish worthless slut, just can’t get enough can you?), but he knew Patton probably didn’t even want to give the first hug. He didn’t deserve this, not any of this.

Patton picked up on Virgil’s dilemma. “I remember what you said almost three months ago. How about this: I promise not to touch you unless I want to. Deal?” Virgil met Patton’s determined gaze and nodded. He died on the inside knowing that this would probably mark the end of all physical contact from Patton, sweet loving warm Patton, but there was relief in that Virgil wouldn’t have to refuse offers.

Patton kept eye contact. “Okay. Can I please hug you Virge?”

Virge was shocked. The Side showed no signs of lying. Virgil knew how to pick up on lying; living with the embodiment of, well, deceit certainly helped with that. Could he be telling the truth?

Virgil nodded slowly through his sobs. Patton came forward, slowly enough that Virgil could tell him to stop, and wrapped him in a tight, loving hug. Virgil cried harder, allowing himself catharsis. Patton held Virgil, wishing his hug could put the broken Side back together if he hugged hard enough. He held on, protecting Virgil from the demons that haunted him and trying to pour all of his love into his hug.

Virgil’s crying slowed, more out of pure exhaustion than anything. Patton loosened his grip slightly, but still held on. “Do you want to stay like this?” Virgil nodded into Patton’s chest. Patton pulled Virgil in a little as he rolled onto his back. He chastely kissed the crown of Virgil’s head.

“Goodnight Virge. I’ll be here when you wake up tomorrow morning.”

Virgil allowed himself to relax in the loving hold, feeling safe, and drifted off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes
Ufda! Glad to see you made it through this one! I'd like to tell you that the next chapter is all comfort, but I'd be lying. On the plus(?) side, we'll get a tiny glimpse into Virgil's history with the Dark Sides.

Also, I used my own experience with self-harm and my decision to get help for it for Virgil. Although my addiction to self-harm (for me, it truly was an addiction to those endorphins) lasted longer than Virgil's after I was rescued, I couldn't write him having it longer than 2 1/2 to 3 months after he was rescued for some reason. It just really seemed like the right amount of time for Virgil where self-harm would become more bad than good for him. I hope that helps the timeline make a little bit more sense!
Hey folks! First and foremost, re-check the last couple of tags! My amazing editor Jasper01 pointed out that I was missing some, so I added them. Stay safe!

There's also a flashback in here. It's the block of italicized text.

I must have done something wrong because AO3 de-italicized a bunch of tet for some reason. Anyways, it's fixed, so it should be a much more enjoyable reading experience!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil woke to Jealousy holding him.

Nonononononono did I pass out?! Fuck! PATTON!!

Virgil knew better than to struggle against whoever was holding him. His skin was crawling and his heart rate was out of control. He listened to see if Jealousy was asleep. I might be able to grab some water or one of the snacks Greed has stockpiled in his room. Maybe then I won’t pass out during the day. Is Thomas doing any filming today? Shit shit shit, I don’t remember! Fuck, what day is it?! Oh my god, Thomas!

Virgil remembered falling asleep in Patton’s arms, and now he was with Jealousy back in the Dark Side, and… wait.

Virgil slowly opened his eyes, and saw a white v-neck short-sleeved shirt with pink kittens and bowties on it. Virgil breathed a sigh of relief, but he still needed out. His breaths were coming fast and shallow. He carefully detangled the arms around him so Patton wouldn’t wake up. Once that was done, Virgil brought the blankets up to cover Patton and went into the bathroom. He used his trembling hands to put his clothes back on. It took him several minutes as his hands were shaking so badly that he had a hard time aiming for the sweatpant legs and t-shirt arms. Finally clothed, he fell back against the wall, slid to the floor, and succumbed to the panic attack and flashback. He tried to keep his voice down, but he wasn’t sure how successful he was.

They were all possessive, but Jealousy was the most likely to go last so he could hold Virgil for longer. Virgil used to delude himself into believing that Jealousy had feelings for him, that there was someone out there who cared, but he couldn’t. Once they got more violent and… creative, it was more painful to have someone you thought cared for you hurt you than for no one to love you.

Jealousy was sliding his hands up and down Virgil’s body. Virgil hated the feeling, he wanted the hands off now, but he knew that wouldn’t happen. It felt like his skin was trying to jump off his body and run away. He tried to stay relaxed, knowing there’d be hell to pay if Jealousy got mad. Virgil shuddered at feeling the evidence of what had happened trickling down him, out of him, drying on him. He had no idea when they’d let him take a break; sometimes it would be weeks before they’d let him shower and rest. Even then, one of the Sides could come in any time they liked and do whatever they wanted to him.
Virgil knew Deceit had talked to the Light Sides and that they had rejected him on the grounds that he was too much work, but dammit they had to be better than this. He knew he deserved the abuse, that the Dark Sides needed a quick way to relax from dealing with him if they wanted to keep Thomas healthy and balanced, he just wished there was another way.

There is no other way.

He knew, he’d known since he was four and the other Dark Sides were closer to Thomas’ age of eleven, but some idiotic part of him still wished.

‘Probably Princey’s influence on the mindscape.’ Virgil mused. Princey was definitely one of the reasons Virgil still hoped, and Virgil blamed him for the crushing disappointment he always felt whenever he wasn’t rescued.

‘I just want to be rescued by a hero.’ Virgil felt tears prick his eyes. He had hung on to that daydream since he had met the fanciful Side. Princey was strong, brave, heroic, and had the looks to match the role. Virgil couldn’t stop himself from imagining what it would be like to be saved, to have Princey care for him and live happily ever after. As ridiculous as Virgil knew it was, he still felt a stab of white-hot pain whenever the fantasy arose and he knew how impossible it was. How hopeless it was.

Virgil felt Jealousy’s hardness returning.

“Ready for round… oh, what are we on now? Whatever, doesn’t matter. Ready my sweet little Anxiety?” Virgil looked up, tears escaping his eyes. As Virgil feared, Jealousy began to get angry.

“Oh, you’re crying now? I’m the best you’ll ever have you ungrateful little bitch!” Jealousy shouted as he slapped Virgil. Virgil didn’t know the right way to respond, so he stayed silent and shaking. Jealousy rolled his eyes.

“Whatever. I was going to be nice to you, but you’ve pissed me off, and the others as well.” Jealousy looked off to the side. Virgil followed his gaze and saw the other Dark Sides and a few visiting Sides waiting their turn.

“Virgil! Honey, it’s okay!”

Virgil opened his eyes and forced himself to focus on the voice. He could still hear, feel, and see the other Sides but knew it was Patton. He felt hands grab his lower arms and let out a desperate keen. The hands immediately removed themselves and Virgil braced himself, raising his arms in preparation for a strike.

“Oh sweetie no, I’m not going to hurt you. I promise.” Patton’s wet voice filtered through. Virgil tried to focus on the voice again but he couldn’t get out of Jealousy’s bed.

He felt something freezing cold and wet in his palm. That shocked him enough that though the Dark Sides were still there, their taunting voices were quieter and he felt and saw them less. Virgil knew to do his breathing exercises. After what he thought must have been twenty minutes of breathing, he opened his eyes again and could see the bathroom floor. Still shaking and his mouth dry, he turned his gaze up to Patton.

Patton smiled sadly at him. “Hey Virge. Can you hear me?”

Virgil nodded weakly.

Patton’s smile grew. “That’s good! What do you need right now sweetheart?”
Virgil turned his gaze down and immediately felt the hands on him more strongly. He lifted his head back up to focus on Patton. Patton could help ground him a little.

Except Patton was too close. Way too close. Virgil felt his skin crawling again and began pushing himself further into the wall. “No no no no no please…” he whimpered, repeating it like a mantra.

Patton picked up on what was wrong and backed into the side of the bathtub on the other end of the bathroom. Being the center of emotional intelligence had its perks.

“Okay honey, it’s okay. What else do you need right now?”

Virgil felt himself calm significantly when Patton backed up. He could feel himself becoming more present and centered in his own body. “I—I’m sorry Patton,” he rasped.

“No baby, you don’t need to apologize! You needed space and asked for it. I’m proud of you!”

Virgil shook his head. “No, that…” There was so much that he had to apologize for. That you have to deal with me. That I woke you up twice just tonight. That I hurt you by hurting myself. That I lied to you. That I haven’t even offered to let you fuck me. That-

“Virgil? Come back to me sweetie. It’s okay, you’re safe now. Can you try to come back?”

Virgil physically shook his head. “Huh. That actually worked. ‘M sorry.”

“It’s okay baby. I know you’re hurting. It’s not your fault.”

Virgil breathed deeply. On the exhale he lifted his head up, fully back in the present. He opened his hand and saw a mostly melted ice cube.

“Logan saw the suggestion in his research so I grabbed one out of the mini-fridge when you weren’t responding.”

Virgil looked at Patton, who looked apologetic for some reason. “It was a good idea. It worked.” Virgil always hated how rough his voice was after an attack or flashback, but the way Patton smiled made up for it. Patton straightened his body.

“Virge? Do you feel okay enough to drink water?” Virgil nodded. Patton stood, and when Virgil’s whole body flinched, sat right back down.

“Oh honey, I’m sorry.”

Virgil shook his head. “No, it’s my fault. I… Just let me stand up first. I think that’ll help.” He always hated it whenever someone was above him. Virgil stood, using the wall behind him as support. Virgil looked to Patton and wished he hadn’t. Patton was still on the ground, waiting for Virgil’s fucking permission to fucking stand, and if that didn’t make him feel like one of the other Dark Sides he didn’t know what would.

He nodded to Patton, not trusting his voice. Patton stood carefully, watching Virgil for any signs of discomfort. When he saw none, he asked, “Can I come over?”

Virgil nodded and moved closer to the door, almost touching it, with the sink five feet away. Patton filled up a glass with water and handed it to Virgil, who took it as quickly as he could. He drained the glass and put it back on the counter, then wrapped his arms around himself.

Patton tilted his head in that adorable puppy-dog way of his. “What do you need?”
Virgil shrugged with one shoulder and looked down. “I dunno. I’m feeling better now.”

Patton gave Virgil a small smile. “Good, I’m glad to hear that kiddo. Do you want to help me make breakfast? It’s about that time anyways.”

Virgil winced at interrupting Patton’s schedule further and nodded. Maybe he could help get Patton’s schedule back on track by speeding along breakfast. *Oh boy, breakfast is gonna be fun…*

“Great! I was thinking breakfast potatoes, scrambled eggs, and fruit. How does that sound?”

Virgil plastered a half-smile on his face. “Sounds great Patton.”

They both headed downstairs, Virgil going first. Patton started setting up and Virgil helped him out. Within a half hour, they had an impressive spread. When they heard the other two Sides coming down the stairs, Patton turned to Virgil, biting his lip.

“Virgil, I really think we should tell the other two what’s going on.”

Virgil nodded quickly. “Yeah, yeah I want to. I can’t keep going like this.” *I want to survive and I’m too weak to do it on my own. I’m too weak. I can’t ask Patton to keep this secret. That’s not fair to him. I never should have told him.*

Patton smiled sadly. “I’m proud of you kiddo.”

“Good morning fellow figments! I am pleased to inform you that despite the many nightmares that threatened Thomas, I was able to exterminate all threats and Thomas got a full night’s sleep!”

Virgil couldn’t stop the smile at Roman’s typical exuberance. Logan lumbered by like a zombie. *Logan’s adorable in the morning when he’s all prickly.*

“You are very loud.” Logan rumbled as he filled his coffee mug.

Virgil snorted a bit at that. All four Sides sat down and ate leisurely, Virgil and Logan silent as Roman and Patton talked excitedly. Virgil was too nervous to eat, but he forced himself to eat a few mouthfuls of scrambled egg. When Logan had cleared his plate, Virgil knew it was time.

“Uh, hey Lo? C-can you stick around for a bit?” Virgil asked nervously.

Logan looked back at Virgil, his intelligent eyes unreadable as he studied him.

“Certainly Virgil.”

Roman quickly finished the rest of his breakfast, always seeming to inhale his food. With Roman done, Virgil looked down, refusing to meet anybody’s gaze.

“Virge? Is there something you wanted to tell us?” Roman asked, trying to catch Virgil’s eye.

Virgil huddled further into himself, trying to make himself smaller.

“I.. y-yeah. I, um, was wondering if I could start seeing Dr. Picani if you’re not too busy?”

Virgil could *feel* the pride coming from the other Side. “It is no trouble at all! I’ll set it up in my room now if you’d like!”

Virgil shivered. “Actually, uh, there’s m-more I should tell you. I-” Virgil’s voice caught in his
throat. No, you can’t talk about that! It’s not safe! Virgil tried again. “I… I haven’t been doing good.” Nice grammar dumbass.

“What do you mean?” Logan asked.

Virgil braced himself. If he wanted to get better, he had to take away the things that were making him worse. It was too late anyway, Patton already saw.

“Underneath my bed there’s some carpet you can pull up. When you do, there’s an envelope there.” Virgil said, hoping they didn’t ask for more than that. He began shaking.

“What’s in the envelope?” Logan asked.

Fuck. Well, there's no nice way to say this. “R-razors.”

He heard Logan suck in a harsh breath. “Thank you for telling us that Virgil. That was very brave of you. Are there razors anywhere else?”

“O-one in my b-bathroom s-s-sink.”

Virgil saw Logan adjust his tie out of the corner of his eye. “Alright. Excuse me for a moment while I retrieve those.”

Logan strode out of the kitchen. Virgil still hadn’t looked up.

“Virgil-” Roman started. Virgil braced himself for disappointment, mockery, insults, Roman telling him-“I’m proud of you.” Roman breathed. Virgil started. Oh.

“W-why?”

Roman gripped the counter tighter. “Because it took so much courage to tell us. Especially to tell us where your razors were.” Roman breathed in. “Just… you’re so brave. And I’m so happy for you. I hope that this helps you become happier. You deserve it.”

Virgil felt like he was tearing up. Logan returned to the kitchen.

“Are there any other tools you would like me to remove from your room?”

Virgil shook his head. “No.”

“Okay. Have you been harming yourself?”

Virgil took a deep breath. He tried speaking, but it was like someone had a hold on his vocal cords. He knew he wouldn’t be able to talk for a little while at least, so he just pulled up his t-shirt sleeve. When he only heard a gasp from Roman, he burst into tears. Oh sure, my voice returns for that.

“I-I-I’m sorry! I’m so fucking weak, I’m ter-ter-ter-terrible!” Virgil sobbed.

“Darling, no. My dear, you are so brave and strong. I promise. It takes so much courage to tell us this and to ask for help. I can only imagine how scary this must be for you.” Logan soothed.

“Indeed my obsidian knight! You are courageous, and I should know!”

Despite himself, Virgil chuckled a little at Roman’s quip. Logan assured him he didn’t hate Virgil,
and Patton seemed to support him.

“Honey? Can I touch you?” Virgil, remembering Patton’s promise from the morning, nodded. He felt Patton’s hands on his back and was immediately thrust into bad bad bad bad! He flinched forward violently.

“I’m sorry!” Virgil gasped out.

“Shhhh, it’s okay! It’s okay to change your mind!”

Virgil fought to focus on his breathing. Once he had cried out his tears and gotten his breathing more under control, he looked up. All of the Light Sides were staring at Virgil in concern.

“I-I’m okay. I’m sorry about that.”

“Do not apologize Virgil. You had a very understandable reaction. Is there anything we can do?” Logan asked.

“N-no, I think I just need to lay down for a bit and relax.”

“Alright my midnight raven. When you enter my room, I’ll know you’re there and come show you the way to Emile’s office.”

Virgil nodded. “Alright.” He chugged the last of the milk in his glass and sunk out to his room. He stumbled over to his bed and collapsed on it. He felt himself sinking into a light doze. *I’ll go to Emile’s when I haven’t literally just had a panic attack.*

Chapter End Notes

Although this is based off of my own experiences, I decided to tone down a few aspects of this fic. One of the things that I toned down was Virgil's age because I can't reasonably expect people to stomach the actual age my abuse started at. If you want to know, I have no problem telling you the age mine started, but I decided against putting that in the A/N's in case folks weren't ready to read that. So be careful reading the comments if that's something that might trigger you or make you uncomfortable. Stay safe! <3
Chapter Notes

Whew! It looks like AO3 italicized everything properly this time! Also, I've been working on fleshing out two future chapters that are really dialogue-heavy because Remy's in them and Remy is dialogue-heavy.

Also, THREE THOUSAND HITS?!?!?!?!?!?! WHAAAAAAT?!?!?!?! MY LIL OL' FIC?!?!?!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Light Sides remained in the kitchen in silence as they tried to process what they had just found out.

Logan turned to Patton. “Do you think Virgil told us all of the locations of his self-harm equipment?”

Patton shuddered. His voice came out thick. “I-I think so. He seemed so… tired. Like he just wanted it to be over.”

Roman still had a hold on the counter. Patton could have sworn he saw the formica bend. “I’m so furious at them for hurting Virgil so…” Roman struggled to find the right word. His heart felt like it was twisting in on itself. *How much has Virgil been suffering to require that many bandages? Why can’t I keep him safe?*

Logan rested a hand on Roman’s shoulder. “Me too Roman.”

Roman relaxed his grip on the counter slightly, his fingertips tingling. “Does this mean he’s getting better?”

“It may. It’s certainly a step on the path to healing.”

Patton chimed in. “It took trust to tell us what he did. And he asked for my help last night. I think that’s progress! Right Logan?”

Logan looked over at his heart. Patton had too many emotions flowing through him for Logan to decipher, as usual, but Logan was able to pick up on sadness and desperate hope. He could hardly say no to those warm chocolate eyes and beautiful, open face.

Logan nodded. “That may be correct Patton.”

The Light Sides fell into a heavy silence. Patton was the one to break it. “I think we should get back to work kiddos. If we keep thinking about what happened to Virgil, we’ll only make ourselves feel worse.”

Roman took a couple of deep breaths. “Right you are padre.”

Everyone filed out of the kitchen, heading to their respective rooms. As Logan went to move past Roman, Roman grabbed his hand and pulled him close. Roman put a hand on Logan’s lower back
and drew Logan’s torso against his, making their bodies touch from their chests to their thighs. After searching his face for a moment, Roman kissed Logan slowly and gratefully. Roman pulled back and rested his forehead against Logan’s, both of their eyes starry.

“Thank you for taking care of those razors Logan.” Roman murmured against Logan’s lips. He pressed another kiss to the brainy Side.

“I… um, yes, well, it was no great endeavor. I am happy to be of assistance to Virgil in any way, especially to help keep him safe.” Logan stammered. Logan acutely felt every spot of his body that Roman was touching. Roman was much warmer than the rest of the Sides, and Logan could feel heat coming through the layers of clothing to envelope Logan. He felt completely encompassed by pure Roman, his scent, his warmth, his energy. The hand on his lower back in particular was making him flush passionately. Roman’s little finger was rubbing up and down, though Logan was sure it was absent-mindedly. However, when the little finger curled suddenly to scratch, Logan shuddered and saw the prince’s lip twitch. He knows what he’s doing. Ass.

Logan sent as smoldering of a glare as he could in his present condition. Roman only smirked. “I love you Logan.”

Logan smiled despite his breathlessness. “I love you too Roman.”

With one last kiss and a smirk, Roman retreated back to his domain.

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Virgil woke from his doze when, big surprise, his anxiety started kicking in.

What do I need to do? What am I forgetting to do? What’s happening? What am I missing? I’m forgetting to do something, I’m wasting time...

Virgil gripped his sheets and worked on his breathing exercises. Once calm, ten minutes later, he checked the time and saw that it was almost lunchtime. I'll go after lunch. I should eat something.

Virgil got up slowly. He discarded his old clothes and put on his regular outfit. Virgil felt much better with the familiar weight of his hoodie on him. It was his armor, the one positive constant in his life. When he got it on, he wrapped his arms around himself to hug the hoodie, like a long-lost friend. After another moment, he dropped his arms and went into the bathroom. He fixed his hair and cleaned up his face, applying new eyeshadow shortly after. Feeling somewhat okay with his appearance for his first meeting with the doctor, he departed for the kitchen. He opened his door, intending to help Patton with lunch.

Only to find him and Logan making out passionately in the hallway.

It was far from the first time he’d walked in on the Light Sides showing their affection for each other, but it always hurt. Every time, his eyes would burn and his stomach would tie itself in knots. He wanted the love, the affection so badly. He knew he could never and should never be a part of them, but every time he saw them his longing grew. Seeing them like this, he felt his heart exploding like the Grinch on Christmas, except instead of feeling all warm and fuzzy, his chest felt too small, and he felt like he was stabbed by an icicle.

He tried to move quietly past them, but Patton looked up and squeaked.

“Sorry Virge! I, ahm, was going to get started on lunch.”

Virgil forced himself to chuckle. He wouldn’t ruin their happiness by showing them his misery, or
worse, making them think he didn’t approve of their relationship or something.

“It’s fine Pat. You do you, or Logan, as the case may be.”

It had the desired effect. Both Light Sides turned bright red. Logan mumbled excuses about getting back to work and Patton escaped to the kitchen. Once they were both gone, Virgil let the smirk drop from his face. He let his breath hitch in silent cries and allowed the tears that had been burning his eyes to fall. His mouth was dry and he felt nauseous, feeling like he had a rock in his throat. It felt like there was a knot made from rope in his chest and it kept getting pulled tighter and tighter.

*What happens when the rope snaps?* Virgil wondered.

He allowed himself a few more silent cries before he forced his emotions back down. Ever since he had been freed from the Dark Sides, it had been getting harder and harder to do that. Even with all of the effort he put into stuffing his emotions into the box in the back of his brain, he could still feel them roiling low in his gut. He swallowed a few times, until the lump in his throat was slightly less painful, and he wiped his face with the sleeve of his hoodie. He plugged in one earbud, so hopefully he wouldn’t have to talk to Patton but he also wouldn’t miss anything the moral Side said. He pulled up his Adam Lambert playlist. For some reason, certain artists helped him feel clearer and steadier. Maybe it was the positive nostalgia attached to Adam Lambert from Thomas’ emo phase. Whenever Thomas had been bullied by a particular group of assholes, he found comfort in Adam Lambert.

After a song, Virgil felt a little more stable and made his way down to the kitchen. Lunch was leftovers, set up like a buffet. Roman was chattering on about his newest creation, a fire-breathing Crocodile Mothman. When Roman excused himself after inhaling his food (*how has he not choked?*), Virgil spoke up.

“Hey, uh, Princey, mind if I come with you?”

Roman beamed, his face glowing. “Of course not! I’d love to have some company on my quest!”

Virgil smiled a small, real smile at Prince’s enthusiasm and excitement. *These are people who don’t deserve to be hurt. These are people worth protecting. These are people who are far too good for me. God I love them so fucking much. “Cool.”*

Roman led Virgil up to his room and held the door open for Virgil. Virgil raised a wry eyebrow at Roman’s actions but went through and paused in the middle of the grand room. Roman closed the door behind them and approached Virgil.

“I hope I’m not overstepping my bounds, but did you follow me up here so you can see Dr. Picani?”

*Happy feelings gone.* “Y-yeah.”

Roman smiled at Virgil, pride and sadness in his eyes. “I’m so happy to hear that my dark knight. Come with me.” Roman turned and went to a floor mirror that looked like it came straight from the 12th century.

“Give me one moment…” Roman closed his eyes and frowned. The glass on the mirror shimmered, then was still again.

“Alright, you should be able to go through whenever you’d like now.”
Virgil was terrified, but shot Roman a grateful smile. “Thanks Roman. It… It means a lot.”

Roman puffed out his chest in pride. “It is no problem Virgil! I’d do anything for my onyx night owl!”

Virgil rolled his eyes at the nickname but huffed out a laugh. He turned to the mirror and fortified himself for the meeting with Dr. Picani. Without allowing himself another moment to think, he took three steps and went through the mirror.

He found himself in a reception area. There were chairs lined up along the walls, with magazines stacked on end tables. Virgil spied a hallway leading off from the main room and figured that had to be where the therapy room was. He started shaking, no longer able to push his emotions down. *I can’t tell! I can’t! What if it’s too much for a therapist? What does that say about me? What if he doesn’t believe me? What if he blames me?! What if this makes everything worse? What if talking about the Dark Sides releases them or summons them? Oh God, this was a bad idea!*

Virgil stumbled over to a chair and practically fell into it. He pulled his knees up and began his breathing exercises. He had to stop when he started feeling light-headed, but thankfully he was feeling a little better and not on the verge of a breakdown. He stood and shakily made his way down the hall until he reached the lone door. Virgil stared at it, as if rooted to the spot. *What if this is a bad idea? What if he’s meaner than in Thomas’ videos? What if- No, nope, not doing this again.* Before he could convince himself otherwise, he grabbed the handle and swung open the door.

The room was exactly like it was in Thomas’ *Cartoon Therapy* series. Posters lined the wall and figurines were placed on end tables. Virgil moved to the couch and sat down, worrying the ends of his sleeve with his fingers. He heard the door open and looked up.

“*It’s the moment you’ve been waiting for! Daaa, da da da da da da da daaaaa…”* 

Chapter End Notes

Did Roman fluster Logan on purpose, knowing Logan would run into Patton? Yes, yes he did. Why? Because he’s a mischevious little shit. But we love him anyways.
Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

Virgil is finally going to therapy!! YAY!!!

Also, have you noticed fewer typos in the past few chapters? You can thank Jasper01 for that! She's awesome!!!

Like a lot of stuff in this fic, I'm drawing from my own experience. Virgil's first session is actually a mashup of my first couple of sessions because I had to keep ending them early, but I think Virgil could make it through with some support.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil had prepared himself for the bombastic introduction from the figment, but he still jumped. After a full minute of crescendoing singing, Dr. Picani stood in the doorway panting, watching Virgil’s reaction, and wordlessly made his way over to the chair.

“New patient! Do you how do? I’m Dr. Emile Picani, he/him pronouns, and you are?”

“I’m, uh, Virgil. Anxiety, he/him pronouns.” Oh fuck oh fuck this is such a bad idea. Virgil was fighting back tears of fright. He suddenly didn’t want to be there. He began feeling floaty. Dammit not now!

“It’s nice to meet you Virgil! And what brings you in today?”

Virgil was dreading that question, but that’s what he came in for, right? Goddammit Virgil, stop wasting everyone’s time and just spit it out. The faster you deal with this shit the faster you’ll get better and stop being so needy.

“I, uh…” Virgil couldn’t make himself finish. Dr. Picani had kind, patient eyes and seemed understanding enough, but Virgil was terrified.

Virgil cleared his throat. “I’ve, uh, been through some stuff,” nice, real specific dumbass. If you don’t talk about it you’re just wasting everyone’s time you useless- “And I want to get better so I can be a better Side for Thomas and the others.”

Dr. Picani nodded, his kind eyes watching Virgil fidget nervously. “I’m sorry you’ve been through troubling events. It takes a lot of courage and strength to seek out help, so I commend you for that. It sounds like one of your goals is to recover from what you experienced, which is great! Tell me, what would getting better look like for you?”

Virgil paused. He had a vague idea, but nothing concrete. Maybe he could work with that.

“Well, I’d like to not have so many nightmares and flashbacks, and I keep blinking out- er, dissociating, when I don’t mean to. It-it’s making me lose track of conversations and that’s not helpful to the Light Sides or Thomas. And the panic attacks are kind of a lot.”

Dr. Picani nodded sympathetically. “It sounds like you’ve been suffering quite a bit and that suffering is really interfering with your life. For our goals to be a little more concrete, let’s try
putting some numbers to it like Jimmy Neutron! How many nightmares would you say you have per week on average?”

Virgil frowned, thinking. “Uh, I don’t know, maybe around 20?”

Dr. Picani scribbled in his notebook. “And do these nightmares tend to wake you up?”

Virgil nodded. “Y-yeah, I usually wake up and can’t get back to sleep for a while. Th-they’re... um, vivid. Sometimes gives me panic attacks. I kinda sleep in, like, 2-3 hour shifts.”

Dr. Picani smiled sympathetically at the smaller Side. “I’m sorry to hear that. How many of these nightmares would you say gives you a panic attack?”

“Most of them. Maybe there were 3 or 4 in the past month that didn’t make me freak out.”

“Alright. Are these nightmares fabricated dreams or are they memories?”

Virgil drew his knees up protectively. He flipped his bangs over his eyes. He hugged his middle to try to keep himself from breaking down. You’ve known this guy for five fucking minutes and you’re about to fucking cry in front of him? Jesus fucking Christ. “M-m-memories.”

Dr. Picani noticed Virgil’s skyrocketing distress. “Okay. You don’t have to talk about anything you’re not ready to talk about. Virgil, can we try some grounding exercises?”

Virgil nodded. “Sure.” he mumbled into his knees.

“Alright. First thing is to place your feet flat on the ground and sit squarely on the couch.” Virgil slowly brought his feet down. “Excellent! Let’s try some breathing to start off with. Now go ahead and put your hand on your knees and close your eyes.”

Virgil was scared to close his eyes, but if it helped, it’d be worth it, right? He did as Dr. Picani said, and shot his eyes open almost immediately with a gasp.

“S-s-s-sorry, I-I-I d-d-don’t like h-having my eyes c-closed.”

Dr. Picani didn’t seem to mind. “That’s okay! Whatever makes you feel the most comfortable and relaxed. Can you spot 5 things in the room that are green?”

Virgil looked around the room and nodded.

“Can you list them out loud?”

Virgil mentally slapped himself. Moron, you’re obviously supposed to list them out loud for him. How else does he know you’re not lying? You do it all the damn time. “Right! S-sorry about that. Uh, one of the toys on your end table, the lamp, a couple of the books on your bookshelf, and that poster over there.”

“No problem! And that was really good! Let’s try four things you can hear.”

Virgil focused. “Uh, I can hear you and I talking, your pencil writing, the lights humming, and I think the furnace is going?”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Good job! Let’s name three things you can feel.”

Virgil looked around. “I can feel the chair I’m sitting in, my hoodie, and my hair in my face.”
“Great! Two things you can smell?”

“I can smell my deodorant and I think there’s like an air freshener or something?”

“Right you are! I’ve got an essential oil diffuser! And one good thing about yourself.”

Virgil froze. Good luck coming up with that one. Liar.

Dr. Picani nodded. “Good job Virgil! How are you feeling after that exercise?”

Virgil took stock of himself. He felt surprisingly more stable, and a little less vulnerable. “I actually feel a lot better. Th-thanks doc.”

Dr. Picani grinned. “Happy to help! Do you feel up to going back to talking about your goals for therapy?”

Virgil nodded. He felt significantly less scared. “Yeah, I think I’m good for that.”

“Great! Now I believe we were talking about your dreams. In therapy, it’s good to have both long and short-term goals. What do you think sounds good as a short-term goal for your nightmares?”

Virgil worried his lower lip between his teeth. “I-I really don’t know. I don’t know what a realistic expectation would be I guess. ‘M sorry.”

Dr. Picani waved him off. “That’s okay! A lot of times the first couple short-term goals are just to see what realistic goals might look like! Would having five fewer nightmares per week sound like a good place to start?”

“Holy shit that would be fucking awesome.” Psh, as if that’s gonna happen. That’s never gonna happen. You can’t possibly believe that this guy’s going to talk at you and you’re magically no longer fucked up? Give me a break.

Dr. Picani smiled. “Great! Want to give it three months and see where we’re at then?”

Virgil nodded quickly. “That sounds great.”

Dr. Picani wrote in his notebook. “Excellent! And remember, the first check-in we set is very fluid. It’s a good way to figure out what future goals can be, so if we don’t reach exactly that number we still gained a lot by seeing where you’re at in three months. Is there anything else you’d like me to know about your nightmares Virgil?”

Virgil fidgeted. Wouldn’t telling him everything let him know what he was dealing with? There’s probably not enough time in this session to tell him everything. Yeah, let’s go with that excuse. Wimp. “N-no, I d-don’t th-think so.”

“Okay! Would you like to talk about your panic attacks, flashbacks, or dissociation next?”

Virgil had never spoken with someone about his issues so openly before. It was scary, but also kind of a relief. Dr. Picani was just accepting the information as Virgil presented it and wasn’t freaking out. The doctor wasn’t questioning him, blaming him, scoffing at him, or anything.

Yet, a mean voice taunted him.

“P-panic attacks.”
Dr. Picani smiled. “Alrighty then! How often would you say you have panic attacks in an average week?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “Like, full-on panic attacks or panic attacks that start but they don’t get too far?”

“Whichever you’d like to work on.” Dr. Picani said encouragingly, friendly eyes soft.

“U-um, let’s do both. I think they happen, like, 4 times a day at least, so around 30 to 40 a week?”

“Okay. And how long would you say these panic attacks last for you?”

“Usually th-they can last from a half hour to 5 hours I think was the l-longest one.” Virgil braced himself, knowing that was extreme. He’s not going to believe you. He’ll realize you’re too much for him. You’re a hopeless case. He knows you’re a freak now. Freak. Slut. Sloppy whore. More work than it’s worth.

“Okay. Are there any techniques that seem to be effective for you in stopping them or preventing them?”

Virgil’s head snapped up. When did I look down? Dr. Picani was looking at him patiently and kindly, not upset by Virgil’s lack of response. “U-uh, 4-7-8 breathing exercises help sometimes. And one time Patton put an ice cube in my hand and that helped bring me out of it. Lately, though, I’ve just b-been p-passing out.” Virgil winced. He hadn’t meant to share that.

Dr. Picani nodded, writing some more in his notebook. “Alright. And is there a number that you’d like to set for your goal?”

Virgil shifted. “Maybe 10 fewer per week, so 20-30 per week instead of 30-40?”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Sounds good! Do you want to have this goal be assessed in three months?”

Virgil nodded.

“Okie-dokie. Would you like to talk about your dissociation or flashbacks next?”

Virgil hugged himself, not really wanting to talk about either, but he knew he had to. Goddammit this is super basic shit, you’re just setting goals, you’re not even going into any gory details. Maybe you should though, let the good doctor know what kind of mess he’s getting into with such a worthless, useless hole.

“Virgil? Can you hear me?” Dr. Picani’s gentle voice filtered through. Virgil looked up and realized he was hyperventilating. As he blinked, he realized he was crying and his legs were pressed against his torso again.

Dr. Picani smiled warmly. “Hey Virgil. Do you think you can do a few breathing exercises with me?” Virgil nodded, embarrassed. “Okay. Let’s breathe in for one, two, three, four…” After a few rounds of breathing exercises, although he was still feeling floaty, the voice in Virgil’s head was quieter, and Virgil was feeling more present.

“M sorry about that.” Virgil muttered, looking down at the carpet.

Dr. Picani was quick to respond. “You don’t have to apologize! We’re talking about difficult things. It’s normal to feel overwhelmed. Am I right in thinking you haven’t fully discussed these concerns with anyone else?” Virgil nodded. “Of course it’s going to be scary! You’re opening up
about big things you’ve been experiencing for the first time to a stranger. It’s okay to be scared. Everyone moves at their own pace.” *He just saying that to make you feel better. At least he’s starting to see how pathetic, broken, used-up, and weak you are. “I’ve found that each person’s brain knows best. Your brain is trying to protect you, and it knows when it’s okay to share some things. Would you like to stop for today?”*

Virgil considered that for a few moments. He really *really* wanted to stop, but he knew he should at least figure out goals.

“No, I think I’d at least like to get goals down.”

Dr. Picani gave Virgil a friendly smile. “Okay! Do let me know if you change your mind and you need to take a break. There’s nothing wrong with realizing that you need to change your original plan. Some of the best strategists are those that can alter their strategy in the middle of a discussion.”

Virgil nodded. “Okay. Can we talk about dissociation next? I think that’ll make the most sense.” *Make it easier on the pathetic little weakling who can barely stand to talk about basic shit with a trained professional before it starts breaking down and crying. Awww, are you sad, you stupid little bitch? You want a hug?*

“Sure! Describe to me what dissociating or “blinking out” is like for you?”

Virgil took a deep breath through his nose. *Here goes nothing.* “It can be a couple things. Sometimes it’s like I leave my body and I’m floating. Other times, I don’t feel like I’m outside my body, but my body isn’t mine. Like, if you’ve ever played on an X-Box or PS4, you know those games where there are hands and arms in front of you and you control them with a gamepad? It’s like that. I think it’s called a first-person ghost? Then other times, it feel like nothing’s real. It’s like I’m in a dream, even though logically I know I’m not. But everything seems hazy, and my vision and hearing suck. And sometimes I just completely lose it. Total amnesia. That’s when I call it blinking out. Although sometimes when I blink out, I pretend I’m somewhere else. Like a really intense daydream.” *God that sounds stupid.*

“That’s not stupid at all!” *GodDAMMIT why do I keep saying shit out loud?! I’ve just got to keep my mouth shut. I did it for years, why can’t I do it now? *“Those are pretty common types of dissociation. It’s a very smart adaptation for the psyche to protect itself.” Dr. Picani encouraged. “And I think you did a great job at describing dissociation! A lot of folks can have trouble with describing it.”*

Virgil gave a half-smile at that. *I guess I’m doing something right.*

“For the goal, do you want to separate each type of dissociation or just have dissociation be an umbrella term?”

Virgil looked down as he thought. “Um, let’s just have it be an umbrella term for now? And, uh, three months sounds good.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Sounds good! How often would you say you dissociate in a given week?”

Virgil shifted. “Um, I’m not sure. It’s hard, because sometimes it’ll last for a while, and that’s really hard to pin down. I don’t know, its- it’s really hard.”

“That’s okay! Dissociation can be really tricky! Would you be okay for saying your goal is feeling a certain percentage improvement?”
Virgil nodded. “Yeah, that’s good. Uh, maybe 15%? Make it kinda realistic?”

Dr. Picani wrote in his notebook. “I think that sounds great! How would you feel talking about flashbacks today?”

*I would not like that at all. I don’t want to. God I don’t want to. He’ll hate me, they’re all going to hate me! ‘Th-that’s fine.’ NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO!!!!!!*

Dr. Picani inclined his head. “Okay. Let me know if it gets overwhelming and we can stop or switch gears. Remember, we’re talking about big things here and it’s okay to not be able to cover everything all at once.”

Virgil nodded. After a moment, Dr. Picani continued in a gentler voice, sensing this part was more difficult for Virgil than the rest. “How often would you say flashbacks occur per week?”

“Um, I think around 40? I usually get like 5 to 7 per day at least.”

Dr. Picani nodded, his kind and ever-patient eyes encouraging Virgil. “Alright. And do you know how long they last?”

Virgil bit his bottom lip. “Usually 10-30 minutes.”

Dr. Picani scribbled in his notebook. “And how immersive would you say your flashbacks are?”

Virgil flinched hugging himself. “P-pretty immersive. I u-u-usually completely lose myself in them.” Virgil was finding it harder and harder to speak. “All s-senses. Sometimes only a couple. R-really distracts me from conversations.” he ground out.

Dr. Picani nodded sympathetically. “I can imagine that would be very distracting. Before we continue, how would you feel about another grounding exercise?”

Virgil nodded quickly. That shit worked. Dr. Picani led Virgil through the grounding exercise twice, and afterwards Virgil felt a lot better.

Dr. Picani smiled gently. “You did really well Virgil. Do you want to keep talking about your goals, talk about something else, or call it here for today?”

“Let’s get this goal down.” Virgil replied.

“Okay. Is there a number you’d feel comfortable assigning to the goal number of flashbacks?”

“Let’s say 30 per week, 3-month check in too.” Virgil said. He was feeling more confident and in control. *GodDAMN that grounding exercise fucking rocks!*

“You got it! Now that we have these goals down, are there any other things you’d like to work on while you’re in therapy? It can be anything you want!”

Virgil thought, and his mood soured. *Gonna have to talk about the cutting sooner or later. “I, um, self-harm. I don’t want to anymore, but it works really well at getting my skin lighter.” REALLY VIRGIL?!!*

“We can definitely work on that. Just to make sure I understand correctly, what do you mean by “making your skin lighter”??”

Virgil mentally kicked himself. *Why did you have to tell him that? Jesus Christ have some self-control for once in your pathetic life. You sound fucking crazy. Maybe it’s for the best; there’s no*
psychologist on the planet who’d be able to help you. “M-my skin gets heavy and tight and feels gross, and it feels like I just want it off. But I know that it’s bad to completely skin myself, so I cut instead. And if I’m panicking or dissociating or having a bad flashback, cutting can help get me right again. I know it’s the chemicals in my brain, but it works and it makes it so I can do my job.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Alright. That’s not uncommon among people who experience the symptoms that you do. Now how often would you say you self-harm?”

Virgil bit his bottom lip and tasted iron. *Shit.* He sucked his lip into his mouth, but he’d always hated the taste of blood. Dr. Picani gestured to the end table. “You’re free to use a tissue if you want.” Virgil hurried to grab a tissue and apply it to his injured lip.

Just pretend nothing happened. “I used to once or twice a day, sometimes three times if it’s a busy work day. Although I actually just had my friends who deserve so much better than me and don’t deserve to have to put up with my bullshit “take away all my cutting… supplies.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “They sound like really good friends.”

Virgil snorted. “Better than I deserve.”

Dr. Picani knew better than to challenge that thought process straight away. “Do you self-harm in any other ways besides cutting?”

Virgil shook his head, then paused. “Yeah, I would slap myself for a quick fix, and I tried burning myself, but burning wasn’t the right type of pain.”

Dr. Picani nodded as he wrote in his notebook. “Okay. Is there anything else you’d like to address?”

Virgil shifted. *Fuck it. In for a penny, in for a pound. May as well see if he can handle me.* “I’ve been having some suicidal thoughts. But I don’t want to! I shake them off really quickly and I’m here mostly because of them.”

Dr. Picani nodded seriously. “Do you have any plans or means to commit suicide?”

“No!” Virgil shot back defensively.

Dr. Picani was unfazed. “Okay. There are two main types of suicidal thoughts, passive and active. Active is where you’re making plans and figuring out how to obtain means to end your life. Passive are more thoughts that come in intrusively and that are easily dismissed. Which type seems like it applies to you?”

Virgil felt a little ashamed for yelling at the doctor. “Passive, for sure.”

Dr. Picani nodded seriously. “Do you have any plans or means to commit suicide?”

“No!” Virgil shot back defensively.

Dr. Picani was unfazed. “Okay. There are two main types of suicidal thoughts, passive and active. Active is where you’re making plans and figuring out how to obtain means to end your life. Passive are more thoughts that come in intrusively and that are easily dismissed. Which type seems like it applies to you?”

Virgil felt a little ashamed for yelling at the doctor. “Passive, for sure.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Alright. While those tend to be less immediately life-threatening than active thoughts, they’re still definitely a concern. Would you be okay making a safety plan for if these thoughts begin getting more insistent?”

Virgil agreed. They went over who to talk to at various stages. They eventually settled on just being around one of the Light Sides if the thoughts got more insistent. Virgil would tell the other Sides if he thought he might act on the thoughts on impulse. If he felt he was in serious danger, he’d stay with the Light Sides and call Dr. Picani. Virgil was floating badly, but he felt a little relieved, if scared, to have a plan in case things started getting out of control.

Dr. Picani set his pencil down. “Alright Virgil! We covered quite a lot today! What I usually like
doing with my clients for the last few minutes is a grounding exercise and then talking about something a little lighter. How does that sound?”

Virgil nodded. He felt like he was closer to the ceiling than his body. Dr. Picani led Virgil through the same grounding exercise and they talked about *Finding Dory* the rest of the appointment. At the end, Virgil was exhausted, but he felt more present and in control than he had in months, hell, in *years*. Virgil felt lighter, not in a floating way, but a good way as he left the office. He stood in front of the “door”, which was actually a copy of the mirror he had come in through. *Time to go back*. He steeled himself and walked through the mirror.

Chapter End Notes

Y'all, that grounding exercise that Picani does is fucking AWESOME. The first time my therapist helped me through it, I was AMAZED.

I also made Virgil's mind as mean to him as mine was to me. I think it's a defense mechanism because the brain is still thinking that it's dangerous to talk about that stuff.

My poor guardian lol. Each time Virgil needed to be brought back by Emile, that was a time that I had to end the session early. My guardian had to come in a few times to help me back to the car so we could go home. Let's all have a moment of silence for the gray hairs I've given my poor guardian and my poor therapist lol.
Chapter Notes

Hello hello! First things first, there's a flashback that's graphic enough I think to warrant a warning. It's the section contained by the tildes. Also, I have a tilde key again!

Also, Virgil experiences another lovely aspect of healing in the later part of this chapter. Anxiety shorts decision-making abilities and going to therapy after what he went through is gonna leave him a little raw. When you're panicking, you're not thinking clearly and you'll do anything the panic says. Plus, therapy tends to bring stuff up, which is part of the process. I hope that helps that section make sense!

Finally, I think this is my longest chapter so far!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil stumbled a bit as he found himself back in Roman’s room. He managed to catch himself, only to jump at Roman’s, “WELCOME BACK VIRGIL!!”

Virgil whipped around, doubled over with one hand on his knee and one on his chest, panting and glaring at Roman. “Dammit Princey, can you not!?”

Roman looked sheepish. “My apologies. I’m glad to see that you’ve returned! How did your quest go?” Roman’s eyes widened. “I-I mean you don’t have to tell me, obviously! But I thought you might want to… talk about it?” Roman quickly added.

Virgil raised an eyebrow at Roman. “You’re spending too much time around me Princey. It was fine. I’ll probably be going back at some point.”

Roman beamed. “Wonderful! I’m happy to hear that! Would you like to accompany Logan and I on our quest today?”

Virgil shoved his hands into his hoodie pockets. “Nah, I’ve gotta get back to work in my room.” Virgil looked around. “Wait, where is Logan?”

Roman grinned. “Oh! We were battling the dragon-witch and I sensed you come back into my room so I came here and…” Roman faltered. “Um, excuse me.” Roman turned and sunk back down into the Imagination to rescue Logan.

Virgil snorted and made his way back to his room. Once there, he flopped on the bed and began absentmindedly scrolling through Tumblr. Virgil reflected on his session, amazed at how well the grounding exercise worked. He winced, ashamed at how many times Dr. Picani had needed to pull him out of a panic attack.

Am I really that screwed up?

Yeah, obviously dumbass. You could barely get through setting goals and talking numbers. How do you think you’re ever going to actually talk about what happened?
Maybe I won’t have to in order to get better!

Ha! Not even you can be that dense. Listen, you’re enough of a worthless burden as it is. The Light Sides won’t even fuck you. Just tell the doctor everything next time - or the next two appointments, lord knows you have plenty of experiences that made you a mess - and then start dealing with it so you can stop being quite so horrible to the Light Sides and Thomas.

During his internal monologue, Virgil began crying in fear. He didn’t want to tell the doctor everything! He definitely didn’t want that to be his next session! He didn’t know what he wanted to talk about during his next session, but it was definitely not that.

Oh grow up you big baby. Everyone has to do things that they don’t like doing. For you, it’ll be easy. Just talk. The Light Sides can’t even relieve their stress in you, and do you have any idea how much stress you’ve been causing them? You pathetic, selfish bitch.

Virgil could feel his panic overtaking him. He was hyperventilating and sobbing as the guilt crashed into him full force. He wasn’t even giving the Light Sides the one positive thing he could contribute! Virgil began hearing and feeling the Dark Sides torturing him again. He opened his eyes and got a knee to the gut from Malice, who was on top of him at the moment.

“Don’t fucking move!”

Virgil stayed as still and quiet as possible as each Dark Side took their turn, knowing that they’d get mad if he made too much noise, but he couldn’t stop himself from letting out more and louder whimpers as the night went on. It hurt so bad. He hated it, he felt so gross, he knew he’d never not be gross. Virgil hated the mattress they sometimes chained him to in the Dark Side commons, it was so stained with his blood and come and sweat and…

When Rage entered him again, Virgil cried out, and was promptly slapped.

“Stay quiet you useless whore!” Rage roared.

“Virgil? Is something wrong?” Virgil heard Logan say. Virgil turned his head and saw Logan staring at him. Virgil was only able to watch Logan for a moment before Rage grabbed Virgil’s chin and roughly turned him so he was looking at Rage again. Virgil saw Rage’s body jerking with the brutal thrusts, he could feel the tearing and bleeding inside of his own body, heard the whimpers forced from him with each thrust.

"Virgil! Please, please listen to my voice." Virgil squeezed his eyes shut, not wanting to see Logan's dark gaze or hear him. He whined, desperate to survive but not sure how to avoid punishment.

"Virgil sweetie, can you hear me?" came Patton's sweet voice.

Virgil cried out, knowing he wouldn't survive the Light Sides. He felt a cold, wet sensation in his hand. Virgil jerked, surprised.

"Virgil, you're safe I promise. Can you hear me? Nod if you can please." Patton said gently.

Virgil was scared. He didn't want to get punished for moving, but he didn't want to disobey a direct order either. Knowing he was going to be punished either way, he decided to go with the lesser of two evils and nodded.
"Oh good." Patton let out a relieved breath.

Virgil was confused. *Why would Patton be relieved?* Virgil felt Rage release inside of him. He couldn't stop the terrified, pained gasp as Rage pulled out.

*Please don't be one of the Light Sides next, please don't be one of the Light Sides next, please don't be one of the Light Sides next…*

~~~~~

"Shhhhh sweetie, it's okay, it's okay." Patton soothed.

Virgil tried to relax, but he was too scared. He began shaking violently as frightened noises came out of him with each inhale and exhale.

"Shhhhh honey, can you open your beautiful eyes for me?" Patton asked.

Virgil obeyed immediately. He saw Patton kneeling next to his bed. *My bed?*

Patton smiled shakily. "Hey sweetie, can you see me?" Virgil nodded, confused.

Patton’s small smile grew. “Can you tell me where you are sweetheart?”

Virgil looked around. It looked like he was in his room, but where did the Dark Sides go? He looked down and saw what must be the remnants of an ice cube in his hand.

Virgil shivered, feeling cold. Roman came over with a heavy red blanket. “Can I put this on you love?”

Virgil nodded. His eyes widened and he shrunk back as Roman leaned down to put the blanket on him, but Roman immediately retreated, not doing anything else.

*Oh. Oh shit, they just saw me in a flashback. SHIT!!*

Virgil turned his head to the side. “Patton?” he asked. He put as much force behind it as he could, but it only came out as a hoarse whisper. Patton smiled and nodded eagerly.

“That’s me kiddo! Do you think you can tell me where you are?”

Virgil looked down, ashamed. “My room.” he mumbled.

“That’s right! You’re safe now, I promise.”

“’M sorry.” Virgil sat up slowly, leaning his back against his headboard and keeping his eyes trained on his lap.

Logan jumped in. “Virgil, I assure you that you have nothing to apologize for. Flashbacks are a common trauma response.”

“’M still sorry you had to see that.”

“No sweetie! We’re glad we were here so we could help you get out of the flashback!” Patton exclaimed. He frowned. “Do these happen a lot?”

Virgil shrugged.
“Oh Virgil. We really don’t mind helping, I hope you know that.”

Virgil didn’t respond, burning up in shame.

“What usually helps when you have these on your own?” Patton asked.

Virgil curled his shoulders in. “I usually just ride it out and pass out. It’s fine, I can still wake up if Thomas really needs me, you don’t have to worry about me, I can still work.”

Virgil saw Patton reach for him out of the corner of his eye. He flinched away, expecting to be struck, or at the very least grabbed.

Patton withdrew his hand immediately. “Oh no Virge, I’d never ever hurt you! None of us would! And we care about you so much! You mean so much more to us than as a function of Thomas!”

Logan nodded. “You are valuable to me, not just as a co-worker, but as a friend, even family-”

“Don’t you mean famLY?” Patton asked, cheeky grin in place.

Logan rolled his eyes but Virgil saw some amusement there.

“Indeed my dark prince! I care for you a great deal! I will slay any beasts come to harm you and I will always be here for you!”

Virgil felt himself getting choked up. “I-um, I’m feeling b-better n-now, can I go downstairs?”

“Of course! I was just about to start dinner! How does homemade chicken noodle soup with dumplings sound?”

Virgil blinked away a few tears. He longed for what the Light Sides said to actually be true. His touch monster was clawing at his sternum. He wished they loved him, that they actually cared about him. This facade they wore was too painful to endure. He just loved them so goddamn much.

“Th-that sounds g-good.” Virgil couldn’t help how broken his voice sounded.

Patton looked at Virgil sadly. “Okay. Do you want to help me or do you want some alone time to decompress?”

Virgil considered it for a moment. May as well be honest. “I-s-should probably be around someone. They t-t-tend to come in sets if I’m by m-myself.”

“You can help me! Or Logan or Roman would be happy to have you!”

“Indeed.”

“Tis true!”

Virgil snorted at Roman’s commitment to his Prince role. “I-I’d like to be doing something. I can help make the soup?” Virgil asked, unsure.

Patton beamed. “Absolutely! Do you want to come down with me or wait a while?”

“I’ll come down with you.”

“Great! Do you think you can stand?”
Virgil pushed the blanket back and started shivering almost immediately. He pushed himself to his feet as the shivering worsened.

“Here you go!” Roman nearly shouted.

Virgil looked over at him. Roman had transfigured the red blanket into a cloak, with intricate gold filigree on the edges and a gold stormcloud on the back.

Virgil snorted. *Jesus Christ you are too extra.* “Thanks Princey.”

“Not a problem!”

Virgil put the cloak on and tied the strings in front of him. It warmed him up almost instantly.

“I have to admit, I can see this fitting in with my aesthetic. Except if it was a little less red and gold, and a lot less extra.” Virgil smirked at the offended Princey noises he heard.

“Come on kiddo, before Roman’s ego gets too bruised.” Patton chuckled.

Patton and Virgil went downstairs while Roman and Logan excused themselves to their rooms. Once in the kitchen, Patton turned around. “Virgil, remember my promise?”

*About not touching your disgusting body if he doesn’t feel like it.* Virgil nodded.

Virgil felt the clawing monster come back, the longing for true care, for love, and his love for the Light Sides filling his chest. Virgil nodded, close to breaking. Patton opened his arms and gently encircled Virgil. Virgil, after a moment’s hesitation, wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck, hid his head in Patton’s shoulder, and sobbed. Virgil felt arms tighten around him, holding him up. Patton murmured soothing nonsense into Virgil’s ear, gently swaying them back and forth and occasionally rubbing his hands on Virgil’s back. After a good twenty-five minutes, Virgil’s tears slowed down. He pulled away embarrassed.

“I, um…”

Patton just smiled, his own face wet. “Don’t worry Virgil. I was more than happy to give you a hug, and I think you needed a good cry.”

Virgil sent a shy half-smile Patton’s way. “Th-thanks.”

“No problem kiddo. Why don’t I make you some tea while you start the broth?”

Virgil and Patton were almost done with the soup when Virgil smelled… an americano?

“Hey gurls!”

Virgil turned to Remy, happy to see him but embarrassed at his self-imposed isolation.

“Hey Rem.”

“Hiya Remy! How’re you doing?”

Remy sighed loudly and flopped into a chair. “Babe, I could NOT get a wink of sleep last night!”

Virgil frowned. “But Thomas was able to sleep.”
Remy leaned back in the chair, acting like a limp noodle. “I KNOW! I had to stay with him ALL NIGHT to keep him asleep! I wasn’t even able to tell my boo’s hot dick good morning before he had to go to work!”

Virgil flushed bright red, but Patton seemed unfazed. “I’m sure Saul doesn’t mind kiddo. We’ve all got jobs to do after all!”

Remy groaned loudly before chugging the rest of his americano. “I know, like, I’m not worried him being pissed or anything, but I just feel sorry for myself! I did NOT get my beauty rest AND I didn’t even get to go on my favorite ride!”

Virgil was still blushing at Remy’s rather… open way he talked about certain parts of his relationship, but he had to recover. “I thought you usually don’t get a lot of sleep anyways? You always go to parties and shit.”

Remy looked at Virgil, betrayed. “Only on the weekends! During the weekdays, my body is a temple!”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “What is it on the weekends?”

“A ruin.”

Virgil smirked.

“I saw you going out on more than just the weekends Rem.”

“Bitch don’t judge me.”

Virgil snorted.

“Do you want to stay for supper Remy? I made plenty and it’s almost done!” Patton chirped.

“Yaaaassss, home cooking! That is just what this queen needs. I need me some comfort food.”

Patton giggled. “Happy to help! Do you want to take some leftovers for Saul?”

“Omg gurl you are too pure.”

Virgil finished rolling out the last of the dumplings and put them in the boiling soup.

The rest of the Light Sides came down and began settling in. Everyone was chatting amiably with one another. Dinner went by smoothly. Eventually, Remy stretched and yawned.

“Sorry gurls, I’ve gotta head back, see if I can get any action before my shift tonight. And Virgie, you should come over sometime! Your cuticles are just crying out for help.”

Virgil shot Remy a half-smile. “Yeah, I’ll come by soon.”

“Just not tonight, ‘cause hopefully I’m gonna have Saul’s di-”

“Here’s your leftovers Remy!” Patton hurriedly said.

Remy smirked and winked at Patton. “Thanks doll.” He turned to the others. “See y’all lat-ah! Byyyyyeeeee!” And he was gone.

Once Remy had disappeared, Logan turned to Virgil.
“It sounds like you saw Dr. Picani today, correct?” Logan asked.

Virgil nodded. “Yep.”

Logan hummed. “Would you like to talk about it?”

Virgil looked over at Logan. He was trying, bless his guarded heart.

“Naw, I’m good. It went fine. I’ll probably go back soon. I’m just really tired.”

“I am glad to hear that the session went alright and that you intend to return. Do let us know if there’s anything we can do to help support you.”

Virgil shot Logan a half-smile, even as he felt his intestines turn into a whirlpool of razors at the false concern. “Yeah, will do L.”

Logan nodded to himself, satisfied. Roman offered to help Patton with the dishes and proceeded to fluster him with little touches and stolen kisses as they cleaned up. Virgil couldn’t help but compare Roman’s behavior around Patton to his behavior around Virgil. From the day they had met, Virgil had plenty of examples to prove to himself that Roman and the others were disgusted by him. And why wouldn’t they be, especially after they learned how irreparably tainted he was? Roman had seemed even more uncomfortable than usual when Remy had been teasing him earlier. It must have been because now the royal knew. Who would want to be with someone as gross as Virgil?

Virgil excused himself to his room, unable to stop the whirlpool from rising up into his chest. He collapsed on his bed and curled in the fetal position in an attempt to relieve the pressure. It felt like there was a hungry boa squeezing his lungs. Virgil was sucking in great gasps of air, trying to fill up his constricted lungs as tears quickly soaked his pillow. After an unknown amount of time, Virgil surrendered to blissful unconsciousness.

When he woke up, he checked his clock. 2:38 AM. Virgil winced, realizing how much worse he had gotten since he had been freed from the Dark Sides. His head felt cloudy, likely due to emotional and physical exhaustion.

Maybe the Dark Sides were right. Maybe it is best that I stay with them and let them hurt me. I’m falling apart without them. Maybe I’m meant to be hurt. So little is known about people like Thomas; maybe there’s a Side that has to be hurt in each person. Maybe that’s me.

Virgil felt a tsunami of anxiety hit him all at once. His neck felt hot and he smelled and tasted copper. He could feel the adrenaline rushing through his system.

Oh god, have I been hurting Thomas by being free from the Dark Sides?! He seems fine, but I’m too stupid to notice otherwise, and it’s not like the Light Sides would - or should - trust me with sensitive information regarding Thomas! Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck I need to go back!! I can’t hurt Thomas!!! Thomas! I’m so sorry!!!!

Virgil allowed himself a few moments to weep before sinking into the Imagination. He was distraught, he knew he was far too upset to be thinking clearly, but his mind was consumed by panic, anguish, and emotional pain. It was like his entire being was made up of hysteria, and he had to do something to fix it. He was single-mindedly focused on fix it fix it fix it fix it fix it!!! He didn’t want to go back to the Dark Sides, god he didn’t want to, but there was no other choice. I’ve never had a choice.
Virgil dropped a few feet through the air before landing on solid ground. He was unused to sinking into the Imagination and he certainly had far less control than Roman did. He looked around and saw that he was just outside Roman’s castle. He remembered Roman had mentioned that the Dark Sides were in the dungeon, so he ran into the castle, his sobs growing more forceful with each breath.

When he got there, instead of the guards putting up a fight, they welcomed him as “Sir Virgil”. Virgil let loose another wave of sobs as his need to protect Roman and Thomas punched through him. He whipped his head around to examine the foyer, unsure of which direction to head. One of the royal guards approached him.

“Sir Virgil, may I be of assistance? You appear to be in great distress.”

Virgil would have laughed at Princey’s creation in any other circumstance. “I need to find the dungeons! Please, tell me where they are!” he begged, panting heavily.

“Of course sir,” Virgil shuddered violently at being called that, “take this right and go forwards until you hit another wall. Then turn right and the entrance to the dungeons will be directly ahead of you.”

Virgil nodded his thanks through his bawling and continued running. After a minute of running, Virgil saw the wall. When he was about 20 feet away, though, Roman appeared in front of him. Virgil slowed but couldn’t stop himself in time to keep from running into the prince. Luckily, Roman caught Virgil as he collapsed into him.

“Virgil! What happened, what’s wrong?”

Virgil was still hysterical, crying and hyperventilating. “I have to go back to the Dark Sides! I need to be hurt! Thomas needs me to be hurt!”

Roman felt horror fill his veins as his blood turned to ice. His skin felt physically cold. “Virgil… my God, why would you think that?” he asked hoarsely.

Virgil looked up at Roman, and Roman became more concerned. Virgil’s eyes were wild, swollen and bloodshot, and his face was soaked with tears.

“I have to! I have to! I’m supposed to be hurt! Thomas is going to be hurt if I don’t! I deserve it! I’m gross and bad and useless and worthless and you won’t even fuck me to relieve your stress and Thomas can’t function with all of his Sides stressed to the max!”

Roman felt nauseous and light-headed, certain shock was setting in. My love… Oh my love, I promise I will fix this. Roman felt tears coming to his own eyes.

Virgil paused, and Roman hoped that meant he was coming out of whatever on Earth brought this on.

“I know… Roman, I know! I have a different plan!”

Roman was terribly worried for Virgil. He truly did not seem to be at all okay.

“What is your plan Virgil?” he ventured.

“Can… um, can you let go of me please?”

Roman let go immediately, not wanting to force unwanted contact onto the traumatized Side. Virgil
dropped to his knees and breathed heavily for a few moments. Roman was cautiously optimistic that perhaps Virgil was returning to himself.

Instead, Virgil reached for Roman’s waistband.

Roman jumped back, horrified and sickened. “No! Virgil, what on Earth?! You don’t want this! I won’t hurt you!”

Virgil flinched and cowered. He had his arms and hands over his head, still kneeling, almost curled into a ball. His sobbing intensified.

“Please, please, God please, please let me, please hurt me. Hit me, fuck me, kick me, burn me, I don’t care. I deserve it, Thomas needs me to be hurt! You can whip me if you want with whatever! You’ll be better than the Dark Sides and I don’t want them! I don’t want them anymore!”

Virgil’s distorted cry rattled the entire wing of the castle.

Roman rushed forward, consequences be damned, fell to his knees before Virgil, and pulled him to his chest. He held the quaking, sobbing Side tightly, protectively.

Virgil, whatever it is you’re going through, I am so sorry. I will do whatever I have to in order to heal you.

Roman shifted so he was sitting on the ground and had Virgil in his lap. He wrapped one arm around Virgil’s body and arms, and used the other hand to cradle his head against his chest. He rocked them gently, humming songs as he pressed his face into Virgil’s hair. His grip never loosened, in fact, it became tighter whenever Virgil would let out a particularly excruciating cry. The royal guards had come running at the commotion, but Roman waved them off, letting them know he had the situation under control.

Do you though?

Roman resolutely ignored his doubts. Virgil needed him to be confident. Virgil’s sobs turned to wheezing gasps. Roman tried in vain to get Virgil to do his breathing exercises, but after several fruitless minutes Virgil passed out in Roman’s arms. Roman wanted to weep for his love’s suffering, but he knew he had to keep it together if he wanted to help Virgil. Roman shifted Virgil so he was carrying him bridal-style with Virgil’s head on his shoulder. After pressing a chaste kiss to Virgil’s forehead, Roman closed his eyes and sunk up into the main mindscape. With a snap of his fingers, he sealed the Imagination to anyone but himself. He carefully placed Virgil on his bed.

Roman turned to the mirror that led to Dr. Picani’s office. He closed his eyes and focused. With great difficulty and precise maneuvers, Roman made it so that although the rest of the Imagination was closed to outsiders, Virgil could still visit Dr. Picani.

Roman turned back to his fallen angel. Virgil appeared to still be unconscious, perhaps asleep. He went to his bathroom, got a washcloth damp with warm water, and started gently dabbing at Virgil’s face, cleaning it of the snot and tears. He banished the washcloth to his clothes hamper and conjured a warm, soft towel. Roman delicately dried Virgil’s face by lightly pressing the towel into his skin. He threw the towel to the side and grabbed a thick quilt. Draping it over Virgil, he hesitated, before deciding to summon the others. They both rose up, sleepy and confused, until they saw Virgil. When Roman explained what had happened, Patton had both hands over his face and was shaking in silent sobs. Logan was trying to keep his face still, but there was a tremor running through him and traitorous tears flowing down his face. Roman climbed into bed on the side closest to Virgil and Patton and Logan crawled in behind Virgil on the other side. Roman cradled the back of Virgil’s head with one hand and pressed another kiss to Virgil’s forehead, this
time at his hairline, before draping that arm over Virgil. They all drifted off into an uneasy sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Don't worry, Roman does indeed love Logan, he's just our impulsive boy and we love him. Besides, he made it up to Logan before dinner. (° °) (Lol not that, that's what Roman was not-so-subtly trying to offer by bein' all, well, Roman, because his nerd is hot. But, Logan didn't pick up on the signals at all and instead made Roman take him around the royal gardens so Logan could talk about the incredible science of splicing and the aspects of the different species of plants.)
Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

Hey y'all! First things first, I updated the tags! Virgil's got some internalized ableism and sanism happening that he needs to work through, so tread carefully if that might trigger you.

Also, we blew by 450 comments and 3500 hits?!?! WHAT?!?!?! And the kudos and bookmarks keep increasing too?!?!?!

I love every single comment and the interaction I get with y'all! I'm awkward as hell, but know that I treasure every single chance to interact with you lovely people that I can!

And another huge thank you to Jasper01! She helps me so hecking much in this fic! There would be quite a few more typos, awkward phrasings, and more if it weren't for her!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil woke up with a sore throat and a killer headache. He felt someone’s arm over his waist and panicked. I can’t I can’t I can’t not again I’m gonna die I’m gonna die… With his breathing picking up, he slowly opened one eye as far as he dared. He relaxed minutely when he saw it was Roman, but he still needed to get out now!

He carefully slid out from underneath the arm that Virgil just knew was protective and crawled down the bed, standing at the foot of it. Now that he had woken up a bit and wasn’t in a blind panic, he remembered last night.

Oh God…

Virgil flushed hot with shame. Shit, poor Princey…

Virgil knew it was the absolute hysterical frenzy that had clouded his mind into thinking like that, but shit. Since the other two were there, he knew Roman probably told them, and Virgil couldn’t blame him. Hell, if Roman had gone batshit crazy like he had, Virgil would definitely want the other Light Sides to know. However, he also knew there was no way he could face them. Virgil knew he wouldn’t be able to stand their frustrated glares.

I fucked up. They were tolerating me just fine and I fucked up. I shouldn’t have done anything last night. I lost my fucking mind. Maybe I am crazy. Why would they want to deal with a crazy person? They shouldn’t have to. They’ll hate me, I can’t see them when they wake up. I know how they’ll look at me. I can’t, I’m gonna die!

Closing his eyes, he focused on teleporting to a place that he used to call home.

When he appeared in a hallway, he opened his eyes and took in the dulled light. He heard coffee being brewed in the kitchen and shuffled over. He saw Remy standing at the counter and Saul with his hands on Remy’s waist, whispering something into his ear. Remy giggled and Virgil saw
Saul’s hands move lower. He decided that now would be a good time to clear his throat. They both turned and their faces brightened.

“Hey Virgie! How’s my little coffee bean doing?” Remy chirped.

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “So it’s not your first cup of coffee this morning?”

“Shade.”

Virgil snorted. Remy leaned and squinted at Virgil. “Your eyes are hella bloodshot hun, and I know that’s not from lack of sleep. What happened babe?”

Virgil grimaced and looked down at the floor. Saul walked over cautiously. “Did something happen with the Light Sides?”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded, tears beginning to fill his eyes.

Saul looked at Virgil seriously. “Did they hurt you?”

Virgil shook his head rapidly.

“Th-they hate me.” Virgil whispered wetly.

“Oh honey...” Remy breathed.

“Can I hug you?” Saul asked.

Virgil nodded as the first tears fell from his eyes. He closed his eyes and found himself wrapped up in a bear hug. He felt Remy join the hug soon after. He cried pitifully, grieving the loss of his relationship with the Light Sides, knowing they’d be disgusted by him and never take him back. Virgil knew he was soaking the front of Saul’s shirt with tears and snot, but he couldn’t find it in himself to pull away. Remy was whispering to him, but Virgil couldn’t make out what he was saying through his painful grief. It felt like a white hot tearing pain that started in his chest and filled his entire body. Virgil wept until his tears ran out and he was only silently hiccuping.

“There you go coffee bean. You feeling better?” Remy asked.

Virgil let out a dry laugh. “Not really. Th-they hate me.” Virgil starting whimpering again.

Remy was quick to intervene. “No, no sugar. I’m sure they don’t hate you, and you know you’ve got us. Can we get some tea in you babes? I think that’ll help you feel a little better.”

Virgil bristled at the suggestion that fucking leaf water could make his emotions all better, but he bit his tongue. Saul and Remy were already tolerating him enough. He allowed himself to be led to and sat down in one of the chairs at the table. He crossed his arms on the table and leaned on them. As Remy went to grab some tea, the grief hit Virgil again. I can’t even be in their presence anymore. Virgil laid his head down on his arms and began lightly sobbing. He felt Saul rubbing his upper back. He heard Remy rush over and start murmuring at him, running fingers through his hair.


Remy and Saul glanced at each other helplessly over Virgil’s hunched form. They looked back down when they heard the anguished Side’s sobs escalate.

“And n-n-now I c-can’t see them anymore!” Virgil wailed.
“Shhhhh sugar pie, tell me what happened. Why can’t you see them anymore?” Remy asked softly.

So Virgil told them. He told them about the panic-induced madness, his realization about his role, the trip to the Imagination, his attempt to get Roman to hurt him instead, and his escape this morning. When he had finished recounting the events of the previous night, both of the Neutral Sides had been brought to tears.

“Oh sweetie…” Remy said wetly.

Virgil felt terrible. “I’m sorry.”

Remy was quick to reassure him. “No, no baby! You don’t have anything to be sorry for! I promise. Why don’t you drink some tea and eat some breakfast. We’ll talk after that, okay? I promise you’re not in trouble and we’re not mad at you, I just think we can help you.”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. He sipped his tea and nibbled on some toast. His throat was so sore he could only manage half of the slice of toast, but he knew he needed to get something into his system.

Remy sat in the chair next to him and Saul smiled gently from across the other side of their small table. “Can we talk about what happened last night coffee bean?”

I’d rather not relive my stupidity, Virgil thought to himself. He cringed thinking back on it, truly regretting his actions.

“Y-yeah, I guess.”

“Okay hun. I think first, can we talk about this idea that you have to be-” Remy’s voice choked off. “-that you have to be hurt in order for Thomas to be healthy?”

Virgil shrugged. “Dunno, makes sense doesn’t it? I’ve been losing my mind since the Dark Sides were locked up. Maybe I did want it and like it and just didn’t know it”

Remy looked distraught and horrified, so Saul jumped in. “Virgil, I think Logic would call that a cognitive distortion.” Virgil snorted at the reference. “Umm, shit, what’s the phrase? Fuck, one second.” Saul pulled out his phone and started furiously typing. “Correlation is not equal to causation!” Saul nearly shouted triumphantly.

Virgil frowned. “Okay, so?”

“So, it means that just because you started feeling worse when the Dark Sides got locked up, that doesn’t mean that you have to be… in the presence of the Dark Sides to be healthy. I really think there’s another explanation.” Saul explained. “Fuck, I don’t know if I’m saying that right.”

“I think you did great baby.” Remy reassured. “Virgie, I think there’s something else going on. You do NOT have to tell us everything you went through with the Dark Sides, but I think that’s what’s causing it. Didn’t Thomas think up a therapist figment? Maybe they’ll have more ideas!”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, Dr. Emile Picani. I actually saw him yesterday. But the path to his office is in Roman’s room, and th-they’re not going t-to want to s-see me.” Virgil felt tears well in his eyes again.

“No, shhhhh baby. I don’t think that’s true. Do you think they hate you because of what happened last night?” Remy asked.
Virgil felt himself growing irritated. “Obviously!”

Remy ignored his outburst, knowing Virgil was experiencing intense mood swings. “I don’t think they’ll hate you for that. I’ve seen how they are around you. They really care about you gurl. I think they’ll be more worried than anything. You’re free to hang out here as long as you want, but would it be okay if Saul or I went up there and let them know that you’re safe here?”

Virgil nodded rapidly, not wanting to stress out the Light Sides unnecessarily. Remy put a hand on Virgil’s back and nodded at Saul. Saul stood and sunk out, presumably to the Light Sides.

Remy smiled gently at Virgil. “What do you say we watch some trashy reality TV and throw popcorn at the screen?”

Virgil forced a half-smile on his face at that. Remy brightened.

“Good girl! Lemme make us some coffee and popcorn and I’ll join you on the couch!”

///// When Logan woke up, he immediately noticed Virgil’s absence. Remembering what the prince had told him last night, Logan leaned over and shook Roman awake. Roman groaned and whined.

“Roman, I do not know where Virgil is.”

Roman shot straight up (did he just actually fly?) and out of bed. He closed his eyes and furrowed his brow. After a moment, he sighed in relief.

“He’s not in the Imagination, and it looks like the Dark Sides are still locked up.” Roman relayed.

Logan let out an identical sigh of relief. Patton, who had woken up with the commotion, looked around.

“Where’s Virgil?” Patton asked.

Logan found himself momentarily distracted. Patton’s hair was a mess, his eyes were still sleepy, there were lines from the pillow on his face, and his glasses were crooked. He is objectively adorable. Logan thought weakly. Logan cleared his throat.

“We do not know. Roman has confirmed that Virgil is not in the Imagination and the Dark Sides are still locked up.”

Patton nodded and frowned. “I guess that leaves the mindscape and the outside world. I’ll go check on Thomas and see how he’s feeling.”

“Excellent, Roman-”

“Logan and I will search the mindscape!” Roman blurted out, obviously eager to state a plan first. Logan sent a half-hearted glare towards the ego, which Roman pretended not to see.

“Very well Roman. Why don’t you-”

“I’ll search upstairs and you search downstairs!” Roman cut Logan off again. Logan felt his patience waver, but knew that Roman only reverted to such ego defence when he was extremely upset and truly could not help it. Logan took a breath in through his nose to ease his temper.

“Very well.”
Patton sunk out, and Roman and Logan searched the mindscape. They met downstairs after a couple of minutes, none of them having been successful in locating Virgil.

Roman was pacing, running a hand through his hair and pulling on it.

“I don’t know where he could be! Could he have gone back to the dark side of the mindscape?! I am prepared to storm their side if that’s what it takes to find Virgil! It looked like the Dark Sides were still locked up, but what if Virgil managed to get them loose?”

“I’m worried too. I don’t want anything to happen to our sweet boy!”

“I must admit I am concerned as well. I do not know the state of Virgil’s mind, but if it was anything like last night it could be very bad.”

Just as Roman was about to organize a military corps to invade the Dark Side of the mindscape, they sensed a Side rise up behind them. They turned and were confused to see Saul.

“Hello Lust. Do pardon my abrupt greeting, but have you seen Virgil? We are very worried.”

Saul rolled his eyes. “Dude, my name’s Saul, you’ve known for forever. And yeah, he’s in our side of the mindscape for now.”

Roman beamed. “Excellent! I cannot wait to see my-”

“He needs some alone time.” Saul cut off Roman, remembering Virgil’s embarrassment and knowing that the fanciful Side may be overwhelming for him. “He’s hanging out with Remy and I today.”

Saul saw the looks of hurt pass over the Light Sides’ faces. He sighed; although he preferred the Neutral Side more, he also knew that they did have Virgil’s best interests at heart.

“Look, it sounds like you guys didn’t do anything wrong, okay? He just wants a bit of time to… um, fuck, what’s the word?... process before he talks to you. He told us what happened last night.” Saul winced when he saw the emotional Side start getting, well, emotional.

“Is he okay?” Patton asked shakily.

Saul had sympathy for Patton. He knew what it was like to worry for the smallest Side.

“He’s okay. He’s, um, emotional, but he’s physically fine.”

Patton nodded, tears still gathering in his eyes. Saul wanted to help the Side, but he knew the other two were far better suited for it.

“Alright then, I’m gonna-”

“Wait! Before you go.” Logan started. Saul looked in surprise at the logical Side; Logan was not prone to random outbursts. Sure, he could get heated during a debate, but it didn’t usually come out of nowhere.

Logan nodded at him. “Thank you, Saul.”

Saul smirked. “No problem, Logic.” and sunk out. As he was sinking out, he heard Roman remark, “That’s fair.”
A couple little director's notes:

I have Saul be the Lust trait because I wanted to be super clear that sexual orientation (Saul) and romantic orientation (Roman) are two separate things and I wanted to give that some representation for folks whose sexual orientation and romantic orientation might differ from each other (shout out to my friend who almost certainly doesn't read this lol). As far as I'm aware, Thomas hasn't given us any indication that his romantic and sexual orientations differ from each other, so I have Saul and Roman work closely together behind the scenes. It's also why Thomas isn't aware of Saul yet; Saul's more of a behind-the-scenes kind of guy and since those two orientations match up for him, Thomas hasn't wondered about it.

If it looked weird that Saul was tripping over his words a bit, that was intentional! When "in the mood", as the cool kids say, blood has a tendency to leave your prefrontal cortex. The phrase "love makes ya stupid" is a tad crude but accurate. It won't have a huge effect on your intellect or decision-making capabilities per se, but it can make thinking of phrases and words a little trickier, which I wanted to represent in here.
Saul sunk back in to the Neutral Side of the mindscape to find Remy and Virgil laughing at the television and eating popcorn. They both turned when Saul rose up.

“Hey baby. How’d it go?” Remy asked.

Saul shrugged. “Fine. Light Sides were and are worried because they care, but no one’s mad.”

Virgil visibly sagged, from both relief and guilt.

“I should’ve left a note or somethin’...” Virgil mumbled.

Remy reached over and scratched Virgil’s upper back. “It’s okay hun. They understand. The important thing to us and them is that you’re safe.”

Virgil acknowledged that with a small nod. He felt his anxiety skyrocket. Oh fuck, the presentation!

“I’ve got to go. Thomas needs me.” Anxiety said. He stood shakily.

Remy put a hand on Virgil’s wrist. “Alright babes, just lmk if you need starbies or a girlfriend to gossip with.”

Virgil looked down and shot a half-smile at Remy, only partially forced. Remy had a gentle smile on his face.

Virgil nodded. “Okay, I’ll catch up with you later.”

Remy leaned back and took a long draw from his coffee. “Kay sis, ciao!”

Virgil’s lips quirked, and he sunk out.

Remy turned to Saul and immediately burst into tears. Saul hurried over to his boyfriend and gathered him into his arms. Remy threw his arms around Saul’s neck.

“Shhhhh baby, it’s okay.” Saul soothed.

“I-it’s not though! You heard what Virgil said! W-we suspected, but we d-didn’t know! And he’s been through so much more! What he went through is never okay!” Remy cried.

Saul hugged Remy tighter, tears falling from his own eyes and his stomach roiling at what they had learned this morning.

Remy whimpered. “I thought he was totally free from the Dark Sides once he had been accepted into the Light. I had no idea!”
Saul kissed Remy’s temple. “I didn’t know either baby. We can’t blame ourselves for that. Virgil did everything he could to hide it.”

“A-and what he went through… I mean, we suspected, but with what he said it’s pretty obvious! It was already horrific knowing about the physical and mental shit they did to him, but the-” Remy’s voice choked off and he sobbed. Saul swallowed thickly.

“I know.” He said, voice breaking. “I know.”

Saul and Remy held each other as they cried for their little brother.

Virgil rose up in his room and took a moment to gather himself. He’d had a hell of a day yesterday. He wrapped his arms around himself and rubbed his upper arms. Virgil tried to avoid it, but he ended up going around his room and checking in and underneath the furniture. Once that was done and he was feeling a little more secure, Virgil flopped on his bed and focused so he could be more present with Thomas.

Except he was interrupted by knocking.

Letting out a frustrated breath, he didn’t bother trying to hide his irritation.

“What?” he ground out.

“Hey kiddo. Can we talk?” came Patton’s nervous voice.

Virgil knew he owed the Light Sides a conversation, but he was getting tired of them being so… delicate with him. They were acting like he was a child, like he was made of glass. Granted, his symptoms were worse, he’d give them that, but it was so fucking annoying for them to only see him as a helpless victim. He didn’t want to be a victim in the first place but was forced into the role by those fucking Dark Sides. Now, it seemed like that’s all they saw him as. Like nothing else he did made up for it.

“Not now, I’m working.” Virgil paused, knowing that although he was irritated, Patton was trying to help. “Sorry, I’ll talk to you later.”

He could see the moral Side slump in disappointment. “O-okay kiddo. Let me know?”

“Yup. Will do.” Virgil said shortly. He took a deep breath to clear some of the frustration, and focused back on Thomas. Thomas was going to be giving a presentation later that day to some newer Youtube creators. Virgil sensed Saul actively join the planning, which confused him. As Thomas was looking over the guest list, trying to squeeze in some last-minute adjustments based on who would be there, Virgil understood why Saul wanted to be involved.

*Nope, Thomas does NOT need the distraction! He needs to focus so he doesn’t fuck up and make a fool of himself and have word spread of what an idiot he is and have everyone lose respect for him and lose his career and have his entire life go downhill. And he doesn’t even know ANY of these people! They could hurt him! I will NEVER let Thomas get hurt!! NEVER!!*

Virgil suddenly felt a tug. He rose up, confused as to why Thomas wanted his presence. Thomas was inhaling and exhaling through his nose, trying to regulate his breathing. He looked at Virgil from under his eyebrows.

“Virge, buddy, I hear you, but you’ve GOT to ease up man! I need to prepare and the amount of
anxiety you’re sending me is slowing me down, not helping me. Okay?”

Virgil looked down, ashamed. He hadn’t meant to slow Thomas down. “‘M sorry.”

Thomas sighed. “Look, Virge, I get you’re going through a rough time—”

Virgil’s head whipped up. He was furious. How dare he… He had no fucking idea…

“I am not a child!” Virgil growled. He wanted to say more, a LOT more, but held himself back for the sake of his Host.

Thomas threw his hands up. “Woah, Virge, never said you were, I just—”

Virgil bristled. Thomas was absolutely treating him like a child! He didn’t make that up! “I’m NOT crazy!”

Thomas’ eyes widened as he took a step back. “Buddy, calm down—”

“You calm down! Fuck you! This is why I shouldn’t have told anyone!” Virgil shouted, his frustration from several months boiling over. It cooled into regret as soon as heard his Host gasp and saw tears in his eyes. Thomas looked absolutely stricken. Virgil knew he fucked up. He lowered his head and sunk down.

He’d fucked up bad.

When he got into his room, his emotions only intensified. Virgil bit his knuckle to try to reign himself in a little.

Later, think about it later. Thomas needs you now.

Pushing his emotions into the box in the back of his brain, Virgil walked over to his bed and focused again. He winced; Thomas was devastated. Patton and Logan were in the outside world with Thomas, trying to calm him down. Virgil was starting to freak out. He knew he’d caused Thomas to be like this, but Thomas needed to pack and get ready for his presentation. Virgil sent Thomas a measured burst of anxiety. It seemed to work. Thomas started calming down a little and refocusing on his preparations. Patton and Logan stayed in the outside world to help Thomas.

Virgil kept an eye on everybody, and soon enough Thomas was nearly ready. Virgil was fretting over Thomas’ appearance, but eventually anxiety over making it to his presentation on time won out. Virgil sensed Thomas had enough residual anxiety to drive, and decided to take a break.

Virgil got out of bed and stretched his arms above his head. He felt his t-shirt ride up to expose a bit of his stomach and practically slammed his arms back down. He bit his lip and closed his eyes, trying to regulate his breathing.

Don’t panic, don’t panic, they’re not here, don’t panic…

Virgil kept breathing through it and felt himself calming until he felt a hand grab his shoulder roughly from behind. He gasped and opened his eyes as he spun around. He turned so quickly that he lost his balance and fell. He was relieved to see that there was no one there to hurt him or to see him fall like that. Virgil stood shakily. He went around his room to make sure there were no Dark Sides, then felt a swirl of chaotic emotion from Thomas. Virgil tuned in immediately, and saw that he was driving and nearly at the site. Virgil felt the guilt come back full force. He knew he owed Thomas an apology, but the thought of seeing his Host in person was enough to make him feel his blood vessels contract. Virgil grabbed a piece of paper and scribbled a note on it.
Hey Thomas. I’m sorry. You didn’t deserve that. I didn’t mean it, I promise.

After another moment, he decided to add:

You’re a good guy.

Virgil

He focused, and sent the note into Thomas’ bag. Coward, his brain taunted. Virgil didn’t bother trying to argue. He looked around and felt his panic and the feeling of being watched increase. He knew he needed to get out of his room and find a distraction if he didn’t want to spiral. He didn’t want to see the Light Sides’ pity after what happened last night, but he couldn’t stay in his room. Steeling himself, he walked to his door and moved to open it. He hesitated at the handle, though.

Virgil was exhausted.

He knew the Light Sides would be upset with him, if not for last night then certainly for hurting Thomas twice in the same morning. He knew he was a coward, but he just didn’t want to have that conversation and see their disappointment and frustration in him. He also knew they’d treat him like a porcelain doll, and that was what made him blow up at Thomas in the first place.

I can’t avoid them forever. I love the annoying bastards too much.

Virgil inhaled through his nose and opened his door. He poked his head out and looked both ways. Not seeing anybody, he made his way down to the kitchen, thinking some coffee and a snack might help him. When Virgil got there, he groaned to see that Logan had drained the pot. It was understandable, but now Virgil had to stick with tea, which did not have nearly as much glorious caffeine as coffee. Once he had made his tea and gotten a couple of granola bars, he flopped down on the couch and focused on Thomas. Virgil absent-mindedly ate his granola bars and drank his tea while he helped Thomas through his introductions and the start of his presentation. Virgil sensed that Thomas was about to take a risk to make everyone laugh by embarrassing himself.

NO!!

He felt Thomas’ anxiety rate spike as Thomas forgot what he was about to say. Virgil’s heart sank. Oh no oh no oh no oh no oh no Thomas I’m so fucking sorry holy shit I messed up I messed up bad I’m sorry...

Virgil felt like he could cry. He felt Roman take over while Logan scrambled to get everything back on track. Virgil hung around in the background for the rest of the presentation and the Q&A. Roman and Saul were working together during the Q&A to make sure Thomas looked good for the cute guys they had scoped out, and although Virgil fucking hated it, he figured he shouldn’t be making any more decisions today.

Once Thomas had packed up and started heading towards his office for a scripting meeting, Virgil pulled back and sat up. He had a headache and felt extra shitty about himself. He looked forlornly at the empty mug and granola bar wrappers on the coffee table.

I shouldn’t have taken that. I don’t deserve it.

Virgil felt a lump in his throat and tears prick his eyes as he let his failure sink in.

“Hey Virge!” Virgil opened his eyes to see the paternal Side coming down the stairs. Patton had a look of happiness with something else.
Virge forced a small smile. “Hey Pat.”

As Patton got closer, Virgil could make out the the other emotion. Disappointment.

“I was thinking some pasta carbonara for lunch today! What do you think?”

Virgil shrugged. “Sounds good.” He pulled up Tumblr and started scrolling through it, trying to pretend he didn’t make the Light Sides and Thomas hate him. The lump in his throat returned and he felt his chest getting tight with grief. When he heard Patton walk into the kitchen, he flipped his bangs down and pulled up his hood so none of the others could see his eyes.

Before long, he heard two more sets of footsteps coming down the staircase. Virgil pretended not to hear them as the footsteps stopped.

“Virgil.”

Virgil sighed inwardly. He didn’t want to acknowledge the voice, but Logan sounded so… off. He looked up and hated himself. Logan had a number of complicated emotions running across his face, and Virgil knew he was the one who put them there.

“Hey.” Virgil said weakly.

“I am glad to see you unharmed.”

Virgil flushed and lowered his eyes in shame. “I… yeah, I’m sorry about that. I-I should have left a note or somethin’. Wasn’t cool of me to dip out on you guys like that.”

“It’s quite alright Virgil. We are all simply happy you are safe.”

Virgil felt guilt from earlier swell up in his chest. Words left his mouth almost uncontrollably as his anxiety overwhelmed him. “And I’m Sorry About Fucking Up Thomas’ Presentation!”

A distant, “Language!” came from the kitchen, and despite Virgil feeling like absolute shit, he felt his lips quirk.

Roman jumped in. “It’s quite alright my dark and stormy knight! For I was skilled enough to lead Thomas to victory while Logan, eh, did his thing or whatever.”

Roman had a playful gleam in his eyes and when Logan turned to glare at him, the scowl turned half-hearted fairly quickly.

Virgil nodded, still feeling tired but somewhat relieved. “Cool.”

“Lunch is ready kiddos!” Patton called.

Lunch passed by in a relatively relaxed atmosphere. Everyone was tired from helping Thomas. Thomas may be an exceptional actor, but when it came to educational presentations he needed quite a bit more help.

Virgil looked at Patton and felt his guilt return. He trained his eyes on his mostly-full plate. “Um, sorry for yelling at Thomas earlier. I apologized to him but you guys had to deal with the fallout, so ‘m sorry.”

“Awww kiddo! That was so good of you to apologize!” Virgil looked up and saw the disappointment had been cleared from Patton’s face.
When Roman had nearly cleaned off the pile of food on his plate and everyone else was half-finished (where does the guy put all that, seriously?) Virgil cleared his throat.

“Hey, uh, Princey? Would it be cool if, um, I saw Dr. Picani again today? We didn’t get to talk about, like, some of the basics of our meetings and I want to get that wrapped up so I know what to expect.”

Roman grinned brightly. “Certainly! You can just walk through the mirror whenever you’d like!”

Virgil nodded. “Thanks.” He shot Roman a half-smile.

“Of course!”

Virgil looked back down at his plate. He had managed to clear half of it, but he wasn’t sure he’d be able to finish the rest. Even though he’d finally been eating well since being freed from the Dark Sides, he still had a really hard time eating a large amount of food in one sitting. He forced a few more roasted vegetable and forkfuls of carbonara before he excused himself. As he walked towards the stairs, he could feel the Light Sides’ eyes on him.

He made his way to Roman’s room and walked towards the mirror. Taking a deep breath to ease his fear, he stepped through. This time, he stumbled a bit from the extra force behind his travel.

*I’ll have to ask Princey why it changed.*

Virgil noticed everything looked the same, down to the magazines. He gulped past his sore throat and made his way into the therapy room. Sitting down, he noticed the stuffed animals in the bottom of one of the bookcases. Virgil felt himself getting surprisingly emotional. He knew he couldn’t have one of the stuffed animals to hold during his therapy session, but he wanted one. He could practically feel the comfort it would provide. He got more upset. *Why do I always want things I can’t have? Stop deluding yourself idiot, you’re only making yourself more upset. You don’t deserve any fucking sympathy, you worthless, moronic burden.*

Virgil pulled himself a little more out of his head when he heard footsteps approaching. He pulled his knees up and wrapped his arms around them.

“Hellllooooooo nurse!”

Chapter End Notes

EEEEEEYYYY YEMILE'S BACK!!!

We'll get more of Virgil's history with Saul and Remy in future chapters, but I thought y'all deserved a little taste.

Also, mood swings suck. And they tend to happen kind of a lot during the healing process.
Virgil’s lips quirked. “Hey doc.”

“It’s good to see you again Virgil! How have you been since our last therapy session?” Dr. Picani asked as he sat down and pulled out his notebook.

Virgil bit his lip and looked down. He was beyond embarrassed at what had happened the previous night and he really didn’t want to tell Dr. Picani. He decided to chicken out as his emotions took over.

“Why have I been getting worse?” Virgil whimpered.

Coward.

_Shut up. I do want to know!_

_That’s not what he asked though, is it?_

Virgil didn’t have a response for that.

Dr. Picani tilted his head, his eyes sincere. “It’s not uncommon for people who have been through trauma to have an increase in symptoms once they start therapy. Is that when you noticed yourself feeling worse?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, I don’t think so. It’s more been since I, um, got away from the D-Dark Sides. Like a week after I got away from them.”

Dr. Picani hummed. “That makes sense. Your brain feels safe enough to heal.”

Virgil felt himself getting frustrated, but reigned himself in. “If I’m healing, why am I feeling worse?”

Dr. Picani had a sad half-smile on his face. “That’s often part of the process friendo.”

“But why? That doesn’t make any sense!” Virgil blurted out. He felt embarrassed for yelling. “Sorry. But aren’t things supposed to feel better when they heal?”

“Don’t worry about it! Dealing with this can be frustrating. Try to think of your trauma like an
infected abscess~"

“Gross.”

“It is gross! It’s kinda contained, but it’s definitely affecting the rest of you. Antibiotics can help, but you know how to really fight an infected abscess?”

“Ew, no.”

“You gotta lance it so it can drain!”

Virgil paused. *Holy shit that makes sense. But also, gross.*

“So… if we’re sticking with the metaphor, it’s draining right now?”

“Yup! More like, we’re starting to lance it. And those things are sensitive. When you first poke at it, it’s gonna hurt. And it’ll hurt until it’s had time to heal, but getting all of that infected pus out first is important. How familiar are you with trauma disorders, like PTSD or C-PTSD?” Dr. Picani asked.

Virgil was a little thrown, but could always count on sarcasm.

“Pretty darn I’d say.” Virgil drawled.

Dr. Picani only smiled sympathetically. “Do you know why the brain does what it does in trauma disorders?”

Virgil shook his head. Dr. Picani continued. “It’s essentially a memory filing error. Think of your memories being stored in a filing cabinet.”

Virgil nodded.

“Great! Now normally, when you experience something your brain wants to remember, it gets put in the right file, in the right drawer in the filing cabinet. But when you experience something traumatic, your brain goes into survival mode and suspends all non-essential activities, including filing memories. That means that instead of your memories getting put in the right spot, the little workers in your brain are taking files and throwing loose papers all over the place! It’s chaos! That’s why you might have trouble remembering the chronological order of events, or why something that’s a part of everyday life might trigger you.”

Virgil frowned. “Okay, I guess that makes sense so far. But why do I have mood swings and why have I been dissociating so much more! And the panic attacks…” Virgil couldn’t keep speaking around the lump in his throat.

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “For the mood swings, your brain is doing a lot right now, trying to heal. It will still sometimes go into survival mode, hence your dissociating - part of the “freeze” response - and your panic attacks, which is your flight response. Make sure you give yourself grace and patience. You’re going through a lot, and you’re doing the best you can. Remember what I said about memories getting thrown everywhere?”

Virgil nodded mutely.

“That’s why your panic attacks, dissociation, flashbacks, and other symptoms have been popping up more. Your brain is getting ready to process those memories, but they’re all in the wrong place. So anything related to what the memory is close to can trigger an attack. Can you give me an
example of when a symptom appeared “out of nowhere”?"

Virgil chewed on his lip. He had plenty of examples, but he didn’t know which one he wanted to
tell Dr. Picani. Suddenly, his mind was clouded over with a thick fog. He knew the memories of
random attacks were there, but he couldn’t grab on to any of them. He started feeling floaty. It was
like his brain refused to cooperate.

Virgil shrugged. “I… I dunno, ‘m sorry.”

“That’s okay! Are you feeling okay?” Dr. Picani asked.

“Little floaty.”

“Alright. Would you like to do a grounding exercise or a breathing exercise?” Dr. Picani’s voice
lifted at the end of the sentence, letting Virgil know he could say no to both if he wanted to.

“Grounding. That works really good.”

“Alright! Name five things you see around the room…” Dr. Picani led Virgil through the
grounding exercise, and eventually Virgil’s mind felt a little clearer and he had his feet back on the
ground.

“So, uh, the example. Um, like, I sometimes get freaked out when the Light Sides are in the same
room as me. Like, I know they’re not gonna hurt me, but I’m,” Virgil swallowed, “I’m still scared.”
he finished in a whisper.

Dr. Picani nodded. “That’s a very common experience.”

Virgil growled in frustration. “But… but I know they’re not gonna hurt me! Why do I get scared
around them when I’m not scared of them?! God I’m stupid.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head towards Virgil, pressing his lips together in empathy.

“You’re not stupid. You survived, and surviving takes a lot. Your brain is only trying to protect
you. Those memories that got thrown around can also have very vague associations with different
things. So while you know the Light Sides wouldn’t hurt you, your brain sees people in a room
with you and thinks it needs to go into survival mode, kind of how like you try to protect Thomas.”

Virgil chewed on his lip. It made sense, but a stubborn part of him wanted to refuse the
explanation. If he could explain it, then he had no reason for suffering. If something worked, then
that would mean he shouldn’t suffer anymore. But he was suffering dammit!

Oh come ON. You know why you’re feeling the way you are, so just, like, stop now.

…but I can’t…

Can’t or don’t want to? I think you’re just doing this for attention.

No! I’m not!

Then why do you insist on still feeling scared and upset when you know why you do and you know
you shouldn’t?

I don’t know! I don’t WANT to feel like this, but I can’t stop! It hurts, I don’t want it! I don’t! That
can’t be the answer if I’m still hurting. It’s gotta be something else.
“I… I don’t know.” Virgil mumbled.

Dr. Picani smiled. “And that’s okay. It’s a lot of information to take in. Just know that whatever you’re feeling? It’s all completely valid.”

Virgil nodded. He had another question on his mind. “So what is this going to look like? When we will we know if we’ve drained the abscess?” Virgil curled his lip in disgust. “And we should figure out a better metaphor for that. Something less gross.”

Dr. Picani laughed. “We certainly can! As for your question, it’ll be up to you. People can generally tell when they start feeling better. It’ll be a long process, but I know you can make it.”

“No, I mean, to drain everything… do I-” Virgil’s voice choked off. “Do I have to tell you everything?”

Dr. Picani softened. “Talking about what you went through helps a person heal for a lot of reasons. But it’s also difficult and scary for those same reasons. We’ll talk about it when you’re ready, and not sooner.”

Virgil smiled gratefully, then ducked his head in embarrassment.

Dr. Picani shifted his notebook. “Well Virgil, we definitely covered a lot today! We have about ten minutes left in our session. Is there anything else you’d like to cover in this session or would you like to talk about lighter topics?”

“Lighter topics.” Virgil replied immediately.

They spent the rest of the session talking about *Avatar*. Just before Virgil was about to leave, he felt a burst of courage.

“Hey, uh, doc?”

“What’s up?” Dr. Picani looked up at Virgil, smiling widely.

“What are those, um, dolls for?”

Dr. Picani looked down to the basket of stuffed cartoon characters. “Oh! Those are comfort items. Some people find it helpful to hold them.”

Virgil felt his courage fading quickly, he knew he had to act fast. “They’re just for kids though, right?”

Dr. Picani looked back up at Virgil. “Nope! Adults can find comfort in them too!”

Virgil nodded, his courage gone. “Cool. That’s, uh, chill. See ya later doc.” Virgil finger-gunned as he walked out and was certain that was the stupidest thing anyone’s ever done in the history of ever. Letting that thought fall to the bottom of his brain to stew until he had to go to bed, Virgil braced himself for the mirror. He stepped through it and ended up falling almost on his face from the sheer force. He groaned as he lay splayed on the carpet. He started to shakily push himself up as he sensed Roman sink into the room.

“Virgil! Are you alright?” Roman shouted, instantly at Virgil’s side and helping him up.

Virgil brushed off the royal’s hands, feeling his skin crawl. “I’m fine Princey. That mirror just has a lot more juice than yesterday.”
Roman tilted his head and frowned. “What do you mean?”

Virgil straightened his hoodie. “I mean that instead of walking through the mirror, I get shot out the end like I’m a sugar-free Haribo gummy bear and someone bought a five pound bag.”

Roman winced. “Ah, my apologies Virgil. I made some alterations to the Imagination late in the night. I’ll work on adjusting that for you straight away!”

Virgil nodded. As he was leaving Roman’s room, he heard Roman mutter “Heh, straight.” and snicker.

Chapter End Notes

If you haven't yet, check out the Amazon reviews for Haribo sugar-free gummy bears. They're hysterically funny!

Also, the thought process Virge has when Dr. Picani's explanation logically makes sense is something that I subconsciously struggled with and took me until recently (like, a year ago) to unpack. I was subconsciously thinking that if an explanation made sense or if a technique helped me, my pain was less valid and I wasn't allowed to feel hurt anymore. I would reject theories and techniques because what happened to me was still a huge fucking deal and I didn't want to minimize or invalidate that, which is what I felt accepting those theories and techniques would do. That's false of course, and once I realized what I was doing a year ago I was able to unpack and neutralize that bad logic, but it's one of the things that I fought for the longest time and one of the biggest, if not the biggest, detriment to successful therapy I've had. I did my best to represent that here in a way that hopefully makes sense. Unlike Virgil, I didn't have a conscious thought process about it, but I figured it made sense in this story and for Virgil.
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! Just a heads up, there is a series of flashbacks that take up the first third of the chapter. I put a line of tildes where they end. They're not as graphic as some of the other ones, just be aware and take care of yourselves. <3

Also, HUGE shout out to my beta Jasper01!! She edited TWO chapters today BEFORE she went into work for her FIRST DAY at a new job!! Yeet your love at her in the comments!

Oh, did I say two chapters? Why, I suppose I did.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil made his way to his bedroom and paused. He didn’t want to go into his bedroom, he wanted to find one of the other Sides and hang out with them. Especially with how he was feeling after his therapy session, he really didn’t want to be alone in his room. He knew he’d probably spiral, but he also knew he hasn’t been the most pleasant person to be around the past few months.

You know they definitely hate you now. You’ve been mostly avoiding them, and the times you decide to be around them you’re a crabby asshole.

I know.

Virgil turned the handle, walked into his room, and closed the door. When he closed it, he felt this strange sense of finality. It was like he had walked into a soundproof studio room, where all of the sound got sucked out of the air. Virgil made his way to his bed, intending to focus on Thomas the rest of the night when he saw his sheets. His clean sheets.

Virgil could feel the panic building, but tried to push it away with a humorless, Guess I’m sleeping on the floor tonight.

Virgil began seeing stained sheets instead of clean ones. He wasn’t standing anymore, he was on the floor and Deceit was on top of him, grabbing his hips, hurting him. Virgil could hear the grunts and slapping skin, he could feel every ounce of pain. He could smell the slightly dusty scent of his carpet and feel the carpet burn that was being formed from the scratchy texture. He felt the familiar sensation of Deceit releasing inside of him. Cruel words were spoken directly into his ear, burning pain traveling up his spine. The stab…

Virgil came out of his flashback abruptly. He was laying on his floor, breathing heavily. He was disoriented and had no idea where he was. He lay still, not wanting to anger the Dark Sides that were watching from a place unseen to Virgil. Behind me, they’re behind me…

Virgil laid there while he attempted to get his breathing under control. He felt strangely calm. I can do this, I know how to do this, I can survive, I’ve done this before, I know how to do this. Virgil felt the carpet below his hands, where they were splayed above his head. He curled his fingers experimentally, mesmerized by the sensation. He felt less… muted. He became more aware of his body, how his clothes were touching him, the soreness of his throat. Virgil blinked his eyes and felt
the tears fall and join the well-worn tracks he hadn’t realized were on his face. He sniffled, and realized that he was in his room and that he had just had a flashback. Slowly, he pushed himself to his hands and knees, his sore muscles protesting the entire time. When he got to his hands and knees, he felt the sensation of someone pistoning in and out of him. He flipped around so he was sitting on the ground. No one was there. He could sense another flashback of someone forcing themselves down his throat so he shook his head and stood. As that flashback became stronger, he slapped himself hard. When once wasn’t enough, he did it again.

~~~~~

Need more! Make it stop, oh god make it STOP!! Please god not this again! Anything but this!! I can’t!!

Virgil didn’t want to, but he knew there was one thing that worked. He all but threw his hoodie off and scratched at himself in desperation.

Make it stop make it stop make it stop MAKE IT STOP MAKE IT STOP!!!!

Virgil felt himself come back down from his frenzy. As soon as he felt the stinging in his arms, he was ashamed.

Wow, you can’t even last 2 days? Guess you are a lost cause.

I had to. I couldn’t… the flashbacks…

Oh shut up you crybaby. It didn’t even happen again, and you’re crying? No wonder none of the Light Sides want to fuck you. They’re way too good for you.

I know.

Virgil hugged his middle and sank to his knees. He hung his head in shame and defeat as he let silent tears fall. He normally wouldn’t want to be touched, but right now…

He wanted a hug fiercely.

He remembered Thomas’ hug, his Host surrounding him with love. The love was false, but in that moment Virgil hadn’t realized that and the memory was as close to perfect as he was ever going to get. And Patton’s hugs were warm and loving and home. He knew his Host wouldn’t want to hug him, especially not after this morning, but he couldn’t stop the craving. Like every other time the beast in his chest reared its ugly head he was helpless against it. He allowed it to overwhelm him, knowing that if he tried to fight it the beast would only spew more venom. He felt pain consume his entire body, every limb, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. Virgil couldn’t hope to describe it; it was like a stabbing, burning, and tearing pain all rolled into one. He just wanted a hug. A hug that someone wanted to give him. He knew he didn’t deserve it.

And he knew he’d never get one.

Virgil curled up on the floor in a loose fetal position, the pain consuming his body, a never-ending supply of tears running down his face. He was limp, helpless to do anything but experience the pain. His breath was hitching fruitlessly as it was trying to produce sobs. Virgil lay there, staring at nothing. He knew it was hopeless.

After some time, Virgil spotted his clock. 5:48.

Four and a half hours, Virgil thought dully. He knew that was a long time to be out, but he also
knew that the Light Sides would be expecting him for dinner. Thinking of them, his desire to not cause them more stress outweighed his lethargy. Virgil made his way to the bathroom and winced. There was no way he’d be able to cover up all of the redness without a full face of makeup and he hadn’t put that on this morning. He cleaned his face, put on his eyeshadow, then added a thin line of liquid eyeliner to his upper lid to make his eyes look less swollen. After hesitating a moment, he also put on a single coat of mascara to make his eyes wider. Once he fixed his hair and his clothes (how the fuck did my t-shirt get so twisted?), he made his way downstairs.

Virgil could feel himself on edge. He was tired and just wanted to sleep, but he couldn’t sleep and if he didn’t show up for mandatory family dinner they’d all worry over him and he wouldn’t get any peace and quiet the entire evening. He knew it wasn’t their fault, he was the one who never let anyone forget how fucked up he was, but still. He hated being treated like a rare vase. It used to warm his cold and dead heart to hear the concern, the little lilt and uplift in the Light Side’s voices whenever they were worried about him, but now it just chafed his nerves. Taking a deep breath to dispel some of the residual irritation, he made his way downstairs. He flipped his bangs in front of his eyes and pulled up his hood.

You’re already crabby about something that hasn’t happened yet? Woooooouuuooow. Impressive.

Shut up.

No.

Fuck you.

Ha!

“Salutations Virgil.” Logan greeted.

Virgil grunted in acknowledgment. He plopped into a chair at the table and buried his face into his arms.

“Kiddo?”

There was that lilt. To keep from snapping at the concerned Side, Virgil only grunted.

Patton tilted his head. “Are you okay sweetie?”

Virgil snorted. No, I’m not okay and you fucking know it. Stop acting surprised. “I mean, no, but no more than usual. Just tired.”

“If you’re sure-“

“Yup.”

The kitchen became quiet after that. Virgil’s irritation was still growing, despite no one saying anything.

God you’re a mess.

I know. Shut up.

You are not fun to be around.

“Shut up.”
“We didn’t say anything Virge.”

Virgil looked around and saw three pairs of eyes on him. Virgil ducked his head back into his arms.

“M sorry. Wasn’t talking to you.”

“Then pray tell, who were you talking to?” Roman asked.

_Can’t really say ‘the voices in my head’. ‘Dunno.’_

Virgil heard Roman start to speak, but stop. Virgil knew Logan was next to Roman and had likely stopped him. They stayed like that until Patton served food. Virgil felt guilt underneath his current of annoyance, so he muttered out a “Thanks,” as he started eating.

Roman filled the silence during dinner, but it was still tense. Every time Virgil sensed eyes on him, his hackles raised and he got ready to fight back. By the time Virgil had finished eating, he was angry to the point of yelling if one of the Light Sides spoke to him. Virgil pushed his uneaten chicken and fried rice around his plate. He heard Patton giggle, which made him look up. Patton had a sweet smile on his face and his eternal light seemingly shone out of every pore of his skin. Virgil felt his feelings go from intense anger to intense remorse in less than a second. He ducked his head as tears of shame and regret gathered in his eyes. He focused on his breathing exercises and drank some water to calm himself slightly.

“Virge, honey? Did you get enough to eat?”

Virgil looked at Patton. His sweet face held concern and hesitation, as if he was afraid Virgil would snap at him at any moment.

_Gee, I wonder why he thinks that?_

“Yeah, I’m good. Thanks Pat.”

Patton smiled, his face and posture relaxing. “No problem kiddo.”

Virgil quirked the corner of his mouth at Patton and resumed staring at his half-eaten plate. Anger at himself began boiling up, along with frustration at the other Sides again. He knew that he had no reason to be upset with them, but there it was. He put his fork down and stood.

“I’m gonna be turning in early tonight. Night guys.”

“Sleep well Virgil.”

“Night kiddo!”

“Sleep well, sweet prince, and may angels carry thee to thy rest!”

Virgil snorted and went up to his bedroom. As soon as the door closed, he allowed his emotions to boil over. He snapped his room soundproof and bellowed at his ceiling, letting out all of his rage at the Light Sides. After a good ten minute yelling session, he looked down, anger at the others spent. Now he just had anger at himself, and dread. He remembered Patton’s subdued voice, hell all of the Light Sides’ subdued behavior after he snapped at them. His mind helpfully supplied every instance of himself being short with the Light Sides. He quickly turned the fury and guilt inwards. Soon enough, his mind was chanting _punish punish bad bad bad you’re terrible punish yourself punish yourself punish yourself_!!
Unable to think of anything else past the mantra in his head, he pulled up his sleeves and began scratching as furiously as possible. He felt his touch ache well up, but the scratching quickly tamed it. When he moved onto the next arm, he stopped cold. Seeing his scratches from earlier shocked him out of the near fit he had worked himself into and left him feeling empty for several long seconds. Then, he was filled to the brim with hopelessness. He stumbled to his bed and collapsed, the fight taken from him. He knew now that the Light Sides could never love him. How could they after how he’d been acting? Virgil felt his breath quickening and his chest getting tighter. *I can’t breathe I can’t breathe I can’t breathe I’m gonna die!!*

It felt like his lungs were full and completely collapsed at the same time. He kept desperately trying to suck air in, but couldn’t get any. After several more minutes, he passed out.

Chapter End Notes

Scream at Jasper01 more in the comments section because edited two chapters before her shift at work WITH spotty Internet!!

Also, can we talk about how much mood swings suck? Cuz they do. I was not always the most pleasant person to be around and I hated myself whenever I wasn't in a good mood because my supportive peeps don't need that. And sometimes the anger is so much that you literally need to scream at the ceiling. It's SO therapeutic! It really helps!
Second chapter of the day! Again, you have Jasper01 to thank!! She did such an amazing job and sacrificed time before her 1st shift at a new job to edit these!

Be advised, there are two sections of sexual assault in this chapter. The chapter starts out with it, but I decided to bookend both where it starts and where it ends with tildes. There's a section in between that doesn't contain sexual assault, and that section is in between the two instances of sexual assault. Because I'm terrible at describing things and I want you all to be safe, I also put a line of forward slashes that bookend the safe section in between. So it'll look like this:

~~~~~~
TW
~~~~~~
////////
Safe
////////
~~~~~~
TW
~~~~~~
The rest of the chapter is safe.

I hope that's clear! If it's not, PLEASE let me know and I will figure out a way to make it more clear!

Ummmmm we also broke 500 comments?!?!?! WHAAAAAT?!?!?!?! And the hit and kudos counter keeps climbing?!?!?!?! Y’all are awesome!!! I freaking love that there's so much interaction between us in this fic! *happy tears*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~~
Virgil was jostled awake by a hand roughly pushing him onto his stomach. He tried to get up and turn his head to see who it was, but was pushed down roughly again as a voice harshly whispered, “Stay still whore.”

Virgil froze. No no no no no no no no they’re locked up in the Imagination! How did they get out?!

You did it.

What? No!

You’ve been lying non-stop, you’ve had completely unnecessary rage towards the people trying to help you, you’ve gone crazy, you haven’t done anything useful, you want more from the Light Sides even though they’re doing more than they should already, and you want the Light Sides even though they’re in a relationship and don’t deserve to have to put up with your bullshit. I’d say
you’ve powered them up nicely. You want this. Why else would you knowingly make them stronger? You deserve this.

Virgil whimpered. He felt hands on his skin. When did they take my clothes off? He felt the burning pain as he was roughly entered. He lay there limply, unable to move, his muscles weak and paralyzed as he was mindlessly used.

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Virgil felt himself blinking out. His vision zeroed in on the air vent near his floor. It turned into a beautiful, multi-colored portal. Feeling nothing, he crawled into the vent and was transported to a beautiful valley, lush with plants, flowers, and colorful birds.

“Virgil!” Virgil turned and saw Roman running towards him. Roman crashed into him with a bear hug. Virgil would have fallen if the prince hadn’t held both of them up.

Virgil laughed. “Hey Princey.”

Roman pulled back and smiled down at him, a light blush on his cheeks. “Hello my love.”

Virgil blushed and looked down. Roman gently lifted his head back up.

“You mustn’t hide your face from me, my sweet. It would be a crime to keep something this beautiful from the world.” Roman leaned forward and lightly pecked Virgil’s nose.

“Heya kiddo!” Patton chirped. Virgil smiled at him.

“Hi Pat.”

Patton giggled and hugged him. “Do you want butterfly kisses Virge?”

“What are those?”

“I’ll show you!” Virgil could still feel where Roman was touching him and was acutely aware of how close Roman was. Patton leaned forward and fluttered his eyelashes against Virgil’s cheeks. Virgil chuckled as Patton giggled. His heart soared and his eyes felt hot with happy tears.

Virgil sensed Logan come up on his right side. “Hello Virgil. It is wonderful to see you again.” Logan brought his hand around and gently laid it on Virgil’s left shoulder. Virgil looked at Logan. Logan was staring at him with love and affection in his eyes.

Logan inclined his head closer to Virgil’s. “May I?”

Virgil nodded. He knew he was being kissed, but for some reason the sensations were blurred and he couldn’t isolate any details. Whatever, he was being kissed!

Virgil saw Thomas approaching. Without saying a word, Thomas wrapped Virgil in a hug.

“I love you Virgil.” he whispered harshly.

Virgil began breaking down, overwhelmed with relief, love, and joy. He felt gentle hands caressing him, soothing words being spoken, love being professed. Once Virgil calmed down, he stepped back a bit and sniffled.

“Sorry about that.” he said sheepishly.
“Do not worry darling. We wouldn’t have you any other way.” Logan reassured. He smiled and kissed Virgil’s temple.

Roman frowned and stepped away.

Virgil felt some of the happiness leave him.

“Roman?” Virgil ventured.

“Why did you lie to us?” Roman asked, his expression dark.

Virgil felt Logan and Patton step away from him. When he looked at them, they both were wearing matching accusatory expressions. Thomas was looking at him in disgust.

\\\\

Virgil’s head spun with confusion and dread. He felt a burning sensation as he felt someone release inside of him.

No! Just a little longer, I don’t want to go back!

He started coming back to reality, even as he fought to stay in the vents. The person on top of him was just finishing releasing inside of him. Virgil felt his assailant bite down on his shoulder hard.

Virgil flinched and whimpered, which earned him several knees to the kidney.

“Fucking bitch.”

\\\\

He felt the person get off of him and sink out. Virgil laid on the bed, breathing through the pain and horror. He felt himself start hyperventilating. Virgil knew he should be crying, but he didn’t feel like crying at all. He started feeling nauseous and light-headed. As Virgil laid there, he could feel the room spinning. He closed his eyes and began his breathing exercises. They seemed to make him more nauseous and light-headed, but he didn’t want to pass out again. He knew the Light Sides would be even more sick of him if he missed breakfast.

Virgil lost track of time. He was lost, spinning in his room and mechanically breathing. He opened his eyes and let them land on his alarm clock. 2:23 AM. Virgil pushed himself up.

Huh. Although he was in pain, the pain wasn’t behaving how it usually would. Despite that, he still had a few whimpers punched out of him.

Did I just have a flashback? Was I attacked? I’m going crazy.

Virgil could feel himself start spiralling and knew that being alone, much less in his room, would make him spiral more. He stumbled out of his room and looked around in the eerily quiet hallway. Normally, the mindscape at night would be a relief to Virgil, with it being quiet, dark, and familiar. Now, though, he was getting unnerved. The panic probably isn’t helping.

Virgil felt completely unbalanced as he stumbled down the hallway. His mind was racing with disjointed thoughts. In his disorientation, he tripped and fell against a wall. He let himself slide down it. Where should I go? I don’t know what to do. How do I figure out what happened?

Virgil had a realization. Logan. He’s Logic, he might be able to help sort through this mess.
It’s two in the goddamn morning! You’re going to wake him up?!

I… I need to know if I was attacked.

Or you can suck it up like you always did and NOT be more of a burden than you already are. No matter if it was a flashback or the real thing, you were always able to hide it.

…I’m scared. I have to know.

You’re really fucking selfish, you know that?

Virgil didn’t argue. He agreed. Although he knew it was selfish, he needed help. He needed someone. Virgil could feel himself want to cry, but he refused. He was so fucking tired of crying. After another minute of stumbling, he came to a dark blue door with the night sky painted on it and mathematical symbols drawn in the upper right-hand corner. Virgil fought with himself before hesitantly knocking. He wrapped his arms around his middle and started to shiver. He missed his hoodie. At first, Virgil thought Logan hadn’t heard him or woken up. His courage gone, Virgil prepared to turn around and go back to his room, but then he heard soft footsteps approach the door. The handle turned, and the door opened to show a sleepy Logan adjusting his glasses. Virgil melted a little at how cute Logan looked with bed hair and groggy eyes.

Logan tilted his head and frowned. “Virgil? Is something the matter?”

Virgil opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out. What do I say? How do I ask?

Logan furrowed his brow curiously at Virgil’s hesitation. The silence dragged on, Virgil too upset to answer and Logan too tired to understand the problem. They stood there for a few long, awkward moments. When Virgil turned his eyes upwards to the room and looked back down, Logan had a suspicion about what Virgil’s dilemma may be. “Would you like to come into my room?” he asked cautiously.

Virgil nodded. Logan stepped to the side. Virgil hesitantly walked in and stopped in the middle of the room.

“May I close the door?” Logan asked. Virgil nodded, not turning to look at Logan. Virgil still had his arms wrapped around himself.

Logan walked over to Virgil. “You appear cold. May I offer you a blanket?”

Virgil started to nod his head, but remembered why he was there and shook it. He bit his lip to quiet the sobs that threatened to spill out of him.

“Can you tell me what’s going on Virgil?”

Virgil shivered more strongly. Swallowing thickly a couple of times to clear the sobs, he asked, “Can you s-see if th-there’s a b-b-b-bite m-mark on m-my sh-sh-shoulder?”

Virgil saw Logan tense out of the corner of his eye.

“Certainly Virgil. Were… were you attacked?” Logan asked, frightened but doing his best not to show it.

Virgil hiccupsed in a breath. “I-I d-d-d-don’t kn-know.” He answered honestly.

Virgil saw Logan circle around to his back.
“Which shoulder would you like me to check?”
Virgil shuddered. “M-my right sh-shoulder.”

“Alright. May I pull the collar of your t-shirt down to look?”

Virgil wanted to cry at the forced thoughtfulness. “Y-yes.”

Logan touched the collar of Virgil’s t-shirt as lightly as he could and paused for a moment. When he didn’t see Virgil flinch away, he gently pulled the collar. He let out a sigh of relief when he didn’t see any injuries. He pulled his hand away.

“I don’t see any injuries.”

Virgil nodded. “U-um, c-c-cool, thanks. ‘M s-s-sorry for w-waking you up. I-I’ll j-just…” Virgil turned to leave.

“Wait.” Virgil froze.

Logan tilted his head. “You are absolutely free to leave if you wish, I will certainly not force you to stay here, but would I be correct in thinking that you had a flashback?”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. Logan softened. “Oh Virgil. I am so sorry. I know that sometimes people find comfort in the presence of others. I would certainly not mind company. Would you like to stay here with me?”

Virgil looked at Logan. He seemed sincere enough. Virgil thought back to his promise with Patton.

“I-I d-d-don’t w-want you t-to only be a-around me if y-you think y-you have to. I kn-know I h-h-h-haven’t been a p-p-pleasant p-p-person to be around.”

Logan stared intensely into Virgil’s eyes. *Goddamn that’s kinda scary.*

“I promise you Virgil, I would not have offered if I was bothered by the prospect of being around you. I promise I will only ever offer my company or physical contact if I too wish it. And do not worry; none of us are taking it personally. You’ve been through hell, and none of us are going to hold that against you.”

Virgil felt the lump in his throat expand. He knew he wouldn’t be able to speak without breaking down, so he just nodded.

“Alright. Would you like to sleep in a bed or somewhere else?” Logan asked.

Virgil thought for a moment. He wanted to be near the logical Side, but the thought of being in the same bed as him made his skin want to jump off his body.

“S-somewhere else.”

Logan nodded. “One moment.” Logan closed his eyes and focused. After a minute of silence, a simple cot with pillows popped into existence. Logan opened his eyes and adjusted his glasses, panting slightly. He turned to Virgil.

“Would that be satisfactory?”

Virgil nodded. He slowly crawled into the cot. It was surprisingly comfortable, and the cotton texture was oddly soothing. He curled up on his side, trying to conserve heat.
“Would you like a blanket Virgil?” Virgil looked up and saw Logan holding a thick patchwork quilt. Virgil quirked a small smile. Logan leaned down and put the quilt over him.

“Goodnight Virgil. Do let me know if you need anything else.” And with that, Logan laid down and dimmed the lights.

Chapter End Notes

Also, I have a Tumblr now? Fair warning, I'm garbage at navigating Tumblr and have literally no idea how to find prompts. I've barely figured out the basics of AO3 lol. I'm at littfella's blog on Tumblr. I haven't been deemed cool enough by the Tumblr gods to be in the regular search results yet, so you either have to switch the results from "Most Popular" to "Most Recent", or type my name in the search bar and not hit enter, and wait for the drop down menu to show my blog. Sorry for the issues! I'm trying to figure out how to fix them right now! I'm definitely not going to start writing anything until after I've finished this behemoth lol, but you can send me requests if you want and think I can do it justice! If I don't respond within a day or so, yell at me in the comments here on AO3 because chances are I'm terrible at technology and I'm not deliberately ignoring you.

The dissociation that Virgil has with the portal in the vents is me describing my "favorite" type of dissociation whenever I had to service clients. I liked it because it was so fantastical and beautiful, and everything was awesome! It was a wonderful adventure, the best thing any mind could think of! But as I would come out of it, it would slowly turn into a stressful, horrible nightmare.

Also, the flashback looking like a current event and Virgil not being sure if it's real or not is intentional. Flashbacks aren't normal memories; to the brain, you're re-experiencing it all over again. The brain is trying to process the memory, but the memory has been improperly stored, so to try to put it back in order the brain re-experiences it. It sucks. It's not always like that, but it's really disorienting, especially when you're tired and/ or are woken up by it.

One last thing (OMG Lilfella these A/N's are getting longer than the fic itself!): The reason Virgil can't make out (heh) any details when Logan's kissing him is because Virgil doesn't know what a real kiss is. My little kid brain didn't know either, so when I was being kissed by a knight in shining armor in my dissociations I couldn't get any details.
Virgil woke with a pounding headache. He groaned at the light coming through his eyelids and pulled his blanket over his head.

“Good morning Virgil.”

Virgil yelped and jumped, bolting upright and scanning the room with wide eyes. When he saw it was only Logan, he let out a breath and tried to regulate his breathing.

“My apologies. I should have known that you are not accustomed to waking up with someone else in the room.”

Virgil laid back down and pulled the quilt over his head. “It’s fine, just surprised me. I’m fight or flight.”

He heard Logan hum. “Indeed. Are you alright?”


“I’m sorry. One moment.” Virgil saw the light dim through the quilt. “Is that better?”

Virgil slowly pulled the quilt down. The light still hurt, but it was way less painful. “Yeah.”

“Good. May I suggest some ibuprofen and breakfast? Fluids will help with any possible dehydration, some food will raise your blood sugar levels, and a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug can assist with vasoconstriction.”

Despite his discomfort, Virgil snorted. “Yeah, I’ll head down once my head stops killing me.”

Logan shifted. “May I suggest taking ibuprofen now? I would usually advise against taking it on an empty stomach, but I do believe breakfast will help you a great deal.”

Virgil felt his heart ache at the fake concern. He was just being an annoying burden, and on top of everything else he was making Logan pretend to care. “Yeah, that’s good.”

“Excellent. Since you do not have any food in your stomach, the ibuprofen should kick in faster.” Logan paused. “You’ll need to remove the quilt from your head if you want to take the pills.” he said, amused.

Virgil groaned, but did what Logan asked after a moment. Logan was sitting next to his cot on his desk chair, gatorade and ibuprofen in hand.
“Thanks.” Virgil said as he took the proffered items. He swallowed the ibuprofen and chugged some of the gatorade. He felt the familiar stomach cramp but was an expert at ignoring it at this point.

“Do you need anything else?” Virgil shook his head. “Excellent. Let me know when you’re ready to go downstairs. I’m just laying down an outline for next month’s schedule.” Logan turned back to his desk to continue writing. How the hell is he functional?

“I take it you’ve had coffee?” Virgil asked dryly.

Logan chuckled. “Am I that obvious?” he asked good-naturedly.

“Yes.”

“Damn.”

Virgil snorted. Once the stomach cramps died down and he didn’t feel like throwing up, he laid down and closed his eyes. He still hated himself for waking Logan for something he could have easily checked himself, but of course he didn’t think of that last night. Virgil didn’t want to spiral in front of Logan, so he focused on the soothing feeling of cotton and the sound of Logan writing.

Frantic knocking came at the door.

“Logan? Are you up? Roman and I don’t know where Virgil is!”

Logan turned his head to the door. “Virgil is in here with me. My apologies, I should have texted you. He has a headache. We will join you for breakfast once he feels better.”

“Okay.” Patton breathed in relief. “Hope you feel better soon kiddo!” he called as he walked away from the door.

_Do you have any idea how much stress you cause the other Sides? It’s all unnecessary you know. You should have been able to stay conscious during filming. They never should have found out. The best option is for you to leave them. Isolate your plague of misery from them. They might worry, but they’ll be mostly relieved that you’re gone. You ONLY cause them unhappiness._

_But… I love them._

_If you truly loved them, you’d stop being so fucking selfish and remove yourself from their lives._

Virgil didn’t want to have another panic attack, so he tried to focus on the feeling of the cot. The voice was still screaming in his head, but he could pretend it wasn’t there for a moment. Once he felt his headache recede, he sat up and stretched. It was still there, but he didn’t feel like a vampire when he was hit with sunlight.

“Are you ready?”

“Yep.”

They made their way downstairs. The moment they stepped out into the hallway, Roman’s voice could be heard serenading Patton. Breakfast passed as it usually did, with Roman inhaling his food as he talked excitedly about his ideas, and being the first to leave the table. Virgil was still feeling off, so he excused himself after a few forkfuls of hashbrowns and eggs. When he was almost all the way upstairs, he realized through his daze that he had left his phone downstairs. He went back to the kitchen and froze.
Patton was talking to Logan, excited about seeing Thomas’ friends later that day after the meetup. Logan was watching him while smiling softly, the typically calculated Side completely open, unguarded, and relaxed. Patton was playing with Logan’s hand, which Logan seemed to enjoy. Virgil wondered if he was more affectionate, if he cuddled with the others. Would it be an arm thrown over their shoulders while reading, or would he fully commit, laying down with them and cuddling in his unicorn onesie? How would Logan act around people he loved and trusted?

*How would he act when I’m not around?*

Virgil felt the familiar stab of pain and longing go through him. He took a couple steps back, then intentionally made his steps louder as he approached the kitchen. Logan and Patton looked up at him, their faces confused.

*They’re wondering why you’re back to ruin their good time. You ruin everything.*

*I know.*

“Sorry, just left my phone.”

“Oh, no worries!”

Virgil sent a half smile Patton’s way, retrieved his phone, and retreated back to his bedroom as quickly as possible. Virgil held his phone to his chest, breathing deeply.

*Don’t cry don’t cry do not cry!!*

*You have no reason to. Stop acting surprised and stop being entitled.*

Virgil clung to the anger at himself to prevent himself from crying. He went to his bed and flopped aggressively onto it. He began scrolling through Tumblr, fuming. After an hour, he was exhausted. He put his phone down and curled up on his bed, feeling miserable. He didn’t have long to feel sorry for himself though, as he felt Thomas summon him. He popped into the real world.

“Virgil!” Thomas shouted excitedly, his eyes shining with happiness.

Virgil gave him his patented half-smile and two finger salute. *Thomas is too pure. He needs me to protect him. I’ll always protect him.*

“What’s up Thomas?”

“I was just wondering what I should wear to the subscriber meet up! I checked the weather, and it’ll be around 70. I’m torn between my favorite blue and red t-shirt with the circles on it and this new shirt with pineapples. What do you think?”

Virgil considered. That particular t-shirt was very recognizable, but the Fanders might think he never washed his clothes.

“Wear the new shirt. The Fanders might think your shirt is dirty because you wear it so often in videos.”

“Great! Thanks Virge! Also, I was wondering…” Thomas looked down and bit his lip as he shifted. Virgil felt his anxiety increase.

“How are you doing Virge?”

Virgil felt all of his defenses go up. *Nope nope nope nope nope nope nope!*
“Uh, I’m good. Did you have any other questions?” *God you sound stupid.*

Thomas looked a little crestfallen. “No, I just wanted to check in buddy.”

Virgil wanted *out* of there. “Cool, well, I’m good, so bye!”

Virgil hurriedly sunk back down into his room. *Nice job asshole.*

*I didn’t want to burden him with my bullshit.*

*That’s a cop out and you know it. You were awkward as hell.*

Virgil could feel himself beginning to panic. He grabbed his phone out of habit and looked at the screen. He had a new text message.

Remy: *Hey babe, wanna do nails? Yours are looking sad and my nails could use some new polish. You down girl?*

The text was followed by approximately a dozen emojis. *Good, distraction, do something else besides stew in your room.*

Virgil texted back, *Yeah, that sounds good. What time?*

He got a reply back almost immediately. *Any time! Can’t wait to see you babes!*

Virgil smiled. He could trust Remy to be a good distraction. Closing his eyes, he sunk down into his first home.

*“Virgie! You want some starbies baby?”*

Virgil saw Remy already holding his own Starbucks and getting ready to summon one for Virgil. Not wanting to let down his friend, he smiled. *“Uh yeah, dark chocolate mocha?”*

Remy smiled widely. “You got it babes!” Remy twisted his hand and Virgil had a drink.

*“Thanks.”*

*“No problem! Now let’s fix your nails.”* Remy pulled out a bowl filled with warm water along with several bottles and other nail care items. *“Sit.”*

Virgil went to the table and obeyed. Remy put Virgil’s hands in the water and massaged them. Virgil’s skin leapt at the contact, but he forced himself to focus on the soothing sensations the massage provided. He didn’t want to be touched, but he wanted it *so badly.* He eagerly drank up the kind, loving touch while his skin tried to mutiny.

*Can my useless brain make up its fucking mind for once in its life?*

*“Oooohhh we should do facials! I have some jasmine tea bags in the fridge!”* Remy exclaimed. Virgil smiled.

*“That sounds nice.”*

*“Yay! Alrighty babe, I’m gonna start working on these tragedies you call cuticles.”*

Virgil smirked. “I write sins, not tragedies.”
Remy groaned. “Ugh, Patton’s been rubbing off on you gurl.” Then he smirked. “Has he?” Remy asked with a mischievous look.


Remy rolled his eyes. “Gurl, you’re a catch. Now hang on while I make your hands as cute as you.”

Remy pulled Virgil’s hands out of the water and put softener on his cuticles. He then used a small metal pick to clean out any gunk from underneath Virgil’s fingernails. After a few minutes, he used a wooden manicure stick to gently remove some of the longer and torn sections of cuticle and push back the rest. Remy brought out his glass nail file next.

“Let’s lay waste to these ragged bitches.” Remy got to work, carefully filing down the notched tips while Virgil snorted, barely able to hold back his laughter.

“What shape do you want?”

Virgil thought for a moment. “Straight across. My nails are kinda short.”

“You got it girl.”

Remy meticulously shaped Virgil’s nails. Virgil felt his anxiety and guilt creep up.

“Hey, uh, Rem, I’m sorry I’m not doing more. Do you want me to do something?”

Remy waved him off. “Hon, I like doing this. I’m having fun, don’t worry. Now what nail color do you want?”

“Black.” Virgil replied immediately.

“Of course you want black. Can I do some nail art? I got a silver mirror nail polish that I’ve been dying to try!”

Virgil shrugged. “Sure.”

“Yaaassss. Okay hold still, we’re doing gel.” Remy applied a peel-off base coat and put it under the UV light. A couple layers of black later, and Remy was ready to apply nail art.

“Okay, I know you’ve got an edgy persona to maintain here, so I was just thinking lines with the silver.”

“That sounds cool.”

“You are so fun! Okay, let’s do this.” Remy applied a single vertical line of reflective silver on each nail. For the thumb, he gave Virgil three lines. He put Virgil’s hands under the UV light.

“Okay, what do you think?”

Virgil looked at his nails. They were the best he’s seen them in a while.

He looked up at Remy and smiled. “I like them.”

Remy beamed. “See? I know what I’m doing! Now why don’t you go wash your face and choose a face mask while I do my nails?”

Virgil nodded and got up. He went over the pile of face masks Remy had laid out. After pondering
for a minute, he chose an acne prevention mask. He had a couple shiners that always seemed to pop up every week. He washed his face and went back to Remy.

“Good choice! I’m gonna do a clay mask. Let’s go!” Virgil saw that Remy had painted his nails entirely in the reflective silver, and he had to admit that it looked pretty awesome. Remy and Virgil went to the couch, Remy holding his face mask and a tupperware of jasmine tea bags that had been refrigerated. Once they applied the tea bags and face masks, they talked about Thomas’ upcoming meet up. Virgil was nervous, but Remy reassured him saying that Thomas had security and the Fanders were the sweetest fandom to ever exist. Virgil was still scared of a gunman or someone pushing their way past Thomas’ security, but he shoved those worries down for now. He knew that his anxiety was already affecting Thomas and he didn’t want to overdo it like he did with the presentation.

Once he took the tea bags off and rinsed off the face mask, Virgil had to admit he looked better. Virgil saw he had about an hour until he would be expected for lunch. Remy made Virgil a throat-soothing tea and they gossiped sedately until Virgil had to leave.

“Thanks for this Rem. It was fun.” Virgil said, smiling.

“No problem coffee bean! I love having you around! Lmk when you wanna do this again sometime! You know how to get a hold of me.” Remy winked.

Virgil snorted. “Yeah, I do. I’ll see ya later.” Virgil gave his two finger salute as he sunk down.

“Bye!” Remy called.

Virgil had to admit that although it didn’t solve everything, pretending to be normal for an hour was kind of nice, even with the mean voice snarling away in the back of his mind. Virgil’s mind and body felt a little quieter. He wondered how long Remy would put up with him. I hope I have a little more time left.

Chapter End Notes

Me: I figured Virgil needed a little fluff.

My muse: Because of what's about to happen?

Me: Wait what

My muse: 3>:D

Also, being touch-starved AND traumatized like how Virgil and I were is really fucking confusing. Like, we need touch, but we are also like don't fucking touch me a lot of times. If I have to suffer, then Virgil does too! (I'm sorry I love u Virgie I promise. I don't know why I do this to you)
Chapter 36

Chapter Notes

Shout out to Bloodbone for helping me figure out Tumblr! I'm so hopeless at technology lol. Come and scream at me there! I take requests, but I won't be starting anything until after this behemoth is finished lol!

Also, just a reminder that whenever Virgil's dialogue is bolded, that means his double voice is happenin'.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Patton greeted Virgil when he came into the kitchen.

“Hey Virge! Ooooooo I like your nails!”

Virgil looked down at his nails shyly. “Yeah, Remy and I hung out this morning.”

“That’s great kiddo! Mind if I take a closer look?”

Patton smiled at Patton’s eternal cheeriness and held out a hand. “Go ahead.”

Patton came closer and studied Virgil’s nails. Virgil could tell he wanted to reach out but was holding himself back. After a moment, he pulled back.

“They look really cool Virgil! Perfect for my little stormcloud!” Patton declared proudly.

Virgil shoved his hands in his pockets and looked down as a blush dusted over his cheeks. “Y-yeah I guess they’re cool, or, y’know, whatever.” He couldn’t stop the half-smile from making its way onto his face.

“Good afternoon fellow nobility! How fares thee?”

Virgil jumped at Roman’s sudden entrance and saw that he was still in his typical dramatic pose. He snorted.

“I’m fine. Just had a heart attack though.”

Roman put his hands down and smiled timidly. “My apologies dark knight. How was your morning?”

Virgil shrugged. “It was cool. I hung out with Remy.”

“Remy did Virgil’s nails! They look really cool!” Patton exclaimed.

“Really? May I see?” Roman asked.

Virgil took his hand out of his pocket and extended it towards Roman. Roman gently took Virgil’s fingers in between his own thumb and index finger. Virgil felt fire where Roman was touching his hand and his stomach filled with butterflies. Virgil knew the tips of his ears were bright red.
“These are lovely! Very edgy. Perhaps I should visit Remy!” Roman said as he released Virgil’s hand.

Virgil tucked his hand back into his hoodie pocket. “He’d be down. Saul’s been busy lately, so he’s been looking for more company.”

“Excellent! I’ve been intending to spend some time with the Beanman anyways.”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “Did you mean Sandman?” he asked after a moment.

“It’s not my best nickname.”

Virgil snorted. He and Roman sat down to eat as Patton went to fetch Logan. When Logan came down, they noticed that a few strands of hair were hanging in front of his face. For someone else, that wouldn’t be cause for concern. For Logan, however, it was the equivalent of someone tearing their hair out.

“Is everything gucci Nerd 9000?”

Logan sighed and ran a hand through his hair. “No Roman. If Thomas wishes to receive an optimal amount of sleep tonight, he won’t be able to get as much editing done as is listed on the schedule that he made after he ignored mine.”

Patton used one hand to massage the back of Logan’s neck. “Can’t he just sleep in tomorrow?”

Logan sighed, a small amount of tension leaving him under Patton’s talented fingers. “No. His sleep schedule has already been thrown off enough this past week.”

Patton cooed at Logan. “I’m sure it’ll be okay. You’re so good at keeping Thomas on track!”

Logan’s lips quirked. “I suppose you are correct Patton.”

“Indeed! If anyone can get Thomas to follow an itinerary, it’s you.” Roman declared. Logan smiled appreciatively at Roman.

“Thank you Roman.”

Virgil knew it was his turn. *Fuck fuck fuck what do I say? They all said really nice things poetically and I’m gonna fuck it up because I have no class or grace or style or-

Virgil cleared his throat. “Uh, yeah, you’re good at that stuff L.” Virgil winced. *Oh yeah that sounded REALLY convincing. Good job dumbass.*

Logan looked surprised for a moment, then slowly smiled a full smile. “Thank you Virgil. That is kind of you to say.”


“AWWWWW! Look at my kiddos being all supportive!” Patton gushed with his hands pressed against his face.

Virgil snorted and hunched in a little. He looked up right as Patton planted a sloppy kiss on the top of Logan’s head. Logan smiled shyly and blushed. Patton walked over to Roman and pulled him into a kiss. When he got to Virgil, he opened his arms and asked, “Hug?”

Virgil smiled hesitantly. He didn’t feel like being touched any more today, and although his touch
ache disagreed, Virgil couldn’t stand the thought of someone touching him. He knew he was close to a flashback. But confronted with Patton’s bright and hopeful gaze, he knew he had to do something.

“Uhh, hand hug?” Virgil offered.

“Sure! What’s that?”

“Um, put your hand up like this.” Virgil raised his hand with his fingers and thumb pressed together so that his hand was flat. Patton copied him. Virgil took a deep breath and pushed his hand against Patton’s, then wrapped his thumb around so it hugged the back of Patton’s hand.

Patton squealed. “OH MY GOODNESS THAT’S ADORABLE!!!”

Virgil let his hand fall back into his lap as he chuckled. “Yeah, it’s cool.”

Patton let out a muted squeal as he sat down.

“I like your nails Virgil.”

Virgil was a taken a bit by surprise, but supposed he should have known the observant Side would see them.

“Oh, uh, thank you Logan.”

The Sides chatted amicably during lunch and all felt the pull when Thomas summoned them. Virgil teleported to his usual spot on the stairs while everyone else rose up.

“Hey guys!” Thomas greeted. Joan and Talyn were setting up the lights.

“Hi Thomas!” Patton said as he waved almost violently.

“Hey guys! It’s been a while since we’ve seen you!” Joan said.

“I KNOW! I’VE MISSED YOU ALL SO MUCH!!” Patton cried as he started getting emotional.

“It’s okay Patton. Reel it in.” Thomas requested.

“Sorry. I just love your friends so much!”

“I know Patton.” Thomas smiled endearingly.

Joan stretched as they looked around the room. “All right, let’s get this show-on the road. Fuck!”

Virgil began taking over. “What if there’s a hurricane? Or an earthquake? What if someone cut the power to the house and they’re coming in to kill us?! Thomas, is your door locked?!?!”

Logan jumped in. “Okay, let’s break that down. None of those scenarios are likely. We would have felt an earthquake, we’d know if there was a hurricane coming, and the chances of a murderer targeting Thomas in broad daylight with his friends present are minute.”

Patton grinned. “Don’t you mean-”

“DON’T.”
“-infinitesimal?”

Logan let out a frustrated scream through gritted teeth as everyone laughed. Thomas pulled out his phone.

“Alright, it looks like the power’s out to the whole block. Something about construction. The power company says electricity should be restored soon. Why don’t we hang out until then?”

“Yay!” Patton yelled, bouncing on the heels of his feet.

Virgil smiled at the father figure’s enthusiasm, but could feel a tingling sensation creep up his spine.

You’ve barely held it together when you’re by yourself, how do you think you’re going to do surrounded by people and having to pretend to be normal?

Virgil focused on his breathing exercises and making sure no one could tell he was doing them. He hadn’t noticed his head had lowered to stare blankly at the ground until Talyn shouted, “Twister!”

“No.” Virgil said immediately. He felt like puking at the thought of playing that.

“It’s alright Virgil. You don’t have to play if you don’t want to.” Logan reassured.

Virgil shifted in his spot. “Yeah, I think I’m going to sit this one out.”

“I believe I shall join you, as Twister is just a little too ridiculous for my tastes.” Logan said with mild disgust.

Virgil felt a little better not being the only one who wasn’t playing. Thomas set up the Twister mat and Roman declared himself in charge of the spinner. Virgil was nervous about Thomas or one of the others getting hurt by falling or having someone fall on them, but he did his best to hold it back so Thomas could enjoy himself. He did, however, sit on the couch nearest the game so he could keep a close eye on everything.

Logan walked over, summoned astronomy book in hand. “Mind if I join you?” he asked.

Virgil shrugged. Logan sat down next to Virgil, much closer than Virgil was expecting.

Why is he sitting so close? He knows better than any of them how gross I am. Is he doing it because he feels bad for me? Duh, of course he is. I’ve got to tell him to move. No, that’s stupid, I should move. I’m not going to make him move because I’m a-

Virgil’s internal ramblings were cut off when Logan put his arm on the back of the couch behind Virgil. He wasn’t touching Virgil, but Virgil could practically feel a physical pressure from Logan’s presence. It was a little uncomfortable, but Virgil did his best to force it down. He was torn; he felt sick at the thought of being touched, but he desperately wanted it.

Yesterday you couldn’t get enough touch, now today someone just being near you is enough to make you nauseous? Make up your fucking mind.

Virgil drew his knees up and wrapped his arms around them, choosing to focus on the game of Twister instead. Talyn won all three games.

“I’m tiny but stable!” they declared.
They started getting ready for a fourth game. Suddenly, a massive amount of light blinded Virgil. He yelped and clenched his eyes shut, startled. He vaguely heard movement around him but couldn’t make out any specific sounds. He tried moving away from the source of the light, screaming danger! danger! danger! danger! in his head. Every sound he heard was like a sharp rimshot against his eardrums, and his usually soft clothes were like sandpaper against his skin.

Virgil felt a hand grasp his arm. He hissed and pulled away, the hand letting him go. Virgil was more concerned with making sure Thomas was unharmed. He could tell when the bright light was turned off and he opened his eyes. He had spots in his vision, but he could make out that everyone was okay.

"What the fuck was that?!"

"Sorry Virgil, the filming lights came on when the power was restored." Talyn said apologetically.

Virgil scratched his nose, pretending to be only slightly irritated. "Yeah, well, glad you’re okay."

Thomas stepped forward, concern written across his features.

“It’ll take us at least 15 or 20 minutes to set everything back up. Do you want to take a break buddy?”

Virgil bristled at the babying, but held his temper. He needed to get his clothes off. He wanted to crawl out of his flesh and just be a skeleton thank you very much, but he figured that was probably bad for his health.

“Yeah. Call me when you’re ready.” Virgil responded. He sunk down and teleported to his bathroom. He immediately stripped off his clothes and turned up the shower as hot as it would go. Once he saw steam, he set an alarm for ten minutes and stepped under the spray. He didn’t last long before he sat down, the sandpaper feeling slowly fading. Virgil turned so the back of his head was getting most of the water. He wanted to blink out and just sit in the shower mindlessly for however long it took to recover from his heightened senses, but there was a video to film today. Virgil let himself relax as much as he could knowing there was an alarm coming. Once his phone sounded off, Virgil grudgingly turned off the shower. He would have sat in the rapidly cooling bathroom longer if he hadn’t made his alarm tone so fricking annoying.

Virgil carefully stood, not wanting to fall, and grabbed a towel to dry himself off. The towel was incredibly soft and the cotton was normally soothing, but his skin was so hyper-aware that every swipe felt like needles dragging across his skin and he just wanted it to stop. He knew that it wouldn’t stop until he did something about it, but that something would have to wait until after filming. Once he dried his body off, he grabbed his hair dryer and turned it on. Virgil cringed at the loud sound and the uncomfortable sensation of feeling each hair move as he dried it, but forced himself to continue. Once his hair was reasonably dry, he used a bit of hairspray to tame it, threw on some eye shadow, and turned to his clothes. Dreading it but knowing he had no time to lose, he put on each item as quickly as possible. The clothes were so uncomfortable they almost hurt and it made him want to scratch every cell of his skin off, but he closed his eyes and focused on teleporting to his spot on the stairs.

Popping into existence in the outside world jarred his senses and grated his nerves, but he forced himself to keep up his usual facade. Roman, surprisingly, was the first one to greet Virgil.

“Virgil! How are you feeling?”

“Great!” Joan shouted as they clapped their hands together and Virgil was reminded how much every sound in existence sucked beyond belief.

Filming went along fairly smoothly. Thankfully, it was a short for the Fanders who had paid YouTube memberships, so there were only a few shots per Side. When they were wrapping up and checking to make sure all of the equipment worked, Thomas went to check his Instagram to start bookmarking things for Fanart Friday. He usually left a lot of the equipment management to Talyn and Joan since those two were so talented with technology. Thomas snickered as he scrolled.

“Man, the Prinxiety is strong this week! I ship it.”

Patton giggled, Logan didn’t care and continued to read, while Roman and Virgil were both mortified.

Roman scrambled to answer. “Ah yes, what an unbelievable ship huh? Why, I could never...”

Virgil felt like he’d simultaneously gotten the air punched out of him and been stabbed in the heart with a frozen pickaxe.

Virgil didn’t bother responding, not trusting his voice. Thomas went into mom mode.

“Roman! There are nicer ways to say that.”

“Right, of course, Virgil I-”

“It’s fine Princey. It’s not like I’m interested in you anyways. You don’t have to pretend to like me.” Virgil chanced a look up and saw a surprised and... sad? look on the royal’s face. Virgil knew he had to act fast.

“What? Not everyone’s into you. I’m just gonna...” Virgil gestured uselessly and sunk down. He made a decision at the last second and decided against going to the Light Side of the mindscape. He knew he wouldn’t be accepted there right now. Virgil you moron you said the worst thing and now you fucked it up you fucked everything up.

He popped into existence in a slightly darkened room.

“Why hello darling. This is a lovely surprise. I didn’t expect to see you again so soon.”

Chapter End Notes

Soft Patton is s o f t.
I gave you more fluff! Wasn't it cute? While it lasted?

Hey can we talk about how much overstimulation sucks? And how our brains can't mAkE uP tHeIr FrIcKiNg MiNdS?!?! *screeches*
Chapter Notes

Hey folks! We got another chapter out! I sure did leave you on a cliffhanger, didn't I? I'm a little sorry about that.

And can I scream for a minute about how awesome y'all are? Y'all are so sweet! And I just finished screaming about how many comments, hits, bookmarks, and kudos there are on this thing, and now we're at **655 comments**, **320 kudos**, and **4445 hits**?!?!?!?!?!?!?! WHAAAAAADDDTT?!?!?!?!?!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman knew he had messed up. When he’d seen how uncomfortable Virgil had looked when Thomas had mentioned Prinxiety, he’d tried to salvage the situation. He didn’t want Virgil to feel nervous around him, and if Virgil knew about Roman’s attraction towards him right now that would not help. Especially with what Virgil had been through with the Dark Sides, Roman never wanted Virgil to feel unsafe around him.

“Ah yes, what an unbelievable ship huh? My, those Fanders sure do think of the strangest things! Why, I could never...”

Roman, you dunce! You’re being mean again?! Fix it! Fix it now!

“Wait, I mean-”

Thomas leveled a serious, disapproving stare at Roman. “Roman! There are nicer ways to say that.”

You’re nothing but a bully.

Roman saw the tension in Virgil’s blank expression. “Right, of course, Virgil I-”

“It’s fine Princey. It’s not like I’m interested in you anyways. You don’t have to pretend to like me.” Roman felt his heart shatter into a million tiny pieces.

He thinks I’m pretending to like him? My love is unrequited? Virgil, I love you so much. My dark raven. Perhaps it is for the best. I would never want to make my love uncomfortable, but I must convince him that I am not pretending!


You’re no prince.

Roman felt his usual confidence evaporate, leaving him quite deflated. “I... I didn’t mean to upset Virgil. I just didn’t want to make him feel uncomfortable! With everything he’s been through...” Roman trailed off.
Thomas sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “I know Roman, it just looks like you might have hurt his feelings.”

“I’ll apologize to him later! I truly did not intend to hurt him. I just planted my foot squarely in my mouth. I’ll do whatever it takes to make it up to him!” Roman declared.

Thomas smiled at Roman. “I’m sure you will Roman.” Thomas turned to Joan and Talyn. “How’s it looking? Do we need anything else for the membership video?”

“No, I think we’re good.” Joan replied.

Roman didn’t hear the rest of the conversation. When he sensed Logan and Patton sinking out, he bid farewell to the humans in the room and sunk down. When he appeared in the mindscape commons, he looked up. Logan and Patton were looking at him expectantly. “I really didn’t mean to hurt Virgil. I didn’t…” Roman voice broke at the end while his eyes filled with tears.

Logan released some of the tension from his shoulders, but Patton still looked disappointed.

“I know kiddo. I do need you to apologize to Virgil though. I’m sure once you explain it he’ll understand.”

“Of course! I shall do so right away!”

“Wait.” Logan interrupted.

Roman stopped, ready to run up the stairs. “What is it Specs?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe that, due to Virgil’s emotional state and how he reacted to the lights, he may need some time to “decompress”.” he said with air quotes.

Roman sagged. “I suppose you’re right. When should I go to him?”

Logan frowned, uncertain. Patton had an idea. “Why don’t you wait an hour? Not too long or too short. Juuuuuust right!”

Roman smiled at the paternal trait. “Perhaps you are correct. I’ll be in my realm if you need me.” he sunk out to his theatre.

The lights were hot and bright on him. The theatre was dark and empty. He could hear each breath loudly in the hollow space, the air dead and heavy. He waved his hand so a single bright spotlight shone on him, the rest of the theatre pitch black.

Roman knew that he needed to process his feelings now so he could focus on Virgil and not himself when apologizing. Thinking back on monologues and sonnets, he decided on Shakespeare’s sonnet 30. He raised his head, staring at the back of the theatre, and poured his whole heart into the poem.

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,”

Roman stopped as bittersweet memories crashed through him. Virgil’s smirks, how rudely he treated the little emo, the rare silenced chuckle he would hear from the stairs, the hurt, defensive looks Virgil would send him. The damage he didn’t realize he was doing before it was too late. Roman cleared his throat past the lump and continued.
“I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time’s waste.”

Roman used to want only true love. How blind he had been to not see the love he hid from himself out of, what? Cowardice? A fragile ego? Roman loved Virgil. He had since before the Accepting Anxiety videos. He had pushed Virgil away, and now Virgil would never love him. Perhaps if he hadn’t been so uncivilized with Virgil, Virgil wouldn’t have had to suffer so. Perhaps they could’ve been together, enjoying each other. Instead, he had neither the past to fondly reminisce, the present to passionately cherish, nor the future to eagerly anticipate. He forced himself to go on.

“Then can I drown an eye unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death’s dateless night,  
And weep afresh love’s long since cancelled woe,  
And moan th’ expense of many a vanished sight.”

Though Roman was fortunate to not have had any of his friends die, he knew he very well could have lost Virgil to those Dark Sides. The things they had done to him, Roman was surprised Virgil was alive. At that thought, Roman obeyed the script of the sonnet, fell to his knees, and wept. He wasn’t sure how long he wept with great, heaving cries, but he eventually found himself again. He grieved the loss of a romantic relationship with Virgil, the loss of Virgil’s trust, the loss of Virgil’s rare vulnerability. He knew he’d never have that again with what he had said today. Roman turned his head to the ceiling, the lone light in his peripheral, and began the next section.

“Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o’er  
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before.”

Roman knew he was attacking himself, but he also knew he’d never be able to make up for the hurt he’d caused Virgil, nor make up for the time lost. He’d been self-flagellating before, and he realized he must continue for the rest of his days, the internal penance only a small portion of his quest for an impossible absolution. Roman let his head fall forward once more as he was too overwhelmed to continue. Tears fell from his face and made patterns on the stage. Accidental art, perhaps the purest form of expression.

“I forget how dramatic you are at times.” Logan said dryly from stage left.

Roman looked up as another spotlight illuminated his boyfriend. Logan had both amusement and concern written across his features. As Logan walked toward him, the spotlight followed him, the two beams eventually merging into one.

Logan knelt in front of the heartbroken prince. He used lithe fingers to gently lift Roman’s chin.

“He doesn’t love me.” Roman whispered brokenly.

Logan smiled sadly. “I do not believe that is the case. Virgil was clearly uncomfortable, which I believe led him to act defensively. We should not put too much weight onto words said in emotional situations. His previous actions have demonstrated otherwise. Besides, you’re forgetting the last part of the sonnet.”

Roman frowned. “How long were you watching me?”

Logan’s expression changed to one of mischief. “Only during the last stanza.” Logan’s expression softened. “You must remember how much a part of this family he has become. He has become our
friend, and I believe you sticking your foot in your mouth, as per usual, is not enough to completely dissolve that.” Roman scoffed, but Logan only smiled.

He continued. “Remember to look back on Virgil’s actions, his trends, not isolated incidents.”

Logan cleared his throat.

“But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.”

Roman felt more tears drip down his face, but not tears of sadness. He pulled Logan into what was likely one of the grosser kisses they’d shared, but neither seemed to mind. When they parted, both were slightly flushed and panting. Roman was staring at Logan, in awe once again of his beautiful mind and sharp eyes. They way he thought was hypnotic. His deep voice, calculated grace, and assessing gaze when he was communicating information were mesmerizing. Who needed magic when he had Logan, indulging his curiosity or reciting poetry?

Logan pulled both of them to their feet. The ending of the sonnet reminded Roman of his fear. Tears filled his eyes. “He could have died.”

Logan pulled Roman into a hug, knowing exactly what he was talking about. “He didn’t.”

“But he could have.”

“He didn’t.”

“But-”

“He didn’t. He’s alive. He’s safe. We’re here for him and will help him heal. We love him, and he will see that. He is here.”

Roman sobbed into Logan’s shoulder for several minutes. Once he calmed down, he pulled back, slightly embarrassed.

“You’re too good for me.”

“I know.” Logan smirked as Roman let out another offended Princey noise. “Shall we have some tea?”

Logan led Roman out of the theatre into the commons, where Patton had set out tea and cookies. They ate and drank silently, simply enjoying each other’s company. After Roman had finished his third cup of tea, he stood and made his way to Virgil’s bedroom.

“Virgil?” he called as he knocked. He frowned upon not receiving an answer.

“Virgil?” he tried again, a little louder. Roman felt his nerves start to kick in. He felt his stomach in his throat as he thought of what might be happening, both with Virgil’s self-harm and how he’d found Virgil in his room with the Dark Sides surrounding him, on top of him...

“Virgil? I’m coming in.”

With that, he focused and sunk into Virgil’s room. He quickly realized Virgil wasn’t there. Dread settled in the pit of his stomach.
Oh dear, did I forget to put what happened to Virgil in this chapter? My bad.

I actually did originally have Virgil's situation in this chapter, but then I was like, "Naawwwww". Jasper01 can back me up. She doesn't know what happens either, though. X'D

Can we talk about how extra and fun to write Roman is? Literally reciting a sonnet in a darkened, empty theatre with a single spotlight on him. I love the boy.
Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

Firstly, re-read the tags and decide if this chapter will be okay for you to read. This one gets rough and I really want all of you beautiful people to stay safe. <3

There is an italicized block of text bookended by tildes that includes child sexual abuse and some grooming techniques. PLEASE take care of yourselves!! I made myself dissociate writing this, so please be careful! <3 <3 <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil met the Side’s eyes.

“Hey Saul.”

Saul frowned. “What’s wrong Virgil?”

At that question, Virgil broke. “Roman said he d-doesn’t l-love me.” he whimpered so quietly he wasn’t sure he was heard.

“Oh coffee bean.”

Apparently he was.

Virgil felt Saul’s hands on him, gently pulling him into a hug, loose enough that he could pull away if he wanted to. Virgil collapsed against the larger, stronger Side. He didn’t cry, his throat was far too sore for that, but he let silent tears flow. After a moment, he felt Remy comb fingers through his knotted and slightly greasy hair.

“Shhhhhhhhh.” Saul whispered.

Remy gently worked out all of the knots in his hair. After a few minutes, Virgil’s tears died down as dull acceptance set in.

You know they never loved you. Of course they don’t. Now it’ll be easier because there’s no hope to be crushed.

Virgil pulled back. Once his sorrow had passed, his overstimulation won out and he did not want anyone touching him. He pulled out of Saul’s embrace and moved his head away from Remy’s fingers. They both let him.

“Sweetie?” Remy asked.

“‘M sorry, just overwhelmed. The lights were bright.” Virgil kicked himself for saying something so stupid. They’re not going to know what you mean dumbass! That was SO out of context, I mean come ON-

“It’s okay honey. It sounds like you’re overstimulated. Wanna try laying down in a dark room?”
Virgil was stunned for a moment, then nodded. Remy and Saul began walking down the hallway towards their shared bedroom. Virgil stopped just inside the threshold.

“It’s okay sugar, lay down for as long as you want. You’re always welcome here, you know that.”

Virgil nodded as he felt his eyes fill with grateful tears. He forced them down; his throat hurt enough. He slowly climbed on the bed and laid his head down. Virgil saw Remy and Saul leave the door cracked open and the bathroom light on. Virgil let his body relax as he drifted off into an exhausted slumber.

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The Dark Sides were holding his smaller body down, with someone on each limb. A visiting adult Side knelt just beyond Virgil’s feet. Virgil knew better than to try to shake off the Dark Sides; they were 11 and he was only 4. He didn’t have a chance. He was shaking and crying, not knowing what was going to happen next but that whenever they got him naked it was always bad. He wanted to go back to Remy and Saul. They were always so nice to him and never hurt him. They definitely didn’t do any gross stuff like what the Dark Sides and visiting Sides liked to do. The Neutrals held him when he was sad, they played with him, they made sure he had enough to eat. Virgil felt tears prick at his eyes. His missed them so much. He just wanted to go back home!

“Shhhh little one, this will feel good, I promise.” the visiting Side said as he smiled sweetly. Virgil wanted to run away but he was powerless. The visiting Side leaned down and began sucking at him. Virgil squirmed at the strange sensation, it felt good but it felt so weird and made him feel bad. After a few minutes, Virgil felt something happen and take over his senses. He came back down, feeling dizzy and sick. The visiting Side sat back and sighed.

“Nothing! I suppose we’ll have to wait until you’re older for that. But now, we made you feel good, so you have to make us feel good. That’s how it works. You don’t want to be bad, do you?”

Virgil was shaking. The visiting Side leaned forward and backhanded him. “Answer me!”

Virgil gasped and sucked in a few desperate breaths. “N-no s-s-sir, I d-d-don’t wanna b-be bad, but I didn’t w-want it-” he was cut off as the Side painfully grabbed his chin.

“You ungrateful little brat! We made you feel good and you don’t accept it or return the favor?! Did you feel good?”

Virgil struggled with his thoughts. “I, I don’t know. Maybe? B-but-”

“But nothing. We made you feel good, so now you make us feel good.” With that, the visiting Side straddled Virgil’s torso and grabbed his head.

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“Virgil! Oh baby, wake up!”

Virgil’s eyes snapped open. He saw Remy staring down at him, hands on his face.

Did they take me back? I’m back! I’m back home!

Virgil began crying. “I’m sorry! I’m sorry I was bad!”

“Shhhh coffee bean, you weren’t bad at all! It’s okay!”
Virgil kept crying as Remy rubbed circles into his shoulders with his thumbs. “B-b-but they s-said that I w-w-as d-d-down there b-because I was b-b-bad and you d-didn’t w-w-want me a-anymore!”

Virgil heard a feral growl come from his other side. He looked over and saw the most furious expression he’s ever seen on Saul. He flinched.

“I-I-I’m sorry! P-please don’t send me back!!” Virgil wailed.

“Shhhh, shhhhh, you’re not in trouble. You did nothing wrong little one. And we’d never send you back.” Saul said firmly.

“He’s not mad at you sugar, he’s mad at the Dark Sides for lying to you. They took you. We’d never send you away. You weren’t bad.”

Virgil cried and curled in on himself a little.

Remy leaned forward. “Can I hold you baby?” Virgil quickly nodded. Remy pulled Virgil into his lap like he used to whenever Virgil got sad. Virgil felt the bed shift.

“May I?” Saul asked.

“P-p-protect m-me? P-please? I-I-I’m s-s-sc-scared.” Virgil whimpered as he nodded. He and Remy were immediately engulfed in a strong hug from the muscular Side. Virgil was surrounded by his family and felt safe. They sat together, Remy and Saul holding Virgil as he cried and trembled, whispering soothing words into his hair. After an hour, Virgil started calming down.

Speaking through hiccuping breaths, Virgil whispered a hoarse, “I’m sorry.”

Remy was quick to reassure him. “Shhhh, you have nothing to be sorry for. Do you know where we are baby?”

Virgil nodded his head and hid it in Remy’s chest. He felt arms on him tighten.

“It’s okay baby. Do you know how old you are sugar pie?”

Virgil was confused. He couldn’t quite seem to grab on to a number. He remembered being four in his dream, but that didn’t feel right.

“I dunno.” Virgil mumbled.

“That’s okay baby. How does 30 sound?” Virgil shrugged.

“Yeah.”

Remy tilted his head. “How… How old do you feel sugar?”

Virgil was scared, but he didn’t want to lie to Remy and Saul. “I dunno. ‘M sorry.”

“That’s okay! What’s the last age you remember?”

Virgil knew the answer to that question! “Four.” He shrunk in on himself. “Th-they h-h-hurt m-m-e.” he whimpered.

Virgil felt both sets of arms tighten on him. “Oh baby, I’m so sorry. You’re safe now, they can’t get you here.” Virgil hiccuped and sniffled as he nuzzled in closer.
“You’re safe, I promise.” Saul rumbled.

Virgil felt himself relaxing, drifting off into a doze, surrounded and protected by his family. After floating in a doze for an unknown amount of time, Virgil felt the arms on him relax. He whimpered.

“Shhhh coffee bean, we’re just laying you down. Is that okay?”

Virgil nodded sleepily. He felt hands gently set him on the bed.

“Do you want us to stay or go?” Saul asked.

Virgil opened his eyes at that. He extended both arms. “Stay? Please?”

Both Remy and Saul immediately laid down next to him, one on each side. Virgil shuffled the blankets up, content. Remy ran a hand through Virgil’s hair.

“Sleep well baby.” And Virgil slipped once more into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Saul and Remy protect. Virgil gets cuddles. Poor bean.

Yeah, it can be really fucking confusing because although I don't think I experience full-on age regression (idk maybe I'm wrong), when you wake up from a flashback like that or if you start dissociating you feel like a scared little kid all over again. Trauma memories aren't normal memories; the brain didn't store them correctly so you're essentially re-experiencing the trauma, including the age it happened at.
Chapter 39

Chapter Notes

Out of curiosity, I decided to check and see where my lil ol’ fic was ranked in the fandom based on comments. And Y’ALL, out of the ENTIRE fandom on AO3, this fic is on the 1st page for number of comments!!! I don't even have words to describe how amazing that is!!! I fricking LOVE that there's so much interaction on this fic!! I love chatting with y'all in the comments section!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

_Maybe he’s in Patton’s room._ Roman thought desperately. He focused, and sensed that Virgil wasn’t in the Imagination and that the Dark Sides were still in the dungeon.

Roman all but ran to Patton’s room and knocked on the door frantically. Patton answered, but before he could get a word out, Roman blurted, “Do you know where Virgil is?!?”

Patton paled and shook his head. Roman closed his eyes and summoned Logan. Logan looked around, confused.

“We don’t know where Virgil is.” Patton stated. Logan stiffened and switched into crisis mode.

“Alright, we need a plan. Roman-”

“I’ll search downstairs! Patton can check the Neutral Side and Logan you’ll be up here!”

Logan nodded, internally sighing at how upset Roman was. He hated seeing his love like this. Despite being Logic and allegedly being above cognitive distortions, he couldn’t help but fear the worst for the anxious Side.

Roman ran through the halls, calling for Virgil and looking in every room. Once he had done that, he focused again on his realm and made sure Virgil wasn’t there. He sensed one of his guards in the Dark Sides’ dungeon, giving them their breakfast, but that was it. Emptying his lungs in a breath of relief, he looked to the stairs as Logan approached.

“I’m sorry Roman, I did not find him upstairs.”

Roman got himself ready to panic when Patton popped up. He had a sad look on his face and Roman was certain that meant Patton hadn’t had any luck either.

“He’s in the Neutral Side of the mindscape kiddos.”

Roman collapsed into a nearby kitchen chair, slightly faint from relief. “How is he?”

Patton looked down. “I ran into Saul and Remy. They said that he had sensory overload and needed some time alone in a dark room to relax. We might s-see him tomorrow.” he said as he couldn’t stop the emotion from leaking into his voice. Roman was still light-headed, but thankfully Logan pulled Patton into a hug.

“D-does he n-not l-l-like us anymore?” Patton cried.
Dizziness be damned, Roman thought. He stood and went to comfort his love.

Logan spoke first. “My heart, I do not believe so. His recent actions have all indicated otherwise. I believe he is truly just overstimulated and needed some quiet time alone.”

“If Virgil didn’t like us, I believe he would have made it very clear already.” Roman stated.

Patton sniffled. “You’re right. I just wish he didn’t suffer so much! Why, why…” he trailed off and sobbed.

Logan pulled Patton closer. “I know darling. I know.”

Virgil woke slowly, warm and comfortable, with the presences of two of his closest family nearby. He basked in the soft warmth until memories from last night came back and his self-loathing returned.

Do you have any idea about how fucked up they think you are now? Oh, I’m sorry, how fucked up they KNOW you are now? Jesus Christ, you’re 30 fucking years old, you’re not a child.

Virgil swallowed thickly, knowing he couldn’t take back what he’d said last night. Then the memory of the nightmare/flashback resurfaced and he had to vault himself over Remy to get to the trashcan on time. He felt a hand on his back and flinched forward as the last of the dry heaves left him.

“It’s okay sugar. Do you think you’re done?” Virgil nodded, embarrassed. “Alright. Why don’t you go ahead and use our bathroom? We’ll clean up in here.” Virgil started to protest, but was cut off by Remy. “None of that, we’re going to take care of you.” Virgil just nodded and shamefully made his way to the bathroom. He first blew his nose to get the residual chunks out of there. Once he had flushed that, he used two doses of mouthwash and rinsed out his mouth. He’d have to wait a half hour at least before he could brush his teeth. He wiped the eyeshadow that had run down his face and threw the tissue in the wastebasket.

When he walked out of the bathroom, Remy and Saul had just finished cleaning up. They turned to Virgil with gentle smiles.

“Hey Virge. We were thinking of making breakfast, does that sound good?” Saul asked.

Virgil smiled shyly. “Yeah. ‘M sorry about the…” he gestured towards the bed.

“Don’t worry ‘bout it. It’s not a big deal. We just like being able to be there for you darling.” Saul assured.

Remy agreed. “Yeah babes, we don’t want you to suffer alone. If we can help, we want to.”

Virgil ducked his head as a blush made its way across his face. “Yeah, um, let’s go to the kitchen huh?”

Once Virgil heard the other two Sides start moving, he made his way to the kitchen, his head down. When he sat in the chair, he was hit by a wave of panic.

“Oh shit! The Light Sides!” Virgil yelled as he stood, ready to go to them to let them know that he wasn’t hurt.
Remy gently put a hand on Virgil’s shoulder, which Virgil flinched away from. Remy withdrew his hand immediately. “Pump the brakes gurl. They came by while you were asleep. We let them know that you were hanging with us.”

Virgil let out a sigh and sat back down. Saul had eggs, pancakes, and bacon going.

“Uhh, Rem? A little help? I think I’m burning them.”

“Which ones?”

“All of them.”

Remy swore as he went to help Saul and Virgil snorted. After some intervention from Remy, a slightly burned breakfast was set out and Remy handed Virgil some throat-soothing tea in a trenta Starbucks cup. Virgil served himself a pancake, a few small scoops of egg, and a slice of bacon. Once Virgil had eaten his fill, he pushed his plate away and stretched.

“Feel better babes?”

Virgil looked at Remy and smiled. “Yeah, thanks. I should probably go back, I have work to do today.”

“Of course. We’ll be here if you need us.” Saul said.

Virgil smiled at them, then closed his eyes and sunk out. He popped into existence in the hallway.

“VIRGIL!!”

Virgil leapt into the air and turned around.

“Jesus fucking goddamn Christ!!” he panted.

Roman stood in front of him sheepishly. “Sorry Virge. I’m just so happy to see you! How are you feeling?”

Virgil focused on catching his breath. “I’m good, even though you just scared the shit out of me.”

Roman lowered his head a little with a nervous smile. “I’m sorry about that.” he paused, frowning and looking down. “Virgil, I… I wanted to apologize for what I said yesterday-”

“It’s fine!” Virgil cut him off, not wanting that conversation to happen.

But Roman, ever the stubborn dreamer, shook his head. “No it’s not. There were kinder ways to say what I meant, and I didn’t mean what I said. You are wonderful, truly. Virgil, you are valuable to me as a loved one. The idea of us together is not so strange or unbelievable. I just saw how uncomfortable you were and wanted to ease your discomfort, and in the process I put my foot in my mouth.” Roman took Virgil’s hand and stared into his eyes. “I am not entitled to your forgiveness, but I do hope I may someday be able to make it up to you.”

Virgil was certain he was gaping like a fish. “I… I… Princey…” he stuttered. His face felt like it was on fire.

Roman stepped closer. “I know you may not believe me now, and that is my failing. But I will endeavor to do anything to ensure you believe in me, us, and yourself. It is my mission!”

Virgil wanted to say something along the lines of, “Roman, thank you! That really means a lot.”
You know, like a normal person. Instead what came out of his mouth was, “Jesus Christ Princey, if someone doesn’t believe what you said after that they must be as much of a moron as you are.”

Would Roman be concerned if I tried to strangle myself with my own hoodie sleeves?

Roman just laughed. “I am heartened to hear that my dark knight!”

Virgil saw that Roman was about to launch into another sonnet or declaration or whatever shit romantic people did.

“Hey, uh, did you fix that mirror?”

Roman brightened. “I did! My apologies again. It should be a smooth ride!”

God help him, Virgil couldn’t stop his rogue eyebrow from twitching up suggestively. I will shave you off you traitor.

Roman turned bright red. “I, ahem, perhaps could have phrased that differently.”

Virgil took his hand back and stuffed it in his hoodie pocket. “Wh-whatever, I’m gonna go see Dr. Picani.”

“Very well! ¡Buena suerte mi amor!”

Virgil snorted at the impassioned Spanish and went towards Roman’s room. As he neared it, his anxiety slowly increased. By the time he was in front of the mirror, he was shaking and barely staving off hyperventilation. Virgil forced himself to hold back tears of fear.

Why am I so scared? Dr. Picani won’t hurt me.

But you will have to talk about the details of your story. And you’re just too weak, too much of a coward, to do that aren’t you?

I-I can do it.

Oh really? And so why you haven’t stepped through the mirror yet?

I will!

Oh sure. And I’m sure Dr. Picani won’t react in the worst ways when he finds out about how fucked up you are. How much they did to you. How gross you are. You’re going to be too much for a fucking therapist. What does that say about you? Don’t worry, I’ll tell you. You’re a lost cause. You’re too much. You don’t deserve to live. No one will ever truly love you. Your entire life is going to be dealing with trauma. You’re never going to be okay or lovable or happy or worthy of anything good. You fucking worthless waste of space. You’re just going to be a walking reminder of trauma for everyone around you. Do you think Remy and Saul deserve that? Do you think Patton, Logan, and Roman deserve that? You should never talk to them or see them again. It’s the least you can do.

Virgil collapsed, hyperventilating with tears rolling down his face. He loved them so much, the thought of never seeing them again was too painful for him to endure.

Awwww what’s the matter? Can’t handle a bit of truth? Come on, you’ve known this, you’re just too selfish to do anything about it. You can’t possibly think they’ll ever actually love you.

Virgil drew his knees up and sobbed into them. He knew his head was right, and he was already
grieving the loss of his family.

“Virgil!”

Virgil looked up at Roman’s exclamation. Roman had run over and dropped to his knees beside Virgil.

“My love, what happened?”

Virgil opened his mouth to reply, but all that came out was a heartbroken sob.

“Oh my darling, I-” Roman opened his arms but paused. “May I hold you?”

Virgil nodded and was quickly swept up in a hug. Virgil threw his arms around Roman’s neck, sobbing for the love and grief he felt. The hug was amazing, overwhelming in its glory. Virgil felt surrounded. The sensation on his back where Roman’s arms and hands were gave his muscles this strange, deep, almost tickling sensation. Virgil’s hyperventilation took over his sobs as everything, the wonderful and the terrible, became overwhelming.

Roman drew back slightly, just enough to speak into Virgil’s ear. “Virgil, are you-” he pulled back the rest of the way, keeping one hand on Virgil’s shoulder holding him up, and the other hand on Virgil’s cheek.

“My sweet, can you breathe with me? In for one, two, three, four…” Virgil tried to follow along, but he couldn’t get any air into his lungs. He looked desperately at Roman and shook his head. He was ashamed that he couldn’t fucking breathe in front of Roman. The voice was right. He’ll never be seen as anything but walking trauma by the other Sides.

“Shhh, my sweet, it’s okay. Can we try again? In for one, two…” Roman’s voice faded away as Virgil’s vision blacked out.

Chapter End Notes

I had someone ask me on Tumblr if I minded if folks made fanart of this fic. I don't mind at all!! In fact, I love it!! Go ahead, just please let me know so I can tell you how amazing your art is!! I'm beyond flattered that folks want to make fanart of my fic!!!

Edit: Go check out Jasper01’s work titled, "Betrayal! Or: The one in which Princey should just stay in his lane, honestly." It is hysterically funny and a great break from the angst fest that is my fic! Seriously, her fic has such amazing characterizations!
Virgil groaned, the familiar tension in his head telling him that he had passed out again from another panic attack. His neck and back weren’t as sore, so he knew he’d at least passed out in a comfortable position. Taking stock of his body, he realized he was in a ridiculously soft bed and covered with a thick comforter.

“Virgil? Are you awake?” came Roman’s soft voice.

He remembered what had happened all at once. He groaned again, this time from mortification.

“I’m glad you’re awake my prince. Can you open your lovely eyes for me?”

Another groan.

“Princey, Jesus Christ, can you be any cheesier?”

Roman chuckled. “Good to have you back, Emo Nightmare.”

Virgil cracked an eye open to glare at Roman. Roman only smiled. Virgil sat up and keened at the headache and yup, that’s dizziness. Roman put a supportive hand on Virgil’s back, to which Virgil flinched away and hissed. Roman backed up with his hands raised.

“I’m sorry! You were wavering, but I really shouldn’t have touched you without permission, I’m sorry-”

Virgil sighed. “It’s fine Princey, I overreacted. Fight or flight.” he offered with a shy half-smile. Roman smiled back, but there was sadness in it. Virgil was confused until he realized he didn’t have his hoodie on.

Oh God I don’t have my hoodie!!
Virgil looked down slowly and saw his scratches exposed. He lifted his arms, turning them as though seeing them for the first time, then dropped them, not willing to meet Roman’s eyes.

“Virgil, my love,” Virgil shivered at the pain the pet name caused him, “may I please clean and bandage your wounds?”

Virgil shuddered. He forced himself to look at the royal. Roman was gazing at him with hope and sadness in his eyes.

*See? You don’t deserve them. Look at how much pain you’re causing by just existing.*

Virgil nodded, if only to make his prince feel better.

“Alright mi amor, do you think you can walk to the bathroom or shall I carry you?” Roman asked.

“I can walk.” Virgil said roughly.

Roman stood and backed away from the bed. Once he had gathered his courage, Virgil got out of the bed (*still not blindingly painful to get out of bed. I wonder how long it’ll take for that to stop being a miracle?) and followed Roman to his opulent bathroom. Roman paused by the sink.

“Would you like to sit down?” he asked, gesturing to the toilet.

Virgil nodded silently and sat down, arms wrapped around himself. He heard Roman turning the sink on, letting it run for a moment, turning it off, and grabbing something from the cupboard. Roman knelt in front of Virgil. Virgil felt a wave of panic overtake him as he saw a figure kneeling in front of him. He whimpered and pushed himself back as far as he could. Roman quickly backed up and got to his feet.

“It’s okay Virgil! I will not harm you!”

Virgil felt like absolute garbage for making Roman scared again. He hung his head as tears filled his eyes. “I’m sorry.” he whispered hoarsely.

“No, no my sweet stormcloud! You have nothing to apologize for!” Roman began.

Virgil felt frustration bowl him over like a freight train. He had used up all of his self-control, and his anger burst out of him. “But *I do!*” Virgil yelled, his double voice coming in as he stood and paced. “*All I do is cause you guys stress, stress that you shouldn’t have to deal with! You don’t deserve it! I should have been stronger! You shouldn’t have found out about my deal with the Dark Sides, that’s my fucking job!! And you guys won’t even beat me o-or fuck me to relieve some of the stress I cause you! It’s the one thing I’m good for! Goddammit!! A-and you’re so worried about me ducking out because of how it’d hurt Thomas that I can’t even isolate myself to save you the suffering! I won’t duck out again, I’d NEVER hurt Thomas intentionally! Why can’t you just let me go?! You should just let me go…” Virgil’s voice became more hushed as his energy left him. With his rage spent, he was empty. He fell to his knees, hands tightly grasping his arms. With no sounds coming from the prince, Virgil nodded to himself and focused to sink out to his room, intending to lock it forever. He was stopped by a tight hug.

“I am NEVER letting you go.” Roman whispered harshly, pressing his face into Virgil’s shoulder. “I love you. We love you, and you give us so much more joy than I could ever hope to describe. We know you’re hurting, and we will help you heal. Please, *please* give us a chance. Let us show you that we love you.” Roman paused to lift Virgil’s chin with one finger. “Give yourself a chance
to believe that you can be loved.” he whispered.

Virgil’s breath caught in his chest, moved by the impassioned speech. The logical thing for him to do after such a speech would be to say something normal, like “Okay,” or “Thank you.” So naturally, Virgil’s eyes rolled back into his head as he collapsed forward, boneless.

“Virgil! Oh my love.”

Virgil could hear everything that was going on, but it was like he was hearing it from underwater. He couldn’t move his limbs. Virgil felt another Side rise up in the bathroom.

“Roman, what is the emergen- oh Virgil.” Logan’s calm, precise cadence washed over Virgil.

“I don’t know what happened! He was telling me why we shouldn’t love him, I told him why we should, and he collapsed!” Roman’s panicked voice came.

“There is no need to panic. I believe that he was overwhelmed and may have passed out from emotional shock. He is likely dehydrated, sleep-deprived, extremely stressed, or has low blood sugar.”

A slow breath in and out was heard from the royal.

“What do we do?”

“Elevate his feet and cover him with a blanket. I don’t want him to be cold.”

Virgil heard a snap, and he was covered with a blanket as his feet were lifted into the air.

“Virgil? Virgil, can you hear me?”

Yes, but I can’t fucking respond.

“We will intermittently call his name until he awakens. If he is unconscious for longer than five minutes, we will need to change treatments.”

Virgil didn’t want to know what those other treatments were, but he couldn’t figure out how to get back to the surface. He struggled and struggled, but it only seemed to more firmly entrench him in his paralysis. After several minutes of mentally thrashing, he took a small break, and had the feeling of floating up. Virgil kept himself relaxed, and he felt himself rising faster and faster to the surface. With the sensation of breaking through water into air, he inhaled sharply through his mouth and opened his eyes.

“Virgil, my moonlight blackbird!” Roman’s face came into view, smiling and vivacious and everything Virgil wasn’t.

I should probably say something poetic or some shit back.

“Um, f-... h-hey.” Virgil replied eloquently.

Good job brain.

Logan took a knee next to Virgil.

“How do you feel Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged. “Embarrassed.”
Logan hummed. “There is no need to be embarrassed about fainting.”

“You sure ‘bout that?”

“Yes. May I take your blood pressure?”

Virgil couldn’t help himself. “Sure, but give it back when you’re done.”

Logan blinked at him once. Twice. Three times. Then he closed his eyes, sighed through his nose, and grabbed a blood pressure cuff. He wrapped it around Virgil’s upper arm and put on a stethoscope. He carefully measured Virgil’s blood pressure. He removed the cuff.

“Your blood pressure is within normal limits. Are you dehydrated?”

Virgil frowned as he thought back. “I don’t know, maybe?”

Logan summoned a notebook and pencil. “Could you have low blood sugar?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, I had breakfast with Remy and Saul.”

Logan nodded. “Are you sleep-deprived?”

Virgil snorted. “Almost always.”

Logan frowned, but didn’t comment. “And would you say you have been experiencing high levels of emotional distress?”

It was Virgil’s turn to blink at Logan. When Logan didn’t get a response, he looked at Virgil, then looked away, properly cowed.

“My apologies. I believe you many have fainted from emotional shock.”

Virgil averted his eyes and grunted. He heard Roman shuffle forward.

“My lovely emo, I deeply apologize for making you uncomfortable earlier. May I clean and bandage your wounds?”

Virgil’s eyes shifted between Roman and Logan, asking Roman a question with his eyes.

Roman deflated a little. “Logan already saw.”

Virgil closed his eyes and reflected on just how much he hated himself. He nodded, wanting to at least give the patient royal some small comfort.

“Do you think you can sit up?” Roman asked. Virgil answered by pushing himself up onto his elbows, then his hands. Opening his eyes, Virgil found the world to be spinning at an alarming pace, but had enough strength left in him to turn lean back against the toilet.

Roman shifted so he was sitting and grabbed a washcloth. He made eye contact with Virgil.

“May I?”

Virgil nodded. Roman gently took one of Virgil’s hands and lifted it. He pressed the washcloth that was still warm somehow, certainly by Roman’s magic, to Virgil’s scratches and let it sit there for a moment. Virgil didn’t flinch; he’d had far worse pain. Roman diligently cleaned Virgil’s injuries, applied antibiotic cream, and wrapped them in gauze and an ace bandage. When he had smoothed
down the last bandage, he let his hand run down Virgil’s arm to hold that hand.

“Virgil, I would greatly prefer it if Patton were to know. I do not want to keep this from him.”

“That’s fine.” Virgil said quickly, not wanting to make the logical or fanciful Sides keep a secret from the father figure.

Roman smiled sweetly, pride in his features. “I’m so proud of you Virgil. That’s very brave.”

Virgil scoffed and rolled his eyes.

Logan interjected. “It is Virgil. Oftentimes, self-harm is the one tactic that individuals use to control emotions or feel. To jeopardize that for the attempt to heal is incredibly brave.”

Virgil was shocked, but of course Logan researched it. He surprised himself by speaking. “I’d like to be the one to tell him, but I want to talk to Dr. Picani first.”

Both Sides nodded. “That is a fair request.”

Roman tilted his head to the side. “You did not see Dr. Picani this morning?”

“No, I had a panic attack before I could go.”

Roman’s expression changed to one of sorrow. “I’m so sorry Virgil. I thought you were in his office. You were up here for nearly an hour and a half, which is about how long people spend in therapy sessions, right? I’m so sorry you had to suffer so long! I should have been there. You have my sincerest apologies abandoning you in your hour of need.”

Virgil shrugged. “It’s not your fault. I’m gonna…” Virgil moved to stand. Roman came beside him and handed Virgil his hoodie. Virgil took it gratefully and pulled it on.

“May I assist you fair gentleman?”

Virgil saw the hope in the prince’s eyes and couldn’t say no. “Fine.”

Roman beamed and tenderly put a hand under Virgil’s elbow. They stood together, standing in one spot for a moment before Virgil moved on his own. He walked to the mirror and looked back at Roman, hesitating.

“You sure you fixed it?”

“Quite certain!”

Virgil sighed internally, having no more excuses to put it off. He walked into the mirror and stepped into a familiar waiting room. He was relieved that Roman had indeed fixed the portal, but felt his anxiety from earlier come up.

One last time. Just so I can get right for the therapy session. I need to have my head straight. Heh, straight. I’ve been spending too much time around Roman.

Virgil put his hand underneath his t-shirt and scratched his chest. It didn’t work as well as his arms, but it would do. He lost track of time while he lost himself to the endorphins. When he felt the buzzing in his head that gave him an illusion of a calm mind, he checked the time and winced. He had been scratching for 20 minutes.

Guess I really lost track of time.
His pecs were starting to sting uncomfortably as he made his way to the therapy room. He sat down on the couch and eyed the stuffed comfort items. He pulled his knees up as something in his chest caved in. He really wanted the comfort, but he didn’t want to appear needier than he already was.

He jumped as the door opened. “And now, here’s something we hope you’ll really like!”

Virgil sent him a half-smile, having prepared for this. “What’s up doc?” Virgil couldn’t stop his voice from being slightly thickened, but he hoped Dr. Picani wouldn’t notice.

“Aw!” Dr. Picani shouted. He chuckled. “Classic! How are you doing Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged, his traitorous eyes darting back down to the basket of comfort items. Dr. Picani didn’t miss that.

Of course he didn’t. Fuck.

Dr. Picani looked at the basket and back to Virgil. His eyes glinted with a knowing look. “Would you like one Virgil?”

Virgil curled up tighter and chewed on his lip. He was scared; he didn’t want Dr. Picani to think he was a little kid!

“Virgil? Are you here with me?”

Virgil looked up at Dr. Picani. Warm, tranquil eyes were trained on him. Virgil nodded.

“Alright. It’s okay to want things Virgil. I won’t judge you for needing some comfort. We’re discussing difficult things. Would you like a comfort item?” Dr. Picani asked softly.

Virgil stared into Dr. Picani’s eyes. They were open and non-judgmental. Finding no deception, he slowly nodded his head. Dr. Picani smiled and pushed the basket towards Virgil.

“Player’s choice.”

Virgil felt his lips twitch. He picked up the flying dolphin fish that was on top, not wanting to spend time digging through the pile and knocking over other stuffed animals and making an even bigger fool out of himself. He hugged the animal to his chest and oh. That’s what it’s like. Virgil felt even more comfort than he thought he would. After taking a few deep breaths to reign his emotions in, he peered over his knees at Dr. Picani, who was smiling at him like he was cute or something.

“Do you like it?” Dr. Picani asked. Virgil nodded, and Dr. Picani beamed.

Hey, I did something right.

“Great! Is there anything in particular you’d like to discuss today?”

Fuck.

Instead of chewing on his lip as he knew he was dangerously close to biting through it again, he hugged the stuffed fish-mammal tighter. Holy shit, that works really fucking well.

Gathering his courage, Virgil nodded. Dr. Picani lowered his energy a little, observing the obvious tells that this was difficult for Virgil.
Virgil opened his mouth to speak. “I-... I’ve been-” he croaked. He couldn’t quite manage words.

Dr. Picani smiled patiently. “Don’t worry. Take your time.”

Virgil smiled at the doctor and ducked his face into the stuffed animal. He did a couple rounds of breathing exercises. He looked up and managed to whisper, “I-I need help with my scratching.”

Dr. Picani’s face became slightly more concerned. “We can certainly work on that Virgil. What would you like to tell me about your self-harm?”

Virgil shifted in his seat. “I-I haven’t been using any tools! But I keep going back to it…”

Dr. Picani nodded. “It’s not uncommon for people to have a hard time quitting right away. It may take several attempts, and that’s okay. How often would you say you scratch yourself?”

Virgil furrowed his brow. “Couple times a day?”

Dr. Picani nodded and wrote in his notebook. “Do you have an idea of what triggers you to scratch?”

Virgil averted his eyes, unable to meet the doctor’s gentle ones. There were so many, and he could already feel the static buzzing under his skin.

“I-I use it to punish myself. Like when I’ve made the others worried or upset. I don’t mean to! But I just fuck things up. So I punish myself because I’m mad and my brain won’t shut up until it’s had its fix of endorphin. Fucked up, I know.” he buried his face in the stuffed animal.

“Don’t be so hard on yourself Virgil. Your brain found a way to survive, and that’s amazing! I think we can find some healthier coping mechanisms. Also, have you heard of absolute thinking?”

Virgil raised his head. “That’s like black and white thinking, right?”

Dr. Picani nodded excitedly. “Exactly! And they’re rarely ever true. Like saying you “just fuck things up”. That’s often a contributing factor to self-harm. Do you think that might apply to you?”

Virgil sighed through his nose. “Yeah, probably. But, it is true! I only cause them more stress. The only time they’re happy is when they’re either not around me or doing something to relieve the stress I’ve caused!”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “You’ve never done anything good for them?”

Virgil felt frustrated. “No!” he paused. “I mean, like, I’ve helped with getting them out of bad situations, like when they were in my room o-or when Thomas broke up with his boyfriend. God knows what shape Thomas would be in without my paranoia.”

“It sounds like you do more for them than what you give yourself credit for. You were able to list two instances off the top of your head!”

Dr. Picani smiled. Dr. Picani smiled.

“Let’s go back to self-harm triggers. So far, we’ve got down that you use it to punish yourself. Are there any other times that you’ve found yourself scratching?”

“I guess when my skin gets itchy, like I’ve said before. It just feels awful. I can’t describe it.”

Dr. Picani smile turned sympathetic. “It sounds really uncomfortable.”
“It is! Like, the only thing I want to do is get it off, but I can’t!”

Dr. Picani hummed. “It sounds like self-harm has been useful in making it itch less. Have you found anything else that works?”

Virgil hugged the stuffed fish. “I like spending time with people. If we can do something without me finding a way to fuck it up it helps.”

“That’s very insightful Virgil! Can you think of a specific example where spending time with someone helped with your need to self-harm?”

Virgil smiled a little at the memory. “Yeah, actually, this morning I hung out with Remy - my brother, kinda - and we did nails and facials. It made my mind and my body less noisy. Like, the voice inside my head was still there, but it was quieter and it didn’t affect me as much for a while, you know? And I really don’t know how to describe my body being quieter, it just was. Um, and I’ve helped Patton in the kitchen, which seems to make the itch mostly go away for a bit.”

Dr. Picani finished scribbling in his notebook. “That’s amazing Virgil! You have something that can help and you were able to think of two examples? That’s really good!”

Virgil flushed and buried his face in the stuffed animal again. “Wh-whatever.”

Dr. Picani smiled at Virgil’s shyness. “Can you think of anything else that helps?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, that’s basically it. Spending time with people without being a complete fuck up.”

“Alright. Are there any other triggers for your self-harm that you can think of?”

Virgil didn’t want to talk about it, but he knew he had to.

“After the D-Dark Sides w-would h-hurt me, I-I’d sometimes cut.”

Dr. Picani’s expression turned more solemn. “Okay. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about that?”

Virgil flinched and curled in on himself. “S-sometimes i-i-it w-was t-t-to make a m-m-mark that was m-mine, n-not theirs, y-you know? And, l-l-like, still nowadays i-i-if I f-f-f-feel g-gross I’ll feel th-th-the n-need t-t-to do it. Um, and th-th-then p-panic attacks a-and f-f-fl-flashbacks. I-it’s good to, like, s-s-stop th-th-those or c-c-come b-back d-d-down from th-th-them s-s-so I can f-function p-pr-properly. A-a-and it h-h-helps prevent a-another o-one.” Somewhere in that explanation, he wasn’t sure exactly where, Virgil began crying. He wept openly and Dr. Picani stayed silent. After a few minutes, Virgil apologized.

“I-I’m s-s-sorry!”

“Don’t worry. It’s okay. Take whatever time you need.”

Virgil continued to cry into the plush doll. After an additional ten minutes, he got a hold of his emotions again. He looked up, embarrassed.

“M sorry.”

“Don’t be! You just let out a big secret that you haven’t told anyone else, is that right?” Virgil nodded. “Think of it this way: your mind just released a huge burden, and your body wanted to
match that. It’s okay to cry. The eyes are the windows to the soul. Sometimes you need to wash the windows.”

Virgil felt himself getting choked up again, so he busied himself with grabbing a tissue and blowing his nose. Once he had thrown that in the wastebasket, he settled back in with the flying dolphin fish.

“Do you feel up to keep talking about your self-harm, or would you like to do a grounding or breathing exercise and call it a day?”

Virgil considered that as he tightened his hands on the doll. “I-I can talk a l-little about it.”

“Alright. Let me know at any time if it gets too much or you want to stop.”

Virgil nodded. Dr. Picani flipped his notebook open again. “There are a few things that folks seem to find helpful. Some people draw on themselves, other people rub an ice cube over the area, and some folks take cold showers or eat hot peppers as a “harmless pain”. There are also a lot of people who use lotion to soothe their skin. Do any of those sound like something you’d like to try?” Virgil nodded. “Great! We definitely talked about a lot. Is there anything you’d like to add?”

Virgil shrugged. Dr. Picani continued. “Okay! Let’s talk about a plan to help reduce your self-harm. A lot of recovering from self-harm is being aware of your triggers and what helps. One thing that a lot of people find helpful is keeping a journal. They write down what seems to trigger them and what seems to help. Writing down the series of events that led you to feel the need to hurt yourself and perhaps up to the point where you did hurt yourself can provide a lot of insight. It’s also really good to record the victories! Writing down when you resisted the urge or decreased the urge to scratch can help give you hope and show that you don’t need self-harm as a coping mechanism.”

Virgil curled in tighter on himself. “I-it’s the one thing that works every time. I want to stop, but I don’t want to lose it.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head in empathy. “It’s terrifying to dispose of a coping mechanism that worked to help unbelievably scary symptoms. Of course you don’t want to lose it! But know that you’re helping yourself by shedding these harmful tactics.”

Virgil knew what the doctor was saying was right. He didn’t believe that a fucking journal could help his scratching, but he’d give it a try. He wasn’t about to lie to the doctor.

“Okay, I’ll try to keep a journal.”

Dr. Picani’s smile was softer than Virgil expected, but for some reason he appreciated it. “I’m glad to hear that Virgil. And if that doesn’t work, don’t worry! We’ll figure something else out. How about we do a grounding exercise and talk about Incredibles 2?”

The rest of the session was spent doing exactly that. Virgil shyly returned the doll to the basket and left the session feeling confused, but happy he had a game plan.

Oh shit! I forgot to ask him how to tell Patton! FUCK!!

Before he could have a panic attack, he stepped through the mirror. He was safely deposited on the other side without falling on his ass. Patton was sitting at the foot of the bed talking to Roman, while Logan sat against the headboard reading a book. Patton brightened when he saw Virgil.

“Heya Virge! Ro and Lo said you had something to tell me?”
Isn't it the most annoying when you walk out of a therapy session and you're like, "SHIT!! I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THAT!!"

Also, randomly exploding from anger/ frustration is one of the parts of healing that I hated the most. I always regretted immediately afterwards because not only would I usually reveal more information in the heat of the moment than I wanted to, I've also just yelled at someone for no reason. It sucks.

Also, Picani is a clever, sneaky shit. Did you spot all of the techniques he used in this session?

The saying about washing the windows to the soul is a saying my Finn grandmother would tell me (she's one of the cool ones, not one of the assholes). So, yay Finn culture!

And now that you've had a chance to look at Bloodbone's art can we talk about the mood and atmosphere of the art?!?! And like those shadows?!?! And Deceit's face?!?! And how cute Virgie is?!?! And the spider?!?! And I didn't know that Virgil needed to be barefoot until right now.
Chapter 41

Chapter Notes

Y'all are literally so sweet!!! You've been so incredibly supportive and nice and I really appreciate it! Especially because a lot of the stuff in here is either a direct retelling of my life events or something close to it (or how I wish people in my life reacted), it really means a lot that y'all are so sweet. Keep being awesome!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Uh, yeah, um…” Virgil didn’t want to cause the beautiful Side’s light to dim again. He knew he didn’t have much of a choice.

“It’s alright Virgil. Patton won’t think less of you.” Logan reassured.

I hope not. Probably will though.

Virgil looked back at Patton. He had a very concerned and sad look on his face.

“Kiddo, you know you can tell me anything and I won’t judge you, right?”

You have no idea. You think that you won’t, but you will.

Unable to put it off any longer, Virgil pulled up his hoodie sleeves. He felt hot with shame; shame that he had failed to resist the itch, shame that he was hurting the Light Sides again, shame that he was letting the Dark Sides keeping hurting him, and shame at the sheer act of scratching.

“Oh.” was all Patton said.

Virgil’s eyes filled with tears. I told you! I KNEW you’d judge! And now you know that I’m a hopeless wreck. He’s going to give up on me I know it. This is the end.

“Oh kiddo, I’m so sorry.”

Virgil hiccupped back a sob. “I-it’s okay. I don’t blame you.” And because he was weak, he stayed.

“I still should have seen something was wrong!”

Virgil shook his head. “I was hiding it, I was selfish. I’m sorry.” His voice broke on the last word.

“Oh baby, you don’t have anything to apologize for.” Virgil heard Patton get up and walk to him.

“What I mean is, can I hug your honey?”

Virgil shook his head. He was barely keeping the flashback away, and that effort was aggravating a rapidly-building panic attack. Hooray for me.

“No, I’m sorry. I can’t-” Virgil’s choked voice broke off into a sob. He hung his head, trying to get his bangs to cover as much of his face as he could.

“Shhhhh baby, it’s okay.” Virgil shook his head and took a step back.
For them it is okay, you self-centered asshole. They’re gonna get rid of you and it’s gonna be such a weight off their lives.

I’ll miss them.

Sure you will. They won’t miss you. Not one bit.

They’ll probably throw a fucking party.

Probably.

“Virge, honey? Can you hear me?”

Virgil sobbed in response. “I’m sorry.”

“No, no baby! It’s okay! I know that you’re trying your best, and that’s what matters!”

*Your best isn’t good enough. Not for them, not for anyone. That’s why you were with the Dark Sides. Did you think that was just coincidence?*

“It’s okay honey. I’m so sorry you’re hurting. We’ll help you through this. That’s what family is for! We’re not going anywhere!”

Virgil felt a tiny spark of hope in his chest. Are they not kicking me out?

They probably are. They’re not going anywhere, you on the other hand…

*But… they said they’d help me…*

You dumbass. They’re just saying that so they can catch you off-guard and force you back into the Dark Side! You’ll be the only one there, all alone. And in pain. No one around. They might even let the other Dark Sides back in there. You need to be punished somehow for using up all of their time and energy. They know you deserve it.

“Virgil?”

Virgil met Patton’s eyes, which were concerned. “Sweetheart, are you okay?”

The endearment combined with Patton’s loving voice broke him.

“Please don’t send me away. I’ll do anything…” Virgil whispered, completely out of hope.

“We’re not sending you anywhere love.” Roman’s resolute voice interjected.

Virgil shivered. *What does that mean?*

*It means they figured out how to make you useful.*

*I don’t want it! I don’t want it!! I don’t want it!!!*

“Darling?” Virgil barely registered Logan’s voice. He felt fear tearing through him, consuming every cell in his body. He could vaguely feel breaths leaving him, though he didn’t know if they were sounds or just air. He was completely disoriented; he had no idea if he was standing or splayed on the ground, or which way he was facing. He was overwhelmed by anxiety, barely aware of anything else around him.
Virgil slowly came back to himself. He felt like he was laying down the slope of a hill, with his head lower than his body. He could feel a blanket covering him and sobbed harder.

_They already started. This... this is it. This is my life._

Virgil felt sick. He felt awareness creeping back, but he didn’t want it. He wanted to not feel or perceive anything ever again. He couldn’t live.

_Thomas... Thomas, I’m so sorry... I tried, I swear to God I tried... I can’t anymore... I can’t..._

“He seems to be calming down a little.” Logan’s crisp voice washed over him.

_How much did I cry while they were fucking me?_

“Virgil? Sweetheart, can you hear me?” Virgil heard Patton’s voice much closer than he thought. His sobs increased again.

_Not Patton! Please, no…_

Virgil kept crying, but his body went limp. His body knew what had to be done to survive. It wasn’t like there was any hope anyway.

“Shhhhhhh, it’s okay, you’re safe.” Patton started carding his fingers through Virgil’s hair. Virgil lay there limply, not wanting to be touched but not being able to do anything about it.

“Patton, you may not want to touch him. Virgil stated that he did not want to be touched before he collapsed and I do not know if that’s changed.”

Patton’s hand withdrew immediately.

“You’re right! I’m sorry, I was just trying to help my sweet boy...” Patton’s voice got thicker until it cracked at the end. He heard Logan come over and muffled sniffles soon after.

Virgil felt something stir in him; he needed to help Patton. Virgil still felt weak, but he started by rolling his shoulders. Once he was able to do that, he found he was able to command more of his body. He shifted his head, feeling it was on carpet but still sensing his body was at a downward angle, spatial awareness off-kilter. He was only somewhat successful in opening and closing his hands, but he was able to move his legs.

“Virgil?” Roman’s rough voice ventured.

Virgil opened his eyes. He saw Roman kneeling a few feet in front of him, with Patton and Logan a few more feet behind Roman. Patton’s face was red and shiny with tears, but he was clearly hopeful. Virgil shifted his body and didn’t feel any new pain.

_I guess they didn’t hurt me after all._

Not knowing what to say, Virgil sighed and closed his eyes, the occasional shiver still going through him.

“Are you with us Virge?” Roman asked.

Virgil swallowed a few times, trying in vain to wet his throat.

“Y-yeah.”
Roman sighed in relief. “Thank God. Do you…” Roman paused, furrowing his brow and biting his lip, “do you feel more here?”

“...yeah.”

“Good! Good, I, um… what do you need?”

Virgil cast his eyes down, unwilling to meet any of their gazes.

“Nothing.” Virgil slowly pushed himself into a sitting position, his balance still very off. He felt a little stronger and carefully lifted his eyes to Patton’s. Patton’s expression could only be described as cautiously optimistic. Virgil forced a half-smile on his face for Patton’s benefit, and Patton’s returning smile could have outshone the sun.

“Heya kiddo. Are you feeling better?”

Virgil nodded.

“I’m glad to hear that. Do you feel up to talking about what happened?”

Virgil curled in a little on himself. “I’m sorry.”

Patton rushed in. “Kiddo, no! You can’t help it when you have a panic attack!”

“Patton is correct. Your unconscious autonomic mind takes over, reduces blood to the prefrontal cortex, floods your system with a variety of chemicals, and changes the electrical activity in your brain. We would never blame you for having a trauma reaction.”

“And neither should you!” Patton exclaimed.

Virgil felt a little better with the reassurances from the Light Sides, but he still felt guilty for upsetting Patton in the first place.

“I, just… the scratching… I’m sorry…”

“Honey, no! I’m sad that you’re hurting, but I’m not upset with you! I love you. So much.”

Even though Roman didn’t move, Virgil could feel the intensity coming off the prince.

“Virgil. Your scratching is what helps you the most right now, right?” Virgil nodded shamefully.

“You’ve been doing this for a while?” Virgil nodded again, fresh tears gathering in his eyes. “Do not be ashamed. You are fighting a terrible beast. It is not unheard of for the most valiant of heroes to be overcome by a powerful villain their first few attempts. Do not punish yourself for being unsuccessful at stopping your scratching. Every time you face it, even if you face defeat, you learn more about your strengths and its weaknesses.”

By the end of the speech, Virgil was gaping at the royal. After a few awkward seconds, he gathered himself.

“I, uh- yeah, thanks Roman. I, um, thanks.” he said eloquently. Somehow, the imaginative Side helped ground him.

“It is my honor brave knight.” Roman stated steadfastly.

“What do you need kiddo?” Patton asked gently.
Virgil paused. He couldn’t really think of anything, but he didn’t want to keep focusing on what had just happened.

“I dunno.”

Patton only smiled kindly. “Want to help me with dinner?”

Virgil quickly agreed. A distraction. Perfect.

Virgil stood shakily, Roman hovering nearby. When he got to his feet, he unwrapped the blanket from around his shoulders and looked around, trying to figure out where it had come from.

“You can just throw that on the bed.” Virgil didn’t want to leave a mess, but decided to do as he was told.

“You can follow me kiddo. Do you want Logan and Roman to hang out with us too?”

Virgil felt bad, but he shook his head. “I-I’m overwhelmed. I’m sorry.”

Logan was quick to jump in. “Do not apologize Virgil. It is entirely understandable.”

Patton tilted his head at Virgil. “Do you want to spend some time relaxing in your room first?”

Virgil nearly flinched at the mention of his room. “Being alone right now w-would be b-bad for me.”

“Okay! Let me know if you change your mind.”

Virgil followed Patton downstairs and into the kitchen. Patton busied himself with carefully lifting a beef chuck roast out of a crock pot. He managed to only spill a few vegetables and... what looked like green pebbles?

“What’s that?” Virgil nodded to the small pile of green.

Patton followed Virgil’s gaze. “Oh! Those are lentils! They’re really filling and have lots of fiber and protein!”

Virgil was impressed. He just hoped they didn’t taste healthy. “What can I do?”

Patton just smiled. “Why don’t you set the table and bring some bowls over here? Ooo! And cut up some cheese and put it out with crackers!”

Virgil did as instructed, beginning to feel the itch come back. It was like a hundred hives of bees were underneath his skin. Having Patton so close to him was setting off all of his alarms at once, but he forced himself to keep working. Virgil started feeling hands grabbing at his waist. He whipped around to see what the hell Patton was thinking, but found him still facing the crock pot.

Oh fantastic, a flashback.

Virgil hoped it was one where he could keep it at bay. He sat down and focused on his breathing exercises. He sensed Patton leave the kitchen quietly, probably to get the other Sides. He opened his eyes and felt a little more relaxed.

You shouldn’t be.

Oh hi again, perfect timing.
Don’t smartass me you useless fucking whore. The only reason they didn’t fuck you was because they’re too disgusted by you. Even if you aren’t a used up wad of come tissue, your body is hideous. And they don’t even know the half of it!

I know.

And you’ve made them worry and stress even more than usual! Impressive!

Virgil didn’t even bother responding, too despondent to try. The Light Sides filtered into the kitchen.

“It smells wonderful padre! I could smell it from upstairs!”

“Good! I hope you like it!”

Dinner passed with the Light Sides filling the space with their chatter, Virgil interjecting when he could think of something to say. His brain was spewing more and more hateful things at him.

Worthless.

Whore.

Burden.

Useless.

Hopeless.

Hole.

Junkie.

The buzzing under his skin kept growing louder. By the end of supper, he had to use almost all of his focus to not scratch himself.

“Are you alright?” Logan asked.

Virgil looked up. He figured he may as well be honest. “N-no, I don’t feel good. I’m gonna go to my room.”

“Alright. Do let us know if there’s anything you need.”

Making them worry again. Jesus Christ, you just can’t stop can you?

Virgil sunk down into his room, not bothering to walk. Without the others around, he didn’t feel the need to hide it anymore. He snapped his room soundproof and let his emotions out.

Okay, okay, grounding. Let’s do that first. Um, purple! 5 things that are purple!

Virgil tried to focus, but his vision was blurred by how fast his eyes were moving. He couldn’t make himself focus on one thing, and he had no idea what number he was on. Every time he looked at a new object, the previous object vanished from his mind.

Not working, not working! Breathing exercises!

Virgil attempted the 4-7-8 exercise, but he couldn’t get past the first step. He couldn’t get any air in
his lungs. They already felt full. Desperate, he tried to combine the two exercises. His vision began getting spotty. He stumbled over to his bed, knowing he was about to pass out. He fell haphazardly onto his sheets and closed his eyes.

\\\\\\

Virgil woke to hands on his thighs, groping and grabbing, trying to pull them apart. Virgil gasped and tensed. Nausea was consuming his torso and he could feel sick crawling up his throat. He swallowed compulsively, not wanting to incur a punishment. His breathing hitched and he could hear laughter from around him.

My room, my room, my room.

Virgil continued the chant until the hands felt too spectral to be real. He opened his eyes and saw that he was alone in his room. He sat up, and clumsily got to his feet. He checked his room and didn’t find any Dark Sides. Feeling his panic building, he left his room and was immediately overwhelmed by the paranoia of Dark Sides hiding in the Light Side of the mindscape. He ran downstairs and looked everywhere, behind furniture, inside closets, in unused rooms. When he didn’t find anyone, Virgil expected to calm down. Instead, his panic began climbing more rapidly. Virgil looked at the clock on the stove. 10:48.

Okay, okay, Dr. Picani said distractions were good, so, distract! Other people are good! Who’s the most distracting?

Virgil didn’t have to think for long.

Roman.

Virgil sunk into Roman’s room, knowing he didn’t have much time. When he appeared, Roman looked startled at first, then delighted.

“Virgil! What a lovely surprise! To what do I owe the pleasure?”

A normal thing to say would have been, “I’m about to have a panic attack and I’m hoping you can provide me with a distraction.” Of course, what came out was a rushed, “Can I paint your nails?” right before he burst into tears. He covered his face with his hands.

“Oh! Oh my sweet.” Virgil heard boot steps approach him. “Would you like a hug?”

Virgil nodded, his face still hidden by his hands. He felt himself pulled into a hug that was gentle, Roman’s arms barely grazing Virgil. Doesn’t want to upset the crazy person. Virgil needed more. He burrowed himself into Roman’s chest, hoping he’d get the message. Roman’s arms tightened, holding Virgil in a strong, secure embrace. Virgil wept into the prince’s chest, feeling comforted and protected and held. Roman had his face pressed against Virgil’s head and swayed them back and forth slightly, humming a tune Virgil didn’t care to place. Once Virgil got the worst of the terror out of his system, he felt more soothed. The places on his back where Roman was touching felt like electricity, and Roman’s closeness made Virgil feel hot. He could practically feel the blood vessels in his skin expanding from… from a feeling he didn’t want to explore. Virgil let the nice feeling wash over him for a moment more before pulling back. Roman let his arms fall to his sides.

“I… I’m-” Virgil began.

“Nope! If you’re going to say that you’re sorry, I won’t allow it.”

Just because he could, Virgil smirked and said, “Sorry.”
“Ugh!” Roman threw his hands up in mock defeat and frustration. “How dare you! Must you be so vexing?”

Virgil snorted. Roman smiled. “Would you still like to paint my nails?”

Virgil looked down and shook his head. “No, probably shouldn’t. My hands aren’t steady.”

Roman nodded solemnly. “Alright. Would you like to do something else?”

Virgil shifted from one foot to the other. “I-I need a distraction.”

Roman drew his shoulders back. “Now that I can provide! To the Imagination?”

Virgil knew that his tormentors were there, but he also knew trusted Roman to have control over his realm, his kingdom, enough to keep them locked up. Although he knew he’d be closer to his abusers, he didn’t feel any more anxiety than usual.

Perhaps it’s an effect of living in the mindscape and being fractions of someone’s personality. Space in here is a psychological construct, a voice that sounded suspiciously like Logan’s said. That particular train of thought freaked him out, so he focused back on the prince.

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

Roman smiled and gestured to his wardrobe with a flourish. It flung open and a beautiful landscape appeared, with a castle dead center.

“Shall we?” Roman asked. Virgil nodded and looked back at the wardrobe, waiting for Roman to lead. Lead he did, and Virgil felt only a small drop when stepping into the Imagination. He looked back and saw that the portal had disappeared, revealing a small town in the distance. He looked to Roman, who was patiently waiting for Virgil to catch up to him. There was a single dirt road leading up to the magnificent castle, and the entire area was surrounded by light green rolling hills. Virgil saw mountains in the distance in one direction and a forest in the other.

“This is a pretty cool place Princey.”

“Why thank you! You’ll find that every character here has their own personality and backstory, and the society is entirely sustainable!” Virgil listened as Roman gestured dramatically and excitedly explained the functions of each of the townsfolk and castle staff. Virgil listened, enjoying the enthusiasm and, well, creativity of Roman. He wasn’t anywhere near done by the time they reached the castle, but they were interrupted by the guards.

“Prince Roman Sanders has returned! All hail!”

“Thank you, thank you. I’ve brought an esteemed guest, Sir Virgil Sanders!”

“Welcome Sir Virgil Sanders!”

Virgil snorted fondly at the incredibly extra guards. After listening to Roman talk during their pleasant walk up to the castle, Virgil was feeling much more at peace. Now, he was just tired.

“What would you like to do my dark knight?”

Virgil looked up at Roman. He had this proud smile on his face. I’ve gotta stay here a little longer... but I’m so tired...

Virgil felt a light bulb go on over his head. “Can we check out your bedroom?”
By the way Roman’s eyebrows shot to his hairline, Virgil figured he probably could have phrased that differently.

“Not that! It’s just, this place is really cool, but I’m really tired, so I thought we could sleep here?”

Roman laughed weakly. “O-of course! I knew what you meant! Ah, my quarters are this way, you can just follow me.” Virgil observed Roman’s blush. It was always placed perfectly on his cheekbones, like built-in highlighter.

_Bastard._

Virgil followed Roman up three flights of stairs and God knows how many hallways. The stone work around them didn’t appear cold and intimidating; rather, it seemed the stones reflected warm light, a nice contrast to the occasional gentle draft they encountered. After a solid ten minutes of walking, Virgil could spot Roman’s bedroom from a mile away. The ceiling in that part of the castle was vaulted, specifically to show off the intricately-detailed columns that framed the massive wooden doors. Roman got to the doors and paused, turning to look at Virgil.

“Are you certain you’ll be comfortable sleeping here?”

Virgil was touched by the concern. “Yeah Princey, I’ll be good.”

Roman searched his face for a moment more before pushing open the doors. The bedroom… wasn’t as luxurious as Virgil expected. There was a king-sized four-poster bed with sheer curtains draped around it and more opaque ones bunched up at the top. The room itself was only 15 feet by 25 feet, which was small compared to Roman’s room in the mind palace. It had a small fireplace, a simple armchair and wooden table near a window, and torches lining the walls. Virgil could make out a smaller door leading to what he assumed would be the bathroom.

“You made this? For yourself?” Virgil asked incredulously.

Roman laughed. “I know, it’s not much, but I wanted to keep this a little more period-appropriate. Besides, a true knight and prince is far too busy to spend much time loafing about in his chambers!”

Virgil was impressed. “Fair enough. Um, what should we…” Virgil trailed off, unsure what to do next.

“Oh, yes! Would you mind if I changed?”

Virgil shrugged. “It’s your castle.”

Roman moved to the bathroom and shut the door. Virgil focused on switching out his jeans for sweatpants. It was surprisingly easy, which Virgil attributed to being in Roman’s realm. Virgil walked around the room, examining the details and ending up at the window. After several minutes, Roman emerged from the bathroom, clad in long silk pants and a long-sleeved silk button-up shirt with white buttons, both trimmed with gold. The pyjamas were a matching set, cherry red with stripes of slightly darker red in them. The shirt had a deep V neck that showed off the royal’s muscled torso down to the first set of abs, just teasing at a six pack. Which Virgil was decidedly not staring at. _The bastard can pull it off. Goddammit._ Roman finished sending a text to someone and vanished his phone.

“Do you need anything else for bed?” Roman asked. Virgil shook his head.

“Alright! Which side do you prefer?”
Virgil didn’t particularly care. “Dealer’s choice.”

Roman slipped into the side nearest the door. Virgil shuffled over and got under the blankets on the other side of the bed. It was incredibly soft and the blankets were heavy. Virgil didn’t feel suffocated or overheated; they were more acting like a weighted blanket. Virgil rolled onto his side, facing Roman. He had never been able to fall asleep on his back. Roman was also on his side, facing Virgil. He had a soft expression on his face.

“Goodnight Virgil.”

“Night Princey.”

Chapter End Notes

Roman is the MVP of this chapter! The reason I made Roman's bedroom less extreme in the Imagination is because I definitely headcannon that Roman has some insecurities that he tried to cover up by being the most extra prince. While he's definitely extra, I think he sometimes uses that to hide behind when he's not feeling as glittery as he normally does. Hence, ridiculous bedroom in the mindpalace and slightly more subtle one in the Imagination.

Also, Patton's reaction at the beginning is because although he's the center of emotional intelligence for Thomas, he's still sad and shocked to see his Virgie all bandaged up. Everyone short-circuits now and then, an no one's perfect.

The thing about feeling like you're on a hill is really trippy. Sometimes when I would wake up from passing out, my balance/ spatial awareness would be all funky and I'd feel like I'm on a hill instead of flat ground.

And finally, lentils are SO underrated and under-utilized!! They're so good!!
Chapter 42

Hey all! First and foremost, this chapter begins with a graphic description of sexual violence and some grooming behaviors. It's the large italicized section and ends once you hit the line of tildes.

I decided to make this description more graphic because a lot of media waters it down and we don't see the gory, uncomfortable reality of sexual violence. And then it's presented as a plot point or something that's good for the victim/survivor? Naw. I intentionally made some of these more or less graphic because I don't want to be graphic just for the sake of being graphic, but I do want to show the horror, in all its truth.

It's what I wish I could have seen when I was doing the bulk of my recovery.

It's also been really therapeutic for me to type out my experiences, and for some of the instances in this fic if I don't include certain details it doesn't seem like I'm being honest. I hope that explains why some of these scenes are more graphic!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas was in high school. The Dark Sides were starting to explore just how far they could push Virgil. Virgil had been attached to or at least nearby a table they had set up for 2 ½ weeks now. He blinked out when he could, but the Dark Sides were trying to keep him present as much as possible. He missed when he could crawl through the vents. He liked crawling through the vents.

His head whipped to the side as he was slapped. “Don’t ignore me!” Rage thundered.

“I’m sorry sir.” Virgil answered robotically.

Deceit began running his fingers through Virgil’s longer hair. “Shhhh Anxiety, we’re just excited to show you your reward.”

Virgil shuddered. He’d learned long ago that Deceit’s ‘kindness’ was a farce. “My reward sir?”

Deceit hummed, still stroking Virgil’s scalp. “Yes, I think you’ve earned it, don’t you?”

Virgil would have felt dread if he was capable of feeling, but at that moment his emotions were miles away. “Yes sir.”

“Good boy.” Deceit stopped petting Virgil’s hair so he could tighten his fingers painfully in the strands. The lying facet held up what looked like a short, grey metal stick with a rounded end. “Have you ever seen one of these before?”

Virgil heard Malice giggling from somewhere in the room. He also heard heavy breathing from the other Dark Sides.

“No sir.”
Deceit patted Virgil’s cheek. “That’s quite alright. I’ll show you how to use it, and then you’ll take over.”

Virgil knew he had to play his cards carefully if he wanted to escape without severe damage like last month.

“Is there a set time you’d like me to use that for sir?”

“Excellent question! Not right now. We’ll tell you when to stop. Now, prepare yourself for a demonstration.” With that, Deceit poured lube over it (Virgil almost didn’t recognize the tube, it was used so infrequently), lifted Virgil’s limp penis and inserted the metal rod. He wasn’t gentle at all and Virgil could barely remember a time when he was so desperate for the torment to end. Deceit pushed until he couldn’t anymore, then drew it out and pushed back in. After a few more thrusts, Virgil began getting the idea. The half of Deceit’s face that was human was splotchy red and he was panting. He stepped back.

“Alright Virgil. Your turn.”

Virgil was horrified. He had no choice, but gods he didn’t want to. He fucking hated participating, he always did. It made him feel so much more disgusting than usual. His entire psyche was rebelling, but Virgil just wanted to survive. He had to. A nearby clock read 12:30 AM. He grabbed the end of the rod and began moving it out, then he pushed it back in. He couldn’t get it very far before the pain became unbearable, so he pulled it out again.

“Not good enough.” Deceit warned from Virgil’s right. He gulped and pushed in further, until he hit a barrier of some kind.

“There you go.” Deceit breathed. Virgil kept pushing the metal rod in and out, going faster when instructed. The drag became painful quickly, but he wanted to avoid punishment. He was starting to keen and whimper; he’d never imagined that something would go in there, and it made him want to vomit from the horror. To his disgust, he began to harden.

“I knew you’d like it.” Deceit taunted.

Virgil detested it, but his body responded to the stimulation anyway. He whimpered, wanting it to stop more than ever. He hated it when he got hard; it always meant something terrible was about to happen. The best case scenario was a feeling of relief. But more than anything, it confused him. His sense of reality seemed to be lost.

He obediently kept using the rod, until he knew he was close. He must have been telegraphing that, because the Dark Sides came closer.

“Show us.” Apathy ordered.

Virgil knew that the faster he went, the faster it’d be over. Closing his eyes, he focused on the sensations, until his body tensed and he released. He distantly felt something cold close around the base of his penis. He wanted to stop more than anything, but if this was his reward he didn’t want to know what his punishment would be.

The sensations were overwhelming. It didn’t feel good anymore, not in the slightest, and he was still hard. Everything was too much, and he was openly crying at this point.

“Stop.” Deceit ordered. Virgil stopped, relieved. Deceit came over, pulled out the rod none-too-
gently, and let his mismatched eyes flicker over Virgil’s tortured, gasping body.

“See? You like it! You’re just making this harder on yourself. You’re telling yourself you don’t like it. You’re lying to yourself.” Deceit leaned closer. “And I can tell.” He pulled back and chuckled. “Hell, now anyone can tell! You’ve made a mess of yourself. You wouldn’t get hard and come if you didn’t like it. Now, let’s see what we can do about this.” Deceit flicked the head of Virgil’s penis. Virgil flinched and whimpered.

Deceit only smiled as he cuffed Virgil’s wrists and ankles. “It must be painful, hm?” Rage walked over with an armful of their favorite toys.

Virgil tried to blink out over the next however many hours, but the Dark Sides would occasionally uncuff him to participate. By the time they were satisfied with their teasing, fucking, beating, and whipping, Virgil was exhausted and on the precipice of blacking out. He hurt all over, but his lower half in particular was screaming. They hadn’t taken the ring off of him since they started. They used toys on him to overstimulate him, then would use whips and beat him all over his body, focusing on his most sensitive areas. Virgil didn’t want to look down to see what it looked like.

Malice walked up with an old Polaroid camera and began taking flash pictures.

Deceit came behind Virgil and began threading fingers through significantly more matted hair. He leaned down and stage-whispered into Virgil’s ear. “This is so that if the Light Sides, Neutral Sides, or Thomas ever question if you wanted this, we have proof you loved it.” Hot breath puffed against the side of Virgil’s face. Virgil had stopped wanting anything a long time ago. He glanced at the clock through bleary vision. 8:48 PM.

The table beneath him began feeling softer. He felt someone shaking him.

~~~~~

“Wake up! Please, my love, you’re safe, I promise!”

Virgil sensed someone over him and forcibly relaxed his body. He knew that it would be easier if he was relaxed.

“Can you hear me my dark angel?”

Virgil couldn’t stop the whimper that escaped him. Is Deceit wearing Roman’s face again? Please no, please god no. Virgil knew he was starting to hyperventilate.

“Virgil, it is I, Prince Roman. Please open your eyes for me darling.”

He really didn’t want to, but Virgil obediently opened his eyes. Roman’s soft, light brown eyes were staring at him in concern. Roman smiled once Virgil made eye contact.

“Hey Virgil. It’s okay, it’s only me here. You’re in my castle in the Imagination. You decided to sleep here.”

Virgil kept his eyes locked with Roman’s. It was the only thing that was grounding him at that moment. Whenever his eyes would shift away, Virgil felt bruising hands on his hips and someone mindlessly using him.

“Hey.” Virgil croaked.

Roman smiled sadly. “Do you need anything angel?”
Virgil closed his eyes and sat up slowly. He rolled his shoulders and was surprised to not find any kinks. *Huh. Guess Princey’s bed is magic.* Virgil blushed and was just glad he didn’t say that out loud. *I regret everything.*

Virgil opened his eyes and scanned the room. He was still light-headed, but he had to check to see if the Dark Sides were in Roman’s bedroom.

“Naw, I’m just gonna… walk around.” Virgil knew he was being paranoid, but he also knew that if he didn’t check it would just eat at him. He knew he was being selfish by not telling Roman just how paranoid he was, but he didn’t want Roman to know yet.

Virgil swung his legs over the side of the bed, still in amazement that it didn’t burn with the fire of a thousand suns, but yanked his legs back up. He knew he was being illogical again, but he was scared that one of the Dark Sides would be under the bed and grab him if he stood up.

“What’s going on Tall Dark and Stormy?”

Virgil turned back to Roman, whose eyebrows were loosely knit together and his head slightly tilted. He chewed his lip.

“I-I n-need to s-s-see… I have to check…” Virgil looked down, ashamed.

Roman waited for a moment before quietly asking, “What do you need to check Virgil?”

Virgil pulled his legs against his chest and hugged them, burying his face in his knees.

“D-Dark Sides…” Virgil mumbled.

There was a pregnant pause, until Roman realized what Virgil was talking about.

“Oh! Do you mean that the Dark Sides are still locked up?”

*Close enough.* Virgil nodded.

“I can do that! One moment.” When Virgil didn’t feel the mattress shift, he pulled his head out of his knees. Roman had his eyes closed and his eyebrows were knit tightly together. After another moment, he opened them.

“They’re all still in the dungeons.” Roman declared. Virgil hid his face again.

*I KNOW that Roman checked, but he didn’t get up to look in the room! They might still be here! I can practically see Jealousy under the bed, waiting to grab me. He’s not gonna check, I’m gonna have to check-*

“Love? Is something else the matter?”

Virgil just hugged his bent legs closer to him, getting more embarrassed by the second.

“Please tell me. I don’t know what’s bothering you.” Roman begged.

Virgil couldn’t stand to hear that tone in the royal’s voice again. “Th-they might be in the r-room.”

Another pause, and then Roman said, “Ah! Shall I check the room for us?”

Virgil nodded, grateful. He felt Roman start to get off the bed. His head snapped up.
“Wait.”

Roman paused and looked back, concerned.

“What’s wrong?” he asked.

Virgil looked down, guilty that his weird fears made him interrupt the prince again.


Roman smiled sweetly and summoned his sword. “How sweet of the little emo to worry about me.” he teased.

“Shut up.” Virgil muttered good-naturedly.

Roman laughed and started by looking under the bed. Once he had looked through the entire room and attached bathroom, he got back up on the bed and vanished his sword. “No Dark Sides are here my raven.”

Virgil relaxed a bit. “Cool. Uh, thanks.”

“Not a problem. Is there anything else I can provide for you?”

There was, but Virgil could never ask for it. His traitorous body, though, had other plans. He felt a soothing hand rubbing between his shoulder blades. He pretended that the sensation was Roman and basked in it.

He didn’t realize he had forgotten to respond until Roman said, “May I touch you?”

Virgil looked at the prince, surprised. Did he figure it out or was it a shot in the dark? Virgil wanted the hand between his shoulders, but he knew it could never be real. He intended to shake his head, but instead whimpered.

Roman looked horrified. “Oh Virgil, no no no my sweet, I won’t hurt you!”

Virgil sobbed, knowing the gallant prince would never touch him of his own accord.

Roman backed away and moved off the bed. “I-I don’t want to make you uncomfortable my love. I can sleep in another bedroom if that’s what you’d prefer?”

Virgil felt like a piece of shit. Roman might be impulsive and say the wrong thing in the heat of the moment, but he was genuinely a good guy, and he didn’t want Roman to feel like shit about himself...

“N-no, you don’t make me u-u-uncomfortable. I, I just… Fuck, okay, but it’s really specific.”

Virgil hunched back over, too scared to show his face. He knew Roman would laugh at him or mock him, but dammit, he had to let Princey know what was going inside his fucked up brain.

“I will not judge you, I promise.” Roman swore.

“I, just… c-can you, um, rub my back?” Virgil’s voice got thick with tears near the end of his request. Here he was, telling Roman what he wanted for once in his miserable life, and Roman held all of the power. Virgil could already see it; he would laugh, tell Virgil how fucking stupid it was, mock him, tell the others, they would laugh and tease him for it. He could hear it already.

“Awww, poor little baby! You want touch, but just specifically on your upper back? Or else you’ll
completely break apart? Ha! You’re so fucking fragile, you could break apart in a gentle breeze. Why, I-

Virgil’s thoughts were interrupted by Roman settling next to him. “Are you sure you want me to rub your back? You look rather… frightened.”

Virgil closed his eyes and did a couple rounds of breathing exercises. Once he felt a little less adrenaline in his system, he turned to Roman and nodded silently.

Roman raised his hand, then paused. “May I rub your back?”

Virgil nodded. He was waiting for the prince to mock him, certainly he would start now…

Roman’s hand came down gently on Virgil’s back and began slowly rubbing it. He thankfully kept his hand on Virgil’s upper back, so Virgil didn’t need to tell him more details of what he wanted.

“Is this what you desired?” Roman asked softly.

Virgil nodded, allowing some of the tension to seep out of him. It felt… nice, having someone he trusted touch him in an okay way. He tensed, remembering that Roman probably didn’t want to touch him in the first place. Roman removed his hand the moment Virgil tensed.

“Virgil?” Roman questioned.

Virgil sighed. “I-I don’t want you touching me just because you think you have to.”

There was a silence, and Virgil knew it meant Roman was going to either remove himself or Virgil from the room. Virgil hoped it was him, it wouldn’t be fair to Roman if he-

“Virgil.” Roman’s stern voice came. “I do want to touch you.”

Virgil felt his frustration building. “I don’t understand why.”

Roman sighed through his nose. “Because, I care for you, more than just as a function of Thomas. You are wonderful and beautiful and sarcastic and witty, who wouldn’t want to hold you in their arms? And if my touch can help you feel safer, then all the better.”

Virgil huffed. “But I’m not… you… you know how… how g-gross I a-am…” Virgil’s eyes filled with tears.

Virgil felt Roman’s energy become softer. “My love, you are not. What those… those fiends did to you is not a reflection on you, and it never will be. You are not gross.”

Virgil curled in on himself. “But you don’t even know the half of what th-they did…”

Roman was resolute. “It doesn’t matter. You are not gross. You don’t have to tell me anything if you don’t want to, or you can tell me everything, or some combination thereof. And I may not know everything, but I do know for a fact that you are not gross. Quite the opposite actually.”

Virgil looked up as Roman waggled his eyebrows. Virgil rolled his eyes.

“Whatever.”

Roman smiled. “May I rub your back?”

Virgil felt a little better about Roman touching him. He had seemed sincere enough.
“Yeah.”

So Roman did. After an indeterminate amount of time, Virgil was feeling much more at peace. He shifted and straightened his back away from Roman. Roman let his hand leave Virgil’s back.

“I-I’m feeling better now. Thanks.” Virgil shot Roman a grateful half-smile. Roman glowed, the corners of his eyes crinkling with his smile.

“I am happy to be of assistance! Would you like to go back to sleep?”

Virgil knew he wouldn’t be able to get any more sleep tonight, but that didn’t mean Roman had to suffer with him.

“Yeah, I think a couple more hours would do me good.”

“Excellent! Would you like to be held while you sleep?”

Virgil was bowled over by the unexpected offer. He tried to think of why in the FUCK would Roman want to hold him, but his anxious thoughts were bouncing around too fast to hold on to.

“Virgil?”

Oh, right, Roman probably wanted an answer or something. Virgil took stock of his body. “I-I don’t think so. The hand on my back is probably all I could handle.”

Roman only smiled. “All right. Thank you for letting me know. Please let me know if you need anything. Don’t worry about waking me up. And Virgil?”

*What else could Princey want? Isn’t he tired?* “Yeah?”

“If you change your mind about wanting to be held, I’m giving you consent to come over while I’m asleep. I don’t mind holding you or cuddling with you at all. I quite enjoy it in fact. So whether or not I wake up, feel free to come over.”

Virgil was shocked at the thoughtfulness, although he supposed he shouldn’t be. Roman might be impulsive at times, but he was good at thinking of others and trying to do what’s right. Virgil nodded mutely.

Roman laid down, and Virgil followed a moment after, two feet separating them on the bed. Virgil watched as Roman’s form became looser. It took an hour before Virgil believed he was asleep. Still sickened and horrified from his nightmare, he lay awake. Knowing he’d spiral again if he focused on those feelings and memories, he did his grounding exercise. He was already feeling dissociated. When he had completed his grounding exercise and several breathing exercises, he let his eyes rest on Roman’s sleeping form. Roman had his left arm underneath his pillow, which just so happened to be the side facing Virgil. *He totally did that on purpose.* Roman was always more likely to be physical or extremely vocal with his affections. After the grounding exercise, Virgil was feeling much better, but the touch ache monster had come back with a vengeance and was ripping and tearing at the inside of his rib cage. Virgil thought back to Roman’s offer and wondered how it would feel to rest on the royal’s chest. Feeling brave, Virgil scooted across the bed until he was next to Roman. Virgil carefully studied Roman’s face, looking for any signs he was awake.

*He’s still just as handsome in his sleep. Asshole.*

The combination of courage and touch starvation compelled Virgil to slowly, oh-so-slowly, lay his head down on Roman’s pec, the top of his head just beneath the royal’s clavicle.
Oh.

Virgil melted into Roman, the touch ache monster appeased and his whole being consumed by a relief he didn’t know he needed. All of the little aches and pains he had vanished, and he couldn’t help but smile at the contented feeling. He closed his eyes and floated in a happy, comfortable doze until Roman began stirring some three hours later. Virgil didn’t move, too happy and not wanting the euphoric feeling to end. He could tell the prince stretched and looked down. Virgil felt a huff of air on the top of his head, and just as he was about to reveal he was awake, he was encircled by two powerful arms. A longer gush of air ruffled Virgil’s hair as Roman sighed. Virgil wanted to cuddle closer, but knew that if he moved the spell would be broken.

Virgil drifted a while longer, until he decided that he was content with the physical contact for now. He shifted, then sighed and looked blearily up at Roman.

“Good morning my sweet crow.” Roman rumbled, his voice rough with sleep.

Virgil wanted to say something nice back, he really did.

“Your breath stinks.”

His mouth apparently had other ideas.

It would be just fan-fucking-tastic if his mouth could consult with his brain before deciding to ruin his life.

Thankfully, Roman only laughed. “If you think your breath smells any better boy do I have some news for you.”

Virgil chuckled and laid back down. Wait, no, we were getting up!

Shut the fuck up.

GET UP GET UP GET UP GET UP GET UP GET UP GET UP-

Okay fine! God.

Virgil rolled off of Roman and onto his back. Roman let him go easily, his arms offering no resistance. After stretching, Virgil turned to see Roman already looking at him. Virgil was certain he was imagining the blush on Roman’s cheekbones.

“We should probably get back to the mindpalace, eh?”

Roman agreed. Virgil snapped into his clothes, courtesy of Roman’s realm, and they sunk directly into Roman’s room. Roman stuck out his elbow.

“May I accompany thee to our breakfast?”

Virgil stared at him blankly, blinking twice. Roman laughed.

“Worth a shot. I have no regrets.”

“Do you ever?”

“Nope.”

“Milkshake vine.”
“We agreed to never speak of that again!”

Virgil snorted.

“Lovely lady lumps.”

“Virgil!!”

Virgil cackled. They made their way down to the kitchen, and Virgil had to admit that it was one of the better mornings he could remember.

Chapter End Notes

I still miss crawling through the vents. It's indescribable.

Edit: Yes, Roman was absolutely checking out Virgil. He was trying to be subtle, but our dramatic boy is about as subtle as a flying brick.

Just to be super clear, when Deceit was telling Virgil that he wouldn't experience arousal if he didn't like it is a lie and common grooming tactic to silence and shame victims/ survivors.

Roman's doing his best.

That thing about Virgil's aches and pains going away? That's thanks to oxytocin! That stuff is powerful!
Chapter 43

Chapter Notes

Two chapters in one day? It's more likely than you might think.

Will I ever come up with a more original line for posting more than one chapter in a day? It's less likely than you might think.

Also, there's some consensual sexy times that happen after the forward slashes. Totally skippable!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The smell of pancakes and citrus wafted through the mind palace as Virgil shuffled into the kitchen.

“Morning Virge! How ya feelin’?” Patton chirped. Virgil shrugged.

“Good.”

Patton looked about ready to levitate in joy. “That’s great kiddo!! I’m so happy to hear that! I’m making lemon and ricotta pancakes with bacon and fried eggs for breakfast! I hope you’re hungry!”

Virgil smiled. “I am now.”

Patton visibly held back his squeal as he went back to tending the bacon. Virgil sat down at the table and began scrolling through Tumblr while Roman went upstairs to recite poetry at Logan’s closed door until the crabby brainiac emerged. Sure enough, several minutes later, a door was heard slamming open with a “Roman I swear to Newton if you complete one more line of poetry I will take all of your Disney posters hostage and line your walls with graphs on the futility of creativity and aspirations.” The most terrifying part of Logan’s statement was that it was all said calmly. An offended Princey noise was heard.

Virgil muffled his laugh in his coffee while a put-together Logan and slightly pale Roman took their respective spots at the table. Roman was going on about a new musical project that he wanted Thomas to do and how he thought it would bring in new viewers. Roman and Logan agreed to work together that day and see what they could come up with. Virgil had to admit, the new pancake recipe was fucking delicious. He scarfed down two whole pancakes with a fried egg and two pieces of bacon! He felt a little over-stuffed, especially after the glass of milk, but he also hated how skeletal he still was so he didn’t mind too much. Roman and Logan left soon after, an unspoken competition between the two as to who could eat the most driving them to finish first. Virgil helped Patton clean up, then made his way to his room to help Thomas through whatever process Creativity and Logic were about to subject him to.

When he entered his room, however, he noticed the cloak that Roman had conjured for him. Virgil walked over and picked it up slowly, feeling the supple texture of the cloth. He thought back to how Roman had talked to him, the things he had said to him in the Imagination.
He was tired, thanks to your ceaseless efforts, and he’s a flirt. Don’t read too much into it.

But-

No! Remember when Remy mentioned you two together? And when Thomas mentioned Prinxiety? Those are only two of the most recent example of Roman clearly stating that he doesn’t like you.

Roman said that us being together wasn’t such a crazy idea.

He was just saying that to make you feel better.

Unable to counter that, Virgil hung up the cloak on the outside of his wardrobe and flopped onto his bed. He closed his eyes and focused on Thomas, throwing his own thoughts on the project in to make sure that his Host didn’t embarrass himself unnecessarily. Once Thomas decided to break for lunch, Virgil decided to head downstairs. His skin had begun buzzing and he was really trying not to scratch or cut. He was surprised to see Logan sitting in an armchair, reading a book.

When Virgil laid down on the couch, Logan looked up from his book and raised his tea mug.

“Salutations.”

Virgil gave him a two-fingered salute. “I thought you’d still be working with Roman?”

Logan took a long draw from his mug. “I was going to, but we decided fairly quickly that Roman needed to come up with more content in order to make the video worthwhile.”

Virgil grunted in acknowledgement and started scrolling through Tumblr. After a few more minutes of that though, his eyes began feeling strained. He tried lowering the brightness of the screen, but that only made it worse. Knowing he was tired, he decided to set his phone on the cushion in front of him and rest his eyes. Just for a bit, until they felt less tired and dry. The sunlight streaming through the windows was hitting him perfectly so he was able to absorb more warmth into his perpetually freezing body. Virgil loved having sunlight heat up his clothes and give him such a soft warmth. It was a simple pleasure that he indulged in the Light Side of the mindscape and one he definitely didn’t take for granted. As he started to drift off, he distantly remembered Logan mentioning that individuals with low body fat or who were underweight tended to be more chilly.

/////

Patton sunk into the kitchen to begin lunch and started wiping down the counter. He thought that personalized grilled cheese sandwiches would be in order. Roman sunk in behind him and placed his hands on either side of Patton’s waist. Patton giggled as Roman leaned forward to nuzzle the back of Patton’s neck.

“Hello my love.”

Patton shivered at the deeper register his boyfriend’s voice had taken on. He finished wiping off the table in record time and threw the rag into the sink. Roman responded by snaking his arms around Patton’s midsection and pulling him close. Roman kissed the back of Patton’s head.

“Hello yourself!” Patton replied. Roman chuckled lowly into Patton’s hair.

“You work so hard. You’ve been so good with Virgil. I would like to take care of you if you’d let me?”
Patton pressed back pointedly into Roman. “Feels like you’ve been working hard yourself!”

Roman let out a huff of laughter against Patton even as his breath hitched and his hips twitched. Roman’s arms tightened around Patton. Patton knew Roman always waited for clear consent before doing much of anything, and Patton liked to tease him a little. It was fun to watch the passionate Side get flustered and desperate.

“Is that a yes?”

Patton giggled. He hadn’t been with Roman for over a week now, and he wasn’t sure how much more he could stand to tease the prince.

“Why don’t we take this conversation elsewhere?”

Roman kissed the back of Patton’s head again. “As you wish.”

With a swirl, they were in Roman’s bedroom and Roman was facing Patton. Roman stepped forward, invading Patton’s personal space and ensuring that Patton’s entire awareness was consumed with him. Patton had to admit, Roman knew what he was doing! Patton could smell roses, cinnamon, and fresh air. He felt his skin heating up and his, ahem, blood flow redirecting. His cheeks were no doubt dark pink and he practically felt his pupils expanding to take in all of the gorgeous man before him. Roman smiled seductively and wrapped a single arm around Patton’s waist, pulling them flush together in a firm grip. Welp, guess I can’t hide that anymore! Oh well!

Roman smirked as he brought his other hand up and gently brushed the backs of his fingers against Patton’s cheekbone.

“What say you, my love?”

Patton giggled. Okay, I’ve gotta tease him just a liiiiiittle bit more! “One sec!” Patton turned and pulled away, Roman offering no resistance. Patton went over to the mirror and pretended to check his appearance, unnecessarily adjusting his hair and cardigan. Patton was very aroused, but he loved delaying it, savoring the heat and fire that were consuming him. His nerves were singing and he loved it. Roman and Logan had learned early on about the games the moral Side liked to play, and they found themselves enjoying the tease as well. When he decided he had kept Roman waiting long enough he turned around and was met with quite a sight.

Roman was flushed, eyes dark and breathing heavy. His substantial arousal was clearly obvious through his white pants, and his slightly tighter-than-usual prince outfit fit his muscular frame perfectly. His broad shoulders, nicely built pectorals, and trim waist gave him a lovely shape, and Patton could die for the thickness of his calves, thighs, and ass. The look Roman was giving him made Patton shiver. The royal’s gaze promised pleasure and animalistic passion. Patton didn’t often use such language, but Roman truly was walking sex.

Patton walked over and leaned against Roman, wrapping his arms around his neck. Roman put both hands on Patton’s lower back, waiting for permission before going lower.

“Hey.” Patton smiled.

“Hey yourself.” Roman smirked back.

Patton giggled and pressed himself more into Roman, the arousal in his veins setting him on fire in the most delicious way. Roman took a deeper breath at Patton’s movement. He trailed a hand slowly up Patton’s back, around his neck, and gently used a few fingers to gently caress his jawline.
“May I kiss you my love?”

Patton smiled sweetly and nodded. Roman leaned down, kissing him slowly but passionately. Patton thought his knees might give out, and they hadn’t even started using tongue. When the kiss broke, Patton didn’t feel like teasing anymore.

“Would you like more?” Roman asked, his eyes and voice dark.

Patton nodded eagerly. Roman captured Patton’s lips in a kiss again, and this time he definitely used tongue. The kiss was filthy and made Patton’s brain short-circuit. He barely had time to register the smirk he felt against his lips before Roman lifted him up with one hand, never breaking the kiss. Patton wrapped his legs around his prince as he felt himself getting carried, still consumed by the kiss. They landed on the bed a little ungracefully, the kiss finally breaking apart and them laughing. They kept smiling and kissing until they reached the top of the bed. Patton lay back against the pillows, and Roman took the opportunity to rest some more of his weight on Patton and rolled his body like a wave. Patton moaned at that, so Roman kept doing it, occasionally making little circles with his hips. He was focusing most of his movements over Patton’s hips, but made sure to rub his chest over Patton’s to stimulate his love’s sensitive nipples. Roman was groaning and letting out little moans, while Patton was letting out the most beautiful mewls.

Patton broke the kiss and pushed slightly at Roman’s chest. Roman leaned up, ceasing his movements and searching his beloved’s face.

Patton was panting. “I-I’m not going to last much longer like that. If you want to do more we should probably start taking off these clothes.” Patton pinched a bit of white uniform between his fingers and pulled. “As dashing as you are in this uniform.” he said mischievously.

Roman growled and recaptured Patton’s lips. They separated to remove Patton’s cardigan. When Patton tried to help Roman out of his shirt, he couldn’t quite get the buttons and gave a frustrated huff. Roman gently grasped Patton’s hands in his own and languidly brought them to his mouth, kissing them. Maintaining eye contact the entire time, he separated Patton’s hands and slowly set them on either side of Patton’s head. His smirk widened as he casually leaned away and unbuttoned his shirt, popping out each button, putting on a show for Patton. He slid his uniform down his arms and casually threw it to the side of the bed. Patton noticed Roman wasn’t wearing an undershirt like he usually did. He took in the expanse of skin and muscle, scanning his firm, built pectorals and his well-formed six pack. His shoulders and arms were perfectly balanced with the rest of his musculature, rounded deltoids and biceps meeting strong forearms.

Roman brushed the bottom of Patton’s polo and met his eyes, questioning. Patton nodded enthusiastically. The shirt was quickly removed, and they joined together again, exploring each other’s bodies with their hands. Roman pulled back as he laid his fingers on Patton’s lower stomach. Patton grinned, leaned up, and pulled his belt out of the loops, throwing it haphazardly. Roman smiled and caught Patton’s lips as he removed the rest of their clothes.

They rocked against each other for several minutes until Roman drew away, a lovely shade of red across his chest. Patton smiled shyly.

“Hey Ro, sorry to kinda put a speed bump here, but I didn’t clean out before this. I should probably go do that, huh?”

Roman just smiled. “Not to worry, my sunshine. I did before I propositioned you. I said I wanted to take care of you. May I?” he questioned, rubbing his thumb over Patton’s cheek.

Patton’s smile turned coy. “That sounds nice. Guess we’ll just have to ride it out and see what
happens!”

Roman chuckled and dove in to kiss Patton, bringing his own knees up so they were on either side of Patton’s hips. Their lovemaking was filled with passionate kisses, loving smiles and occasional laughter. When both were spent, Roman collapsed next to Patton, breathing heavily. Patton reached for Roman and started to pull him towards his chest.

“I’m supposed to be taking care of you.” Roman whined, protesting.

Patton kissed the top of his head sweetly. “I love holding you. You’re still taking care of me.”

Roman relented, not wanting to move and quite happy to cuddle his strong boyfriend. He snuggled contently into Patton’s chest.

Patton hummed. “My prince.”

Chapter End Notes

I figured our boys needed a bit of fun after this.

Did Roman wear an extra-tight prince uniform and not wear an undershirt on purpose? Yes, yes he did. He knows what he's doing.

Also, Patton likes to tease his boyfriends just a little bit and you can't convince me otherwise. (don't @ me i'm soft)
Logan didn’t miss how Virgil started to fall asleep after he had put down the phone that seemed to be perpetually attached to him. Once Virgil’s breathing had evened out, Logan allowed himself to indulge in appraising Virgil’s beautiful form.

His eyeshadow was ever-present, but seemed to be joined by dark circles. Logan had always been concerned about Virgil’s sleeping habits but ever since… a few months ago, he was watching the Side more carefully. Virgil almost certainly didn’t receive enough sleep. Logan wanted to assist him in sleeping, but was unsure as to how to approach the younger Side. He certainly didn’t want to make him uncomfortable. If anything, he was hoping Virgil would reach out to him. Logan had been studying trauma recovery and he knew how important it was for the individual to find their own hope and make their own choices.

Logan was also concerned about Virgil’s eating habits. He knew that decreased sleep and increased anxiety increased stomach acid, which made one less likely to eat. Coupled with the fact that he’d been obviously malnourished for who knows how long with the Dark Sides, and Virgil’s lack of weight gain certainly made sense. Logan had almost hoped that Virgil would go the other way and gain weight, even if his fat-to-muscle ratio suffered slightly. At the point where Virgil was, Logan would prefer to have Virgil be slightly overweight than… this. He didn’t think it made Virgil unattractive, certainly not. But it was cause for concern.

Forcibly shifting his thoughts to a more positive path so as to not wake up Virgil with his anxiety, Logan’s gaze travelled over Virgil. His face was relaxed, and his lips were slightly parted. His brown pili had fallen loosely over his face, not quite hiding his sharp eyebrows. Logan observed REM movement behind his closed eyelids. Those same eyes that were so deep and thoughtful, observant and wary, were hopefully seeing happiness in his dream. Logan would get lost in his eyes if Virgil were to allow it. Logan wondered what Virgil might be saying in his dreams. The
deep, slightly coarse voice sent chills down Logan’s spine whenever he heard it. To Logan, it was the sweetest symphony.

His smaller form was curled up, as though cold. Logan had noticed that every time Virgil slept (when he wasn’t drugged or recovering from… heinous injuries), he curled up like that. He thought it may be due to the fact that he had frequently been cold where he was imprisoned and had become accustomed to sleeping like that. Feeling moved to ensure the Side would always be warm with them, Logan grabbed a simple purple polar fleece blanket and draped it over the anxious one. Virgil grabbed the blanket in his sleep and curled into it. Logan knew that beauty and cuteness were subjective, but that had to be objectively adorable.

Logan settled back in his armchair and continued reading for another hour and a half, frequently stealing glances at the man who held his heart. Well, one of them anyway. Roman and Patton chose that moment to come downstairs, giggling.

Logan put his index finger up to his lips and pointed at Virgil. Roman was looking at Virgil with affection and Patton pressed his fists against the side of his face and whisper-screamed, “Oh my goodness that’s adorable!!”

Logan’s lips quirked at both of his boyfriends. Patton came over. “Cuddles?” he asked.

Logan wordlessly lifted his arm. Patton smiled and snuggled in on his lap and relaxed against him, so much so that Logan thought the fatherly Side might fall asleep. While Patton was more apt to express his affection physically, he usually wasn’t so relaxed. The moral Side was typically a ball of light and energy, bouncing around the mindscape and gleefully chatting up any Sides he happened to come across. Logan pressed a kiss to Patton’s hair and was surprised to find it slightly sweaty. Becoming suspicious, he glanced up at Roman, who was looking quite smug. Now understanding, Logan quirked an eyebrow at him, to which Roman simply smirked. Logan rolled his eyes fondly and tightened his arm around Patton, resuming his book. Roman sat in another armchair and closed his eyes, resting.

After twenty more minutes Virgil began to stir. He opened his eyes and jumped slightly when he saw three people staring at him. He groaned and buried himself in the blanket, leaving only his hair visible.

“He’s so cute!” Patton gushed. Virgil grunted from underneath the blanket.

Roman decided it was his turn next. “Awww, are you shy?” Virgil just lifted his head out of his protective blanket and hissed at them sleepily, eyes closed, before he retreated back into his polar fleece cave.

“Ahhhhhhhhhh!” Patton squealed.

Logan figured it was time to put Virgil out of his misery. “How did you sleep Virgil?”


“I am glad to hear that. Will you be joining us for lunch?”

A jerk of his shoulders.

“I’m making customizable grilled cheese with tomato soup!!”

Virgil lifted his head up enough to have a half-lidded, bleary eye visible. “That does sound good.”
Patton beamed and jumped off Logan’s lap, which made Logan huff in fake annoyance. Virgil reburied himself. Logan didn’t push the matter; it would take Patton a while to get everything set up anyway, and Virgil needed all the rest he could get. Roman looked like he was about to follow after Patton, but then his eyes landed on Logan and he got a lascivious look on his face. Logan simply raised his eyebrow in challenge and his chin in pride. Roman stalked over slowly and put his hand on the back of Logan’s neck, keeping intense eye contact. Logan relented and leaned up to meet Roman, smiling. They both tried taking the lead, with Logan at an angle disadvantage but determined and Roman being tired but having a more desirable angle. They kept getting more and more passionate, trying to one up each other and take the lead.

“Gross.”

Logan and Roman jumped apart, embarrassed at forgetting themselves for a moment. Virgil was still firmly under the blanket, but they just knew he had a shit-eating grin on his face.

“Make out sounds are, like, not hot. It’s just wet and slurpy and uncool. Sounds like you’re trying to get the last of the custard out of a donut.”

Logan cleared his throat. “My apologies Virgil. I blame Roman.”

Roman squawked indignantly. “You kissed me!”

Logan returned to his book, turning the pages nonchalantly. “You walked over.”

“Y-yeah but you started it!”

“Did not.”

“Did too!”

“Did not.”

“Did too!”

“Jesus fucking Christ you both started it.”

Logan and Roman stopped their playful banter. “Our apologies Virgil. Would you like to accompany us to lunch?”

The sentient blanket mass sighed, and a Side emerged.

“It lives!” Roman announced.

Virgil rolled his eyes and stretched. His hair was mussed and he ran his fingers through it in an attempt to tame his locks.

The three Sides filed into the kitchen where Patton had laid out all of the fixings for grilled cheese. He had set out various meats, vegetables, cheeses, and breads. Roman descended on the spread and quickly piled all of the meats and cheeses into one sourdough sandwich, only adding tomato when Patton gave him a look. Logan had a much more reasonable brown bread sandwich with basil, brie, mozzarella, and prosciutto, while Patton added all of the cheeses together with bacon and tomato on to wheat. Virgil was anxious when it was his turn. He didn’t know how much to take without seeming greedy or like he was starving himself. He had always been more of a grazer. He must have taken a bit too long, because Patton interjected, “Do you want some help choosing kiddo?”
Virgil felt relieved at letting someone else choose for him. “Yeah, there’s a lot of options.”

Patton helped Virgil eventually choose potato bread with cheddar, bacon, and tomato. The fatherly side then fried everyone’s sandwiches and passed them out with soup. Roman was talking about the new content he had in mind for Thomas, but half of it was garbled as he tried to talk around his monstrosity of a sandwich.

“For the sake of Galileo, will you swallow your food and then try talking?”

Roman stopped talking, then smiled slowly and opened his mouth. Logan turned his head away and shook it, but Virgil saw a smile. Once lunch was cleaned up, everyone went up to their rooms to work. Roman, of course, had to announce his departure.

“Farewell my handsome knights! For I am off to vie for inspiration! Thomas is depending on me!”

Logan joined Roman in the hallway and crossed his arms. “Weren’t you supposed to be vying for inspiration this morning?”

“I was working hard!”

Logan raised a brow. “You were working hard.” he deadpanned.

“Yep! Can confirm!” Patton chirped from the kitchen. It took Logan a second to get it, but once he did he blushed. Roman smirked and stepped closer.

“Perhaps I should give you a demonstration of my abilities later tonight?” Roman rumbled, a dangerous glint in his eyes.

Logan tried to maintain his composure, but found himself slipping. “Y-yes, that would be adequate.”

Roman’s smirk grew as he hooked his index fingers through the belt loops on Logan’s jeans and pulled him close. “I can guarantee you, it will more than adequate.” he all but growled.

Logan could only squeak in response. Roman slowly leaned down. Logan closed his eyes, leaned up, and prepared for a kiss, only for Roman’s presence to suddenly vanish. When he opened his eyes, Roman was just about to turn the corner as he threw a final smirk over his shoulder. Logan floundered in the empty space and from the situational whiplash, but regained his footing and left for his room, hopefully to get some work done despite being rather distracted. Virgil smiled wistfully at their antics and left for his room.

Virgil sighed in relief when he closed the door. His skin was too tight and he needed it off now! He chewed his lips as he threw his scratchy clothes off, and paused in his course to the bathroom.

Virgil set his jaw. No. No, I’m not doing that again. I’m... I’m doing something else. Virgil scrunched his eyes shut and after a minute, he felt a pop in his room. He opened his eyes and saw a purple notebook on the floor in front of him. It had black and purple plaid patches with large stitches, much like his hoodie. Virgil slowly leaned down and picked it up. It wasn’t the greatest quality, but it would work.

Okay, so I’m supposed to use this to write down what made me want to hurt myself, what worked, and what didn’t. Okay, okay, I can do this.

Virgil held the book shakily, then threw it on his bed.
I can’t, I can’t! Too much, too much, it hurts too much, my skin **needs** to come off! I hate it, I hate my skin! I’m so disgusting, I’m so ugly, gross, get it off!!

Virgil grabbed his clothes and desperately threw them back on despite their heaviness and scratchiness, not wanting to see any more of his skin. He grabbed his phone and realized that he had been unconsciously trying to scratch himself through his sleeve.

**NO!!!**

He ripped his hand away and started furiously typing on his phone.

**“How to stop cutting”**

Virgil pulled up websites and yelled at them when they wouldn’t load fast enough. He scrolled rapidly through site after site until he **finally** saw a list of something that was actually fucking **helpful**. Although it just repeated what Dr. Picani said.

**Guess he knows his shit.**

Keeping the tab open so he could remind himself, Virgil grabbed a felt-tip marker from his desk. He rolled up his sleeve and grimaced at his bumpy skin.

**Yeah, I doubt they’re gonna want to fuck me. Maybe if I stay mostly covered they still can...**

Virgil tore himself away from that line of thinking, made a mental note to write that under triggers in his journal, and started drawing. He didn’t know what he was drawing at first, but he quickly decided on a nu school cemetery scene. When he had drawn from elbow to wrist, he took stock of himself. It definitely seemed to help his brain get quieter, but his body was still loud.

**Okay, body. Body, what do I do to make my body quieter?**

Virgil thought about trying to take a shower, but shoved that out of his mind. He knew he’d be more likely to give in to scratching if he took his clothes off. He decided to try the ice cube method. It helped, but barely.

**Nothing’s going to work. No one, nothing can help me. It’s hopeless. I should just give up. No one will want me anyways. I’m just a useless hole. I’m so gross and permanently tainted. No one should want me.**

Virgil pulled his phone back up and blinked a few times to clear his vision. He scanned the list, defeated, certain he had tried everything.

**Lotion.**

Virgil paused. He didn’t have much hope, but he was willing to try anything at this point. He’d like to make it more than 48 hours.

Virgil walked into his bathroom and dug around underneath his vanity. In the back was some glittery body lotion Roman had gifted him for his birthday. (“Huzzah! Now you too can have beautiful skin like mwah! And it even sparkles!” “Thanks Princey.” “Of course! I want only the best for my vigilant warrior!” “Wh-whatever.”)

Virgil teared up as he reminisced. After he removed his clothing, Virgil took a few pumps of the lotion. It smelled like coconut and sweetpea and was, in fact, sparkly. Virgil applied the lotion as quickly as possible, not wanting to see or touch any more of his body than necessary.
When the lotion had barely finished drying, Virgil tugged his clothes back on. He grimaced at the spots where the lotion was still wet, but he had to admit that his skin was indeed less tight than it was before.

*Maybe my skin was dry?*

Virgil didn’t doubt it. Goodness knows he could stand to take better care of his body, and the frequent hot showers probably weren’t doing him any favors. He still had buzzing under his skin, but it felt less tight at least.

*Okay, calming down helps the buzzing, I’ll deal with everything else later.*

Virgil knew he needed a quiet environment, but he needed to be doing something with someone. *Patton.*

Virgil made sure he had put all of his clothes on, and made his way to Patton’s room. As he approached, Virgil started getting more and more nervous.

*I’ve already interrupted his life so fucking much. I can’t interrupt his work! He’s going to be so much more sick of me than he already is. Oh god this was a terrible idea. I can’t interrupt him again! I can’t keep being selfish!*

Just as Virgil was about to turn back, the door to Patton’s room opened. He looked surprised, then delighted.

“Hey kiddo! What’s up buttercup?”

Virgil felt his lips twitch. “I, uh, was wondering if you were doing anything that I could help with?”

*Help him with something, make up for your worthlessness in some way if they won’t fuck you.*

Patton’s smile got wider. “Well sure! I was just about to water the plants! Wanna help me with that?”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

Virgil followed an excited Patton to the kitchen to fill up a watering can, Patton chatting all the while. Virgil just smiled and nodded along. It was soothing to hear Patton talk to him freely; it meant that at least in that exact moment, he wasn’t hated by the father figure. Patton filled up the watering can and handed it to Virgil.

“Want to take the downstairs plants and I’ll do the upstairs?” Virgil nodded. “Great! See ya in a bit! We’re gonna have a snack after this!”

Virgil snorted and went about watering his plants. When he was done, his body was a lot quieter. Not completely, but it was tolerable at least. He went back to the kitchen and found Patton putting some cookies on a cooling rack.

“Perfect timing! I thought cookies and milk would be good! A classic!”

Virgil smiled. “Sounds great Pat.” Virgil thought he saw a blush on Patton’s cheeks, but blew it off as him projecting.

*What, you think someone as good and pure as Patton could ever be attracted to someone as*
Virgil focused on keeping his tears at bay as Patton served up hot, gooey chocolate chip cookies on a plate. Patton eagerly grabbed one and immediately began blowing air out of his mouth.

Virgil chuckled. “A little warm there?”

Patton smiled sheepishly after he swallowed the cookie. “Yeah, a little. They’re hot ‘n’ fresh out of the oven!”

Virgil snorted and sipped on the tall glass of milk Patton had placed in front of him. He had noticed that they switched from fat-free milk to 2% sometime in the past few months, but he wasn’t complaining. That shit was good. He couldn’t remember his time with Remy and Saul all that well and he certainly didn’t get any real food when he was with the Dark Sides-

Forcing himself to focus on Patton to cut off that particular line of thinking, he nodded along to Patton gushing about Thomas’ friends. He had to hand it to him, Patton helped Thomas be an amazing friend. Thank goodness one of them wasn’t socially inept.

Virgil managed three cookies and a glass and a half of milk before he had to call it quits. He smiled genuinely at Patton.

“Thanks Patton. This was fun. It meant a lot.”

Patton squealed. “Awwww! I’m happy I could help! I have fun hanging out with you!”

Virgil searched Patton’s face. He seemed to be telling the truth, but then again, Patton was the physical embodiment of sunshine and rainbows.

“I, uh, thanks.” Good one Virgil. After saying their goodbyes, Virgil sunk back into his bedroom. His eyes landed on the notebook haphazardly thrown onto the bed. He sat down, and wrote out everything that had happened, from waking up from a nightmare, to the make out sounds, to deciding what to have for lunch, all the way to having cookies and milk with Patton. Satisfied he had done a somewhat decent job of describing everything, he set the notebook and pen on his desk and laid down on his bed. I’m just going to close my eyes for a few minutes. I shouldn’t have a nightmare if it’s just a few minutes.

Chapter End Notes

As you might be able to tell, my Roman has been demanding more representation in this fic lol!

Also, the whole rage/ impatience at websites when trying to deal with a mental illness-related stress is 100% me projecting onto Virgil.

Virgil's negative inner voice is being pretty mean to him this chapter. It ebbs and flows, but when it feels threatened (i.e., going to therapy and getting tools to be healthier), it fights back.

WHOOOO 3 AM POSTING!!! You can blame my Remy. He’s been out partying these last few nights and I’m about ready to kill him off in the fic. I won’t because I’m pretty sure y’all would riot lol, but I’m ready to off him if he doesn’t get his act together.
First of all, huge trigger warning. At the beginning of this chapter, there is a graphic description of sexual assault. It's the block of italicized text. This description ends at the line of tildes. Within the block of italicized text, there is also a character throwing up, as well as immediately after the line of tildes.

Like every other instance of graphic depiction and the way Virgil deals with it afterward, I'm drawing from my own experience. So if these don't line up with how you experience trauma or respond to trauma, I just want to assure you that your experiences are valid. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“My goodness, you really are a slut, aren’t you? Trying to participate by any means necessary. You do realize those cuffs are metal, right? Or are you just that stupid?”

Virgil could barely hear Deceit’s taunts over the sounds of his dry-heaving. He had vomited up every last bit of bile in his stomach long ago. He was bound on his back to the table by cuffs on his ankles and wrists, and a leather strap that rendered his hips immobile.

Once he had caught his breath, everything was silent. He was blindfolded, so he couldn’t see anything. The Dark Sides enjoyed doing that; taking away his sight and being completely quiet, leaving Virgil wondering when they would act, waiting for whatever they were going to do next.

In this case, he had a pretty good idea.

Virgil didn’t have to wait long for Malice’s excited giggle, followed quickly by electricity. This was one of Malice’s favorite toys. He’d gleefully attach electrodes to Virgil’s genitals and use a remote control to electrocute him. All Virgil could do was scream as every muscle in his body tensed and thrashed to get away. For the past few zaps, he had tasted blood when he screamed. He wondered if it came from his throat or his mouth.

When Malice finally relented after what was almost certainly an unsafe amount of time, Virgil’s body went limp. His limbs were trembling from pain and exhaustion. Deceit usually wouldn’t let it carry on this long, so Malice must have done something to earn a treat. Virgil’s body twitched in surprise as he felt someone enter him, disrupting the pattern of electricity and terrifying silence. The size of the hands and pace told him it was either Greed or Jealousy. Virgil let himself float a little when he sensed that whoever was using him at the moment would take a while. When he heard a familiar grunt as someone released inside of him, Virgil forced himself to come back down to avoid punishment. The Side inside of him leaned down and rested on Virgil as he panted. When he pulled out, Virgil felt blood and release drool out of him.

“My turn.” Virgil heard Jealousy impatiently say.

“So it was Greed,’ Virgil thought distantly to himself.

As Jealousy entered him, Virgil let himself float again. Jealousy was moving much faster than
Greed, obviously worked up. When Jealousy climaxed, he leaned over and told Virgil all the ways he was owned and how he was never going to be loved by anyone else. Virgil knew every word was true.

Jealousy pressed several lingering kisses to Virgil’s face and neck before moving away. Virgil heard movement to his right, but wasn’t sure who it was.

“Why don’t we all take a turn? We might even be able to go again afterwards!” Deceit declared. Virgil heard a Side walking quickly to him, and identified them as Rage before he was roughly entered. Rage never seemed to tire of being as brutal and causing as much pain as possible. By the time he was finished, he had worked three fingers in alongside himself. Virgil easily figured out that Malice went next, followed by Apathy. Virgil’s nerves were frayed by this point. Whenever Deceit went last, it was always very bad.

Deceit entered him in one thrust, and leaned down to whisper in Virgil’s ear. Virgil was trying to breathe through the pain of two lengths inside him.

“Remember your place whores. You’ve become too full of yourself lately. I think I’ll use one of Rage’s ideas tonight to remind you of your place.” And with that, he viciously inserted three fingers beside his hemipenis. Virgil barely had time to cry out before Deceit set a fast, harsh pace. Deceit growled obscenities into Virgil’s ear as he thrust; the lying Side always seemed to like the sound of his own voice. All Virgil could do was hang on to nothing as he was broken. When Deceit finished, Virgil could feel himself bleeding more.

Virgil was confused when Deceit didn’t move away. Virgil could only hear the sounds of clothes rustling. Virgil was relieved when he felt the electrodes being peeled off his burnt flesh. However, Deceit hung onto his lax penis. Virgil didn’t have to wonder long before a sharply ridged sound was thrust into him. He was silently grateful for the leather strap, as he knew he would have harmed himself if he could move at all. Deceit kept up a fast pace with the sound, and Virgil just knew there was going to be blood. He had no idea how long this torment went on; he was floating in a haze of pain. After what seemed like an eternity, Deceit ripped the sound out of him. Virgil could hear heavy breathing.

“Looks like we can all go one more round after all!”

Virgil lay there limply as the Dark Sides each took a turn again. He focused on what he was going to do once their time was up for the night. He would have to get cleaned up and swallow 4 ibuprofen before he’d be presentable. He might even need to dive into his tramadol stash. He’d definitely need to put some absorbent materials in his underwear to hide the evidence. He couldn’t let the Light Sides know that he wasn’t feeling well; they had to film a new video about selfishness and selflessness tomorrow, and Virgil didn’t want the schedule adjusted because of his weakness.

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Virgil woke with a gasp. He turned his body and was barely able to avoid his bed and vomit on the floor. Once he had emptied his stomach, he dry-heaved a few times before collapsing and laying on his bed for a few moments. He wanted to clean himself and his room up, but he was stuck between shock and an oncoming panic attack.

Virgil checked the time. 6:10 PM. He winced, realizing it only took an hour for such a powerful dream to take hold.

You’re only going to get worse, this is your forever, don’t think you’ll ever be lovable or loved, you’re disgusting, fucking disgusting they hate you they hate you they all hate you…
Virgil felt his breaths coming faster. He found himself instinctively scratching the fabric of his sleeve and ripped his hand away.

NO!! I’m not doing that, I can beat this!

Wow, your go-to metaphor is to beat something? You’re just like the other Dark Sides. Good thing they rescued Remy and Saul from you.

Virgil sobbed and forced himself to the bathroom. He tore his clothes off and turned the shower as cold as it would go. He lay in the shower, sobbing and gasping in his panic, self-hatred, and disgust at his own body. Virgil did his best not to look at himself, but it was difficult when he was naked. Panic tore at his insides, his skin over-sensitive yet at war with his touch ache. The cold wasn’t doing enough, he felt so fucking gross, so he reached up and changed it to the hottest setting. He felt like he was getting burns for sure, but he didn’t have it in him to care. He needed to punish his body for being disgusting, for wanting touch from people who he shouldn’t even be inflicting himself on, for not being able to handle the feeling of loneliness. Virgil switched back to the cold, and kept switching back and forth until his hysterical sobbing died down. He had come close to passing out several times, but the changing temperatures had shocked him enough so his hyperventilation slowed a bit, just so he could get a few breaths in.

Virgil turned off the shower from where he was on the floor and lay there in the steam-filled bathroom. He was numb and he wanted to self-harm, but the desire was a little more manageable. He summoned an ice cube and ran it up and down his arms and thighs. Surprisingly, it seemed to help. Once that had melted, he distantly recalled a forum where one user had found breath mints to be helpful, so Virgil focused and summoned one. He was almost startled at how well it worked. The flavor and cooling sensation seemed to bring him back down to Earth and outside of his own head a bit, and the pleasant flavor was, well, pleasant to focus on. After he had finished that, he felt the strength to stand and dry himself off. He paused in front of the mirror, unable to take his eyes off the trainwreck he saw. Scars littered his pale skin, his body a sickly color of off-white, and his skeletal frame making his body go from blemished and mangled to grotesque. He tore his sight away from the haunting image and was amazed to find that his clothes were only a little heavy and scratchy.

I’ll write in my journal after dinner. I don’t want to upset the others.

Virgil changed into thick, soft, cotton socks. When he looked at his shoes, he just didn’t have it in him to mess around with laces, so he slipped into his cartoon bat slippers. Once he went back into the bathroom and wrangled his hair and makeup into something somewhat presentable, he headed downstairs. Virgil could hear the voices of the Sides who were far superior to him in every way and went to join them. When he rounded the corner and saw them, he couldn’t help but think of how unworthy he was to be in their presence.

Logan saw him first. He raised his mug. “Salutations Virgil. It is good to see you.”

Virgil jerked his head in acknowledgment before going to his chair. He wanted to be held, held lovingly, so badly that he nearly broke down into tears at the sight of his hopeless crushes. “Patton’s letting you drink coffee this late?”

Logan smiled at Patton, who returned it victoriously. “No, he insisted I drink decaffeinated tea after 3, which is a good practice in most cases, but I will find a way to convince Patton to allow an exception. There are outliers to every study after all.”

Patton’s smile widened. “You’re so smart Logan!” Patton went over and kissed him. “But don’t think you’ll outsmart me!” he said just as cheerily as he booped Logan’s nose.
Logan was left staring at Patton in shock while Roman and Virgil were doing their best to stifle their laughter. Hearing the prince’s laughter and seeing Patton flex his intelligence only made Virgil crave them more, but he could never let on that he wanted to be with them. He would never want to coerce anyone into doing anything physical with him that they didn’t want to do. And they surely didn’t want to. Why would they? He was hideous, disgusting, pessimistic, the eternal wet blanket-

“And how much would you like Virge?”

Virgil jumped at Patton’s question, having gotten lost inside his own head again. Patton was looking at him with slight concern, holding a pan with beef kofta in it. A plate with Greek mint yogurt had been placed in front of him at some point.

“U-uh, one piece?” Patton smiled and placed the kofta onto the yogurt. Turmeric-jasmine rice with garlic, onions, roasted pine nuts, wilted basil, and currants was passed around. Virgil already knew he’d be pushing it with the size of the kofta, but he still took a scoop of the rice anyway.

*Just can’t stop wasting all of the resources possible, can you? You’re useless, a fucking burden…*

Virgil’s brain continued to spew vitriol at him throughout dinner, Virgil silently agreeing. Once they had finished, Roman offered to help Patton with the dishes, and Virgil sank down into his room, escaping the worried glances. He closed the door behind him and succumbed to his demons for the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

In the flashback, Virgil goes over what he has to do for a video about selflessness vs selfishness. This flashback is referring to the night before the first chapter of this fic. I've been waiting for this chapter since I outlined this fic and I'm so happy with the result!

Also, shout out to the brain trying to tell us that we're like our abusers. For me, one of my abusers liked throwing it in my face how similar we were, and that still occasionally fucks me up to this day. But it's gotten loads better. It's something I don't see a lot of folks talk about, so I wanted to talk about it here so maybe someone else struggling with it can see it represented.
Chapter 46

Chapter Notes

What happened after Virgil was alone in his room with his demons for the night? How will the others respond? I guess we'll find out!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil checked the clock and groaned. It was already time for him to get ready for breakfast, and he hadn’t gotten any sleep that night. He didn’t count when he passed out from a flashback or panic attack as sleep since he usually woke up after a few minutes.

_Hopefully eating something will get me tired enough to go to sleep._

Virgil got out of bed and popped his back, wincing at the knots that had formed. He shuffled into the bathroom and took stock of his appearance.

_Guess I’m doing a full face today._

Virgil’s face, especially his eyes, were red and puffy. The eyeshadow that was left was streaked down his face, and dark circles had moved in to replace the washed away eyeshadow. As per usual, he was pale and gaunt.

He wet a washcloth and scrubbed at his face with soap. Once his face was clean, he put down some acne-fighting primer and put concealer where the red wouldn’t fade. He then applied a thin layer of cc cream, threw on a bit of eyeliner to disguise the puffiness, and reapplied his eyeshadow. Virgil had to hand it to himself; he wasn’t too bad at this makeup thing.

_Practice makes perfect, and you’ve certainly had more than enough experience in lying to the Light Sides._

Virgil turned his attention to his hair. Using a wide-toothed comb, he worked out all of the knots. His hair was greasy from sweating throughout the night, but he hadn’t been able to force himself to undress until the self-hatred grew too strong. He hated his body. To him, he saw nothing but a repulsive mass of skin and bones littered with brands showing his filth. Virgil grabbed the container of baby powder he kept underneath his sink and worked some into his hair, absorbing the oil. He used hairspray to style it into a socially-acceptable shape and braved the outside world.

Just as he was nearing the kitchen and already hearing the other Sides there, he flipped his hoodie up. _The less they have to see of me the better._

He sat down in his usual chair and prepared to float until breakfast started when a cup of black coffee was placed in front of him. Virgil turned his eyes up to his savior.

“Thanks Pat.” he said with a smile.

Patton smiled, radiant. “Of course! I’ve gotta take care of my anxious bean!”

Virgil smiled back, a little forced. Without his floating, seeing Patton right there made his touch ache come back. Of course, it was joined by his repulsion to any kind of physical contact. Roman
was too close for comfort, and he was standing several feet away, singing at a decent volume for once. Virgil wanted a hug and he wanted to tear all of the skin off his body.

With the dueling compulsions warring with each other in his exhausted and wounded mind, Virgil felt his resolve breaking. He was trying to keep his turbulent emotions from the others as much as possible, but he knew he was going to break soon. Virgil crossed his arms on the table and laid his head down on them, trying to at the very least hide his tears.

“Virgil? Are you okay?” Logan’s deep, precise voice asked.

Virgil grunted from his position on the counter. Once he had swallowed a few times and thought he could keep the emotion out of his voice, he said, “Yeah, just tired.”

“Did you get any sleep last night?”

“Um, kinda, when-” Virgil cut himself off, his fatigue impairing his filter and almost allowing him to tell them that he had had a rather normal night, sans the couple of hours he usually got.

“No, not really.” Virgil finished with a sigh. He sensed more than saw Logan adjust his tie.

“It sounds like you are experiencing difficulty sleeping. Would you like to talk about it?”

Virgil looked up at Logan. He was trying. Virgil just sent him a small but genuine half-smile. “Not right now. I think I’m going to see Dr. Picani today.”

Logan nodded. “Alright. I wish you well during your therapy session Virgil.”

Virgil felt his smile grow. “Thanks L.”

Logan sent Virgil his own small, soft smile and returned to the crossword puzzle he’d been working on.

“Awwwww look at you all being so sweet! I love you all so much!” Patton’s voice wavered at the end. Virgil saw emotion building in his eyes.

Virgil ducked his head shyly. “Love you too Pat.” he mumbled. He was pretty sure his eardrums were perforated by the resulting squeal.

Wincing, Virgil lifted his head to look at Patton, who was meeting Logan’s gentle stare. “I love you all as well.” Instead of squealing, Patton just dove in and kissed Logan, who eagerly returned the affection. Logan had a hand resting on the back of Patton’s neck, and Virgil noticed that Logan let it linger there after Patton had pulled back. They smiled tenderly at each other for a moment before Patton turned to Roman.

“I swear to the great name of Lin Manuel Miranda, I love you all!” the boisterous prince declared. Patton was going to kiss Roman, but got distracted by the timer for his tea going off. Roman just chuckled and finally sat his Disney ass in the chair.

Patton served up several bowls of ingredients. “Logan was telling me how healthy Greek yogurt is, so I thought we’d have a build-your-own Greek yogurt parfait bar for breakfast!”

Logan was visibly touched, though trying to hide it. “Why, thank you Patton. That was very thoughtful. I’m glad that the information I deliver to you is something you find interesting.”

Patton smiled as he heaped honey-flavored Greek yogurt into his own bowl on top of raspberries.
“Of course Lo! I always find you interesting! I love how smart and curious and insightful you are!”

Logan blushed and tried to hide it by creating his own parfait while continuing to scroll on his phone.

Once they had settled in and Roman had almost choked on his yogurt while trying to demonstrate a new musical number, Logan tilted his head and frowned at his phone.

“This is interesting. In researching the status of the Fanders, I’ve found a number of them who refer to Patton as “daddy”, however that seems to be a rather strange title as “daddy” is typically used by children to refer to- OH! Oh dear. Nevermind, I have just discovered another implication for the term.” Logan’s face was beet red. “I suppose I shouldn’t call you that?” he joked, trying to clear his embarrassment.

Patton was walking by Logan to put his dishes away in the sink. He leaned over and said into Logan’s ear, just as chipper as always, “Only in the bedroom!” and skipped away to run some water.

Logan spit out his yogurt. Roman was howling with laughter and Virgil was hiding his chuckles behind his hand.

Besides that incident, breakfast passed relatively normally. Virgil helped Patton clean up and chatted with him about berries before he trekked to Roman’s room. When he got there, Roman had clearly already left for the Imagination. Virgil stared at the mirror. It was simultaneously a threatening enemy and a supportive friend. Feeling a burst of courage, he stepped through and looked around the now-familiar waiting area.

Once he had walked through to the office and sat down, he eyed the basket of stuffed animals. I better wait until Dr. Picani gets here.

“Heyo! Spaghetti-O’s!”

Virgil jumped. Dr. Picani had his usual bright smile in place. “Hey doc.”

“Hello Virgil! It’s good to see you again!” Dr. Picani sat down in his chair. “Would you like a comfort item?”

Virgil was astonished, rendered speechless for a moment, until he remembered that answering questions was usually the polite thing to do and nodded. Dr. Picani pushed the basket towards Virgil wordlessly and Virgil picked up the same flying dolphin fish from last time and hugged it to his chest.

“So Virgil! It’s been a while since I’ve seen you! How have you been?”

Virgil squeezed the stuffed fish. “Not great. Couldn’t sleep last night.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. What do you think was different about last night than other nights where you have been able to get sleep?”

Virgil paused, not expecting the question. “I-I don’t know. Sleep’s been really difficult for me these past few months. Last night I kept passing out. Normally I’d at least get 2 hours of sleep, if not 3 or sometimes even 4 if it’s a good night, but the only time I wasn’t awake was when I was passed out. And I still couldn’t breathe, even with the breathing exercises and the grounding didn’t work, does that mean that I’m a lost cause? What if I’m hopeless? I don’t-” Virgil inhaled sharply and buried his face in the doll. He was taking in short, sharp breaths, trying to control his breathing
and not cry at the same time.

“It’s okay Virgil. Sometimes, especially early in recovery or when there’s a severe attack, coping mechanisms might not always work. That’s because the brain needs to learn to trust that the exercises will work, or else the fight, flight, or freeze part of the brain won’t calm down enough.”

Virgil heard what the doctor was saying, but he was more concerned with trying to breathe.

“I… I can’t breathe. The exercise-” he gasped.

“Alright. First, push all of the air out of your lungs.”

*How the FUCK is that supposed to help?!?! I need air IN, not out!*  

Virgil shook his head and kept gasping.

“Focus on my voice Virgil. Push all of the air out of your lungs. I know it seems counter-productive, but please try it.”

Virgil saw spots in his vision and knew he was close to passing out. *Fuck it, I’m gonna pass out anyways, may as well try. He forced as much air out as possible.*

“Good. Now let’s try to breathe in for one, two, three, four…” Virgil inhaled, expecting to find the same barrier he’d been encountering. Instead, he felt blessed air fill his lungs. He greedily sucked in as much as he could.

“Very good! Now hold for one, two, three…” Dr. Picani continued to lead Virgil through the breathing exercises several times until Virgil felt a little calmer. He looked back up at the doctor.

“S-sorry ’bout that.”

“It’s okay! You’re exhausted and dealing with a lot. The breathing exercises seemed to work this time. What do you think was different?” Dr. Picani asked.

Virgil knew in his head what was different, but he didn’t want to admit it. Since the doctor had helped him, though, he figured he owed him as much.

“The breathing out at the beginning.”

Dr. Picani’s expression lightened. “Sometimes, when other patients have trouble with the breathing exercises, it’s because their lungs are already full of air, so of course you can’t breathe in! It’s really scary! If you find that the breathing exercises aren’t doing what they used to, try breathing out first and see if that helps.”

Virgil nodded. “Thanks doc. That… that’s really helpful.”

“I’m glad to hear that! Would you like to keep talking about coping mechanisms?”

Virgil sensed that if he kept talking about it, he’d get frustrated, so he decided against it. “No, I want to talk about something else.”

Dr. Picani picked up his pen. “Okay! What did you have in mind?”

Virgil faltered. He didn’t actually have a backup. Then he remembered, “I started k-keeping a journal. I was able to stop myself f-from scratching.”
Dr. Picani beamed. “That’s great Virgil! What was helpful?

“The cold showers helped. And I’d also switch it from cold to hot to cold again. That helped me stay conscious. Um, the ice cube helped, and I found someone online who suggested breath mints, and I liked that. Drawing on myself helped a little, but not a lot. A-and then I distracted myself with my friends.” Virgil paused. “God I’m selfish. I’m just using them.” He re-buried his face.

*And they don’t even know you’re doing it.*

“Now hold on! I think I heard some negative self-talk there! Were your friends upset when you were hanging out with them?”

Virgil grumbled in frustration. “No, but they didn’t know why I was hanging out with them. I had been avoiding them up until about a week ago.”

“It sounds like they enjoy spending time with you. If one of them was having a hard time with self-harm, would you be upset they came to you for help?”

Virgil felt affronted. His head shot up. “What?! No! Of course not, I’d want…” Virgil trailed off as he realized what Dr. Picani had just done. “Nice one.”

Dr. Picani chuckled. “Thanks! I do my best. Now why would your friends react differently? Are they not as kind as you?”

Virgil stiffened, feeling protective. “No, they’re actually a hell of a lot nicer than me. I’m, just…”

“You’re?” Dr. Picani gently encouraged.

“I’m not worth it!” Virgil yelled. He hugged the stuffed animal to his chest. *There. Now at least Dr. Picani knows.*

*What a stellar last session. You really made the most of it.*

*Shut. Up.*

“Virgil.” Dr. Picani began softly. “Would I be right to think that you’ve got a mean little voice in your head that yells at you?”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah. I mean, not like I’m hearing voices, I just talk to myself in my head?”

“It’s okay, I understand. What are some things this voice says?”

Virgil curled up. *Okay, let’s test the waters, see how he responds. “Th-that I’m not worth it.”* 

Dr. Picani nodded, his voice becoming very gentle. “Does it say anything else?”

Virgil shrunk further. “Y-yeah.”

“It’s okay, you’re safe here. Can you tell me something else it says?”

Virgil started shaking. He was *scared* dammit! “Th-that I-I’m g-g-gross.”

“What does it say makes you “gross”?”

Virgil squeezed the dolphin fish tighter and kept his face hidden. *Okay, I can do this. This is what you’re supposed to do, right? “Wh-what th-they d-d-did to m-me.”*
“What did they do to you Virgil?”

Virgil opened his mouth to respond, but all that came out was a sob. He shook his head violently back and forth.

“It’s okay Virgil, you don’t have to tell me. I promise I’m not mad or disappointed. I could tell that was really hard for you, but you did it and I’m proud of you! Would you like to do the grounding exercise?”

Once Virgil had let out a few more sobs and felt a bit more in control of his emotions, he nodded. Dr. Picani led Virgil through the grounding exercise. By the end, Virgil was feeling more calm but very floaty and depersonalized.

“How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. “Less upset, but I’m floating and I think I’m depersonalized.”

“Alright. Would you like to call it here for today or keep talking?”

Virgil considered. “I think I’m here enough to keep talking.”

“Okay! What would you like to talk about?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I-I think I can talk about my negative self-talk a little more.”

Dr. Picani nodded, bringing his energy level down a little. “Okay. Let me know if it gets too much and we can stop. Would talking about combating the negative self-talk be an okay subject?”

“Y-yeah. Yeah, that sounds good.”

“Great! The first step is one that a lot of folks have trouble with; telling the voice it’s wrong.”

Virgil raised his eyebrows. “What if the voice isn’t wrong?”

The doctor only smiled. “It is. It’s making you feel terrible about yourself and sending you into panic attacks, right?”

*How the fuck does this guy know this fucking much about my brain?*

Virgil nodded silently.

“Then even if you don’t believe it right now, it’s objectively better to weaken it to help reduce your symptoms.”

Virgil furrowed his brow and looked at the ground. “I guess that makes sense.”

“And it’s okay if you don’t believe what you’re telling the mean voice. As long as you say it, you’re already reprogramming your brain. Just repeat to yourself that the voice is wrong. You can tell the voice directly that it’s wrong if you’d like. Whichever works out best for you. You don’t even have to give any reasons. Just by the virtue of that voice saying something, you already know it’s wrong.”

Virgil felt his chest starting to tighten. “How will I know what thoughts are right? Won’t every thought be wrong if I do that?”

“Nope! It’s just the mean voice that we’re telling to take a hike! Are you able to differentiate your
own voice from the mean one?”

Virgil hugged the stuffed animal tighter. “I-I don’t know.” He really didn’t. Whenever he tried to think about it, it was like trying to grab onto fog.

“That’s okay! It can take some effort to figure out. If you find yourself confused, sit with yourself and take the time to figure out whose voice is yours.”

Virgil nodded. He could do that. “I will. Thanks doc.”

“No problem! Want to talk about *Avatar: The Last Airbender*?”

Virgil snorted. “Sure.”

They spent fifteen minutes chatting about Sokka’s character arc before Dr. Picani checked his watch and called time. Virgil thanked him and left through the mirror, feeling very raw but happy that he got a little more out during their session.

Chapter End Notes

Patton might be sweet, but he's a grown adult and he reminds everyone every now and again!

Virgil's trying so hard! Fighting the internal monologue is one of the hardest and longest-lasting struggles you have to face, but it's worth it. It takes so long because you're literally reprogramming the most complex thing in the known universe from *not* doing what it's been trained to do as a survival mechanism. It's hard and it's gonna take time, but it's very possible and totally worth it.

Also, Picani is once again a sneaky little shit. He focuses on the goal, i.e. Virgil telling the voice to fuck off, for a reason Virgil agrees with instead of Picani's true motive. Picani's a smart cookie.
Virgil went back to his room and worked the rest of the day. He missed lunch, but just couldn’t make himself eat anything. It was nearing dinner and his stomach was roiling. He’d been fighting off panic attacks all day, had a couple smaller flashbacks with just the tactile sensations, and he could feel a stronger flashback creeping in, trying to take hold. It was a pretty standard day for him, but he always felt more fragile after therapy.

Virgil avoided it for as long as he could, but eventually a knock came at his door.

“Hey kiddo? Do you feel up to having some dinner?” Patton asked softly.

*Probably doesn’t want to wake me up.*

Virgil felt like puking at the thought of food, but he didn’t want to worry the moral facet.

“Yes, I’ll be down in a bit.”

Virgil swore his door glowed.

“That’s great Virge! See you then!” Virgil heard Patton walk away. He let out a breath and started gathering his strength. It was going to be an ordeal getting out of bed, out of his room, and downstairs. He was *exhausted*, but he couldn’t sleep. He just wanted to lay in bed and suffer alone, but social etiquette demanded that he suffer with people around. He just couldn’t seem to make his limbs move.

Virgil lay there for an unknown amount of time, battling his urge to stay still so he could be a decent friend for fucking once in his life and go downstairs. He’d started to accept his fate of becoming one with his mattress when he heard a crash and a yelp come from downstairs. He jumped out of bed and was nearly at his door when he heard shy laughter from Patton and encouragement from Roman. He leaned his head against his door, breathing heavily, adrenaline still rushing through his system.

*I’m up, may as well use my adrenaline for something good for once.*

Virgil opened the door and stepped out into the hallway. The bright lights shocked him and the flashback he had been fighting off all day came back full force.

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Virgil had been chained to the mattress in the Dark Side commons for several days. He had previously been chained there for a week and a half and was thankful that he got to be hosed down and eat half a slice of hard bread before they restrained him again. After the first day of almost constant use, the Dark Sides had been kept busy. They would filter in and out of Virgil’s periphery, but he was too far gone to care. One of them would occasionally use him and drop him back onto the mattress when they were done, but he at least had enough of a break where he could get some sleep.

He heard several sets of footsteps approaching the commons. They walked by him and into the kitchen. He heard chatter from in there but didn’t bother to register any words. He could smell that they had heated up a strawberry Poptart.

His throat closed up and his eyes burned with how much he just wanted a warm strawberry Poptart. It was ridiculous, but his want for the Poptart was making emotion rise up he didn’t know he had. Sensing he was about to start crying, he pushed that away, into the box in the back of his brain. He wouldn’t survive if he didn’t.

Just as soon as he finished that, he felt someone settle in behind him and move his already spread legs slightly further apart. His hips were grabbed and he could tell from the hands and the cologne that it was Greed. Virgil almost made a sound when he was entered, but managed to relax his vocal cords so only air came out. The other Dark Sides were watching TV and from the conversation, Virgil gathered that Greed was as well and that it was soccer. After a while, Greed’s hips began stuttering and he came inside Virgil. He kept Virgil there for a few moments, basking in the aftershocks, before dropping him unceremoniously back onto the mattress and joining the others on the couch. After listening for another moment, Virgil figured out that Greed was hanging out with Rage and Jealousy. Jealousy came over to the mattress and, after a few minutes of the sound of skin on skin, Virgil felt warmth splatter on his back. Jealousy seemed to prefer marking outside some days, especially when Virgil was on the commons’ mattress. Jealousy rejoined the other Sides on the couch and waited until whatever they were watching was over, chatting amiably the entire time. Greed and Jealousy left, and Rage came over to take his turn. Virgil knew that staying as limp as possible was the best way to avoid punishment, but with Rage it was difficult to know what might set him off.

Once Rage finished inside of him, he landed several hard kicks to Virgil’s kidneys and ribs. Virgil nearly blacked out; his kidneys were already sore and several of his ribs were cracked. Virgil breathed a sigh of relief when he heard Rage walk away.

After several more hours, the Dark Sides came back into the commons for their weekly meeting. Each Dark Side took a turn with Virgil before Deceit decided to start the meeting. He thought he heard extra sets of footsteps, but didn’t care about anything at the moment.

“I’m so glad we could all meet tonight. This meeting will be extensive, but we have refreshments on the table, Virgil on the mattress of course, and additional writing materials, all for your convenience. Now would you distinguished gentlemen like to introduce yourselves?”

“Surely you know us by now Deceit?” A deeper voice said humorously. Virgil felt the ghost of a shiver pass through him as the familiar voice echoed around the commons. Virgil didn’t know how the Visiting Sides were present at this time of night, but he was too weak to try to see what was going on in the outside world. He provided the Light Sides with a burst of anxiety so they could protect Thomas for him.

‘I’m so sorry Thomas. I’m sorry my best isn’t good enough. I love you. I hope you’re safe…”

“Of course I do Entitlement, simply a formality. Fury, Resentment, Lethargy, welcome back to
Thomas’ Dark Side! Do feel free to help yourself to any of the conveniences.”

A pause. “I think we will.” One of the visiting Sides drawled. Virgil heard four sets of footsteps come towards him. He wasn’t able to completely blink out as two of the visiting Sides wanted his throat, but he was able to float enough so time passed just a little faster.

The Dark Sides of both Thomas and the superintendent of Thomas’ school district discussed their plan for each of their Hosts and compared strategies. A Side would come over to force Virgil every now and then, but he was too out of it to notice who. Eventually the meeting ended, each Side took a turn with Virgil, and they left him there, chained to the mattress. Once he was sure that the Dark Sides were truly gone, he allowed the box in the back of his mind to crack open a bit, and cried.

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“It’s okay honey, I promise you’re safe. Shhhhh, you’re safe, it’s okay now.” Patton’s gentle voice washed over Virgil. He lay still, not sure if it was a trick by Deceit. Deceit liked testing him. Virgil realized mostly silent tears were streaming down his face, with hiccuping breaths that were occasionally accompanied by a small whimper.

“Oh baby, you’re safe here, we’re not going to hurt you.” Virgil could hear the love and care in Patton’s voice. No matter how hard Deceit tried, he could never make himself sound truly genuine. After a couple of years of Deceit trying on the Light Sides’ faces, Virgil could tell the difference in the voice.

Virgil slowly opened his eyes and saw Patton kneeling a few feet away.

“Pat’n?” Virgil rasped out.

“Oh sweetie, there you are! You’re safe now, it’s okay. Do you think you can sit up for me?”

Virgil closed his eyes. He was so tired…

“Virgil, baby, can you hear me? Are you still there?”

Virgil felt bad, but he was just too tired to respond. He heard a wet sniffle and someone shuffle over to Patton.

“It’s okay padre, we’ll take care of him. He’s safe, we’ll protect him, that’s what’s important.”

“Flashbacks are exhausting to experience. I’m not surprised Virgil is currently unresponsive.”

Virgil inwardly smiled. Logan. He wanted to move, but he was so tired and in so much pain. He could still feel each of his injuries from the flashback.

Being the function of anxiety, however, did not allow him to rest. Virgil identified cortisol as the culprit. He managed to crack his eyes open again. He groaned as he pushed himself up.

“Sweetie!”

“Do you need me to help stabilize you?”

Virgil looked over at Logan. He had his hands out, ready to assist. “No, I’m good.” Virgil grated out, his voice rough. Logan nodded and let his hands drop.

Virgil winced, his lower half blindingly painful. He panted, trying to get the pain under control.
“Virgil? Are you still here?” Roman asked carefully.

Virgil looked at Roman just as tears of pain left his eyes.

“Oh love.” Roman looked like he wanted to hold Virgil, but held himself back. “What do you need my dark knight?”

Virgil was swaying a bit from the pain and exhaustion. “I’m tired.” he mumbled.

“We can help you sleep. Do you think you’ll be able to eat or drink anything?” Logan asked.

Virgil thought for a moment. “Maybe Gatorade? That has electrolytes in it.” Virgil felt the air shift as something was conjured, and heard a bottle of Gatorade being opened by Roman. Virgil took the proffered bottle and slowly drank it, the cold soothing his throat.

“Do you feel up to eating something?” Patton asked.

Virgil knew he should eat something, so he said the first thing that came to mind. “Goldfish?”

Roman quickly summoned a gallon carton. Virgil lifted an eyebrow.

Roman shrugged. “I didn’t know if you’d get hungrier once you started eating.” Virgil sent him a half smile and popped a couple of goldfish into his mouth. The next several minutes passed silently, with Virgil alternating between goldfish and gatorade.

Virgil started feeling a little more full, and his emotions came back. Why do my memories act differently from normal people? Why does the pain stick around? Why do I still want a warm strawberry Poptart?

Virgil swallowed the rest of his Gatorade in a vain attempt to control his emotions. Patton obviously saw through it.

“Honey?”

Virgil couldn’t hold back any more. His chest started shaking and he tensed his throat to prevent any sounds from escaping.

“Would you like a hug?”

Virgil surprised everyone, including himself, by throwing himself at Patton and bawling. Strong arms wrapped around him and pulled him close. Patton was rocking him and murmuring soothing words into Virgil’s hair. Virgil let out all of the tears he had been trying to hold back all day.

After a solid half hour, Virgil’s tears slowed. He shyly pulled away, embarrassed. Patton looked at him lovingly, his own eyes shiny.

“There you go. I think you needed that.”

Virgil chuckled wetly. Roman silently offered Virgil a handkerchief, which he accepted. Virgil cleaned off his face and blew his nose. Patton shifted, squeezing Virgil’s shoulder.

“How are you feeling now champ?”

Virgil shrugged. “Tired.” He allowed himself to lean against Patton’s chest and close his eyes.

“Do you want to stay with me tonight?”
Virgil nodded.

“Is it alright if I carry you?”

As an answer, Virgil pressed himself closer to Patton. Patton put an arm underneath Virgil’s legs and one at his back, then easily lifted him. He was carried to Patton's room and laid down on the bed. Virgil grabbed a stuffed dog that was nearby, one of many stuffed animals. Patton smiled down at him as he ran his fingers through Virgil’s hair.

“Want me to read to you to help you fall asleep?”

Virgil smiled and nodded. Patton walked around to the other side of the bed, sat down, and leaned back against the pillows.

Lifting his hand, Patton shouted, “Accio!” and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* flew into his hand. Virgil snorted and shuffled deeper into the pile of pillows. Patton opened to the first page.

“Can I touch you sweetie?”

“Yeah.”

Patton threaded his fingers through Virgil’s hair and gently petted him, beginning to read. By the end of the first chapter, Virgil was nearly asleep. One last thought flickered through his mind.

*Maybe I’ll make a strawberry Poptart tomorrow morning.*

Chapter End Notes

Like many of the flashbacks and whatnot in this fic, it's based on true events. It might seem far-fetched to some folks, but that scene in the flashback was not at all uncommon for when I or someone else might get rented out to a yacht, party, business meeting, etc. Could range from a few hours to several months. Reality kinda sucks sometimes.

Sometimes after a flashback you need cuddles, and sometimes everyone needs to stay ten feet away. It's inconsistent and frustrating, but this time Virgil got Patton cuddles! <3

With the strawberry Poptart, it's the strangest things that will bring up emotions that you thought you had killed for the time being. It could be ripping the side of a piece of paper, smelling fresh food and not being able to get it, all kinds of seemingly random things. For Virgil, it was a strawberry Poptart.
Virgil represents the sympathetic nervous system. Since Virgil had domain over that part of the autonomic nervous system, he has a few little hidden talents. Let's see if you can spot where I have Virgil flex his powers a bit!

TW for needles and sounding near the end of the chapter! Also, there are some medical things done and measurements taken centering around Virgil's weight and body composition. He doesn't have an eating disorder, but I just wanted to give y'all a heads up in case that could be triggering. If you do find it triggering and think it requires a line of tildes, PLEASE feel free to reach out to me either here or on Tumblr and I'll fix it! I promise I won't be upset if you need me to make something safer and/or more accessible. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil woke slowly, feeling nauseous and woozy. There was someone’s hand on his head and he relaxed his body instinctively, ready to be directed to wherever the other person wanted. When he heard snoring and the hand didn’t move, he cracked his eye open and saw Patton asleep. His glasses were askew and *Harry Potter* was open on his stomach. Virgil smiled and slowly removed Patton’s hand. He allowed himself a moment to take in Patton before he gently removed his glasses and set them on the nightstand. He took the novel out of the emotional Side’s hands and closed it, setting it on a nearby stack of books. Patton let out a few loud snores and smacked his lips. Virgil was worried he had woken the sleeping Side, but thankfully Patton stayed asleep. Virgil pulled the blankets up and over both of them and looked at the time.

4:34 AM.

*Holy shit I slept for 6 hours!*

Virgil was wide awake and he knew he wouldn't be able to get any more sleep, but he was willing to stay in a soft, warm bed. He was also able to watch over and protect Patton. Being able to watch over the other Light Sides when he was awake during the night helped to ease his anxiety somewhat. Virgil grabbed the stuffed dog and hugged it again. He tried to stay in the cocoon of pure comfort, but his anxiety was only getting stronger. Surrendering to his compulsive thoughts, he carefully got out of bed and searched the room for Dark Sides. When he found none, he left Patton’s room and started checking everyone else’s rooms. He slowly opened the door to Logan’s room and didn’t see anything amiss until his eyes landed on the perfectly made bed.

Okay, okay, it doesn’t mean they’ve taken Logan. He might still be safe. **Gotta check Princey’s room first, then panic.**

Quickly losing the battle against hyperventilation, Virgil nearly ran to Roman’s room. Opening the massive door as quietly as he could manage, he peeked in and expanded his pupils to take in more light. He had to hold his breath to avoid sighing loudly in relief when he saw two forms underneath thick quilts on the massive bed. Squinting his eyes a little more, he noticed they were wearing the same shirts.

**Nope, they’re not wearing any shirts, abort mission!**
Virgil closed the door and searched his room, then the rest of the Light Side for Dark Sides. He was feeling better, but…

He sank down into the Neutral Side of the mindscape. He searched as quietly as he could, but he ran into Remy in the kitchen.

“Hey gurl! What’s happenin’?”

Virgil shrugged. “I’m good, I woke up early, so I decided to walk around.”

Not a lie, but not the truth either. Perhaps a lie of omission? My, my, you must really want those Dark Sides to be freed so you can get fucked by them again, mustn’t you?

“Pumpkin?”

Virgil shifted his eyes back up. When did I start looking at the ground? “Yeah?”

Remy frowned. “Are you sure you’re okay? It’s awfully early and your dark circles are hogging the spotlight.”

Dammit. “I’m actually good Rem. I got 6 hours last night!”

Remy brightened. “That’s great baby! You deserve it. Anything momma Remy can do for you?”

Virgil chewed his lip. He wanted a strawberry Poptart, a lingering effect from the previous night, but he knew it was stupid. It’s just a fucking Poptart. If I get that emotional over it, I shouldn’t have it. Gotta learn to not be emotional over stupid things. “C-could you show me how to make waffle batter? I’m up early and I’m not a complete zombie, so I thought I’d make some waffles for everyone.”

“Awwww baaaaabe!! Of course!!” Remy squealed. Virgil winced. I swear to God he’s worse than Patton sometimes. Wait…

“Why are you in a bathrobe?”

Remy just smirked and waggled his eyebrows.

Virgil rolled his eyes. “Gross. Just, change into something better for cooking.”

“You got it babe. Let’s go!”

They sank into the Light Side kitchen. “So, what do you know about making waffles?” Remy asked, in his usual outfit.

Virgil shrugged. “Not much. I’ve never really gotten to cook all that often. Patton’s helping me learn though.”

“That’s good.” Virgil thought Remy’s voice sounded a little thick, but Remy moved from one subject to the next too fast to really analyze anything. “I’ll get the ingredients out and I’ll tell you what to do!”

“Sounds good.”

Remy started Virgil on cutting up some fruit before they realized that it would be hours before the Light Sides would get up. Remy conjured a dark chocolate mocha for Virgil and they sat and vented about how much work they’d been having to do recently with Thomas putting so much on
his plate. Virgil knew it was basically two hours of them bitching to each other, but it was a lot of fun.

Once they heard the fatherly facet start moving around, they started on the waffle batter. Saul rose up soon after, though Virgil suspected Remy had summoned him.

“We’re making waffles with our little coffee bean!”

Saul groaned and stretched. “Sounds good.” he rumbled, voice still deep with sleep. Remy didn’t bother to hide how he checked out Saul. Virgil just stirred the batter, trying to ignore the amorous Sides.

“Careful Virge! Don’t wanna overstir!” Remy chirped.

“Says you.”

“Bitch don’t slut shame me.”

“Hey you said it, not me.”

“Virgil!”

Virgil chuckled, thinking he had won.

Remy grinned. What a fool.

“I know we ain’t the only thirsty bitches up in here. Gurl, you are not subtle.”

“Wh- I’m not interested in you guys!” A pause. “No offense.”

“None taken baby. I’m not talking about us.”

It took a second, and then Virgil was red from head to toe.

“You... just... shut up.” he grumbled.

Remy chortled and got the waffle iron ready. Saul stepped forward. “Do you want a hug?”

Virgil considered. My skin doesn’t feel too bad and my touch ache is yelling at me, so... win-win.

Virgil nodded and stepped forward a bit. Saul wrapped his large arms around Virgil. Virgil wasn’t sure where to put his hands and by the time Saul was holding him he had panicked and had just them curled in front of him. Saul didn’t seem to mind the slightly awkward way Virgil was hugging him. He held Virgil, burying his face into the younger Side’s hair and breathing deeply. Once Virgil’s embarrassment faded, he relaxed into Saul’s chest. After a good thirty seconds, Saul let go and ruffled his hair, which earned him a hiss from Virgil.

“Sorry darling, you’re just too tiny and adorable.”

“Shut up.” Virgil muttered.

Saul just laughed as Patton came into the kitchen.

“Hey kiddos! Whatcha got goin’ on there?”

“Virgil wanted to make waffles for you guys!” Remy chirped.
“Awwwwww kiddo!” Patton squealed, pressing his hands against his face. Virgil ducked his head.

“Y-yeah, it’s no big deal. I got up first, wanted to make you guys breakfast.”

“That’s so sweet!” Patton gushed.

*I changed my mind, Patton’s the worst.*

The Light Sides filtered into the kitchen soon after, all complimenting Virgil on the waffles.

“Remy did most of the work, I mostly just watched him do it.”

“Nonsense! You are an accomplished chef! And a dark and mysterious one at that.” Roman winked.

“...I will accept dark and mysterious.”

Breakfast passed in the usual fashion. The Neutral and Light Sides were excitedly talking about Thomas’ many projects and Roman was practically glowing. Virgil managed to get half of a waffle down before he had to call it quits, the acid in his stomach making it impossible to eat any more.

“Virgil? Are you unwell?”

Virgil looked in surprise at Logan. “No, why?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “Your caloric intake appears to be diminished. I was concerned that you were experiencing nausea.”

Virgil knew the surprise showed on his face. He thought he had been hiding it pretty well, and he’d never eaten much before. “Uh, yeah, I get, like, heartburn a lot.”

Logan hummed. “I am sorry to hear that Virgil. I have some medications that may help with that. Would you be open to trying some?”

Virgil was full of anxiety at this point. *I didn’t want them to know, and now they were going to hate me for keeping a secret.*

“S-sure.”

Logan nodded to himself. “Excellent. Before I show you the options for daily use, may I offer you some chewable calcium carbonate tablets?”

“What?”

“Tums.”

“Oh! Uh, sure, if it’s not too much trouble. I don’t want you to strain yourself or anything.”

“Nonsense. These are simple medications and I understand their molecular structure. One moment.” Logan closed his eyes and focused. After a pregnant pause, a bottle of Tums appeared on the table.

“Given that you are unable to eat due to your heartburn, I would suggest 4 tablets right now. You may take 2-4 every four hours, but do not exceed 24 in as many hours.”

Virgil grabbed the bottle, trying to memorize the numbers. “You got it.”
He tore off the top and shook 4 tablets into his hand. Once he had swallowed them, he waited for
them to work. Amazingly, he started feeling the effects almost right away. His heartburn was
decreased and he felt less like puking. Virgil stared down at his half-eaten waffle. Deciding that he
would not be beaten by a breakfast pastry, he attacked it and managed to get the rest down.

“I am glad to see that calcium carbonate appears to be effective for you.” Logan said dryly from
beside Virgil. Virgil looked up at Logan and blushed.

Logan had an eyebrow raised with a small smile in place. “There are once-daily acid reducers that
you may find useful. The most common is twenty milligrams of omeprazole. Would you like to try
that?”

Virgil nodded. “Sure, if it’ll help.”

“Excellent. Wait until an hour before your next meal to take this, then begin by taking one in the
morning at least twenty minutes before breakfast. It is a proton pump inhibitor and works best on
an empty stomach.”

*Logan really should be a doctor. Damn, that’d be hot.*

“Y-yeah, that sounds good.”

Logan responded by closing his eyes again and conjuring a bottle of omeprazole. “You should
begin to see symptom improvement in a couple of days. You should see almost the full effect by
two weeks.”

“I, uh, thanks. That’s cool.”

“It is my pleasure Virgil.”

And damn, Virgil couldn’t formulate a response because Logan’s deep voice made him feel a way
he didn’t want to focus on.

Once breakfast was completed, Remy and Saul left, with Saul messing up Virgil’s hair again and
Virgil hissing at him for it. The Light Sides went back to their rooms to work. Just as Virgil had
gotten somewhat comfortable on his bed, he heard three precise knocks on his door.

“Come in L.”

Logan opened the door and walked in carrying… *what the fuck is that?*

“What the fuck is that?”

Logan held up up the device. “This is a handheld body composition monitor. It measures the
percentage of fat and muscle in your body. I know how hard you work, and that you’ve been
having difficulty eating. Although this is only one metric and BMI should never be used as the only
measurement when it comes to an assessment of health, I thought it might be useful in determining
whether or not you are in a normal range of body fat percentage and if your diet needs a change to
improve your health. Especially now that you are taking acid reducers.”

Virgil felt hot with shame. “I… Look, I know I’m fucked up, we don’t need a machine to tell us
that.”

Logan’s face stayed static, but anyone who knew him could see the sadness in his eyes. “Virgil,
you have nothing to be ashamed of. I only offer my recommendations as simple suggestions. I will
not be offended if you refuse, and I will not judge you based on the outcomes of these tests, if you choose to participate.”

Virgil curled into a ball. “I… I don’t want you to see me.” he whispered. “I’m too gross to be inflicted on you.”

“Falsehood. You are not gross. No test or data point could ever convince me otherwise.”

Virgil looked up at Logan. He had his jaw set and fire in his eyes. *He means it… but he can’t actually know-*

Virgil’s abrupt realization almost literally knocked him over.

*He saw me right after…*

“All right.” Virgil said in a small voice, numb due to the shock.

Logan softened a little. “May I sit?”

Virgil nodded. Logan sat down next to him. “Are you certain you want to do this? You do not have to.”

Virgil found his voice after a moment. “Yeah.” he said a little roughly.

“All right. Place your hands on the metal parts. It will beep when it’s done.”

*He saw me and wasn’t grossed out. He saw me and wasn’t grossed out. He saw me and-*

The monitor beeped. Logan looked at it and frowned a little.

“Your muscle mass is within normal limits. However, your body fat is rather low.” He pointed at a box on the screen that read 6%.

“Isn’t lower body a fat a good thing?”

“Not usually. We need fat to be healthy. Some distance runners might have a body fat percentage that dips slightly below 8%, but is incredibly unusual and they should be closely monitored by a doctor.”

“Fuck.”

“Do not despair. This is a fairly easy metric to remedy. In addition, these are just numbers, and a single measurement almost never gives us the whole picture in terms of metabolic or overall health. That said, would you be comfortable taking a few other measurements?”

Virgil thought about it. He was a little uncomfortable, though he didn’t know why, but he could push through it.

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Excellent. As always, do tell me if you need to stop or if you become overwhelmed or uncomfortable. I do not want to do anything that is detrimental to your mental health.”

Virgil nodded.

“I would like to take your height and weight next. Would that be alright?”
Virgil had been expecting far more invasive tests, so he agreed quickly. Logan summoned a scale and a tape measure. While he had Virgil stand on the scale, he measured his height.

“You are 5’8” . And your weight is…” Logan trailed off as he waited for the scale to decide on a number.

“108 pounds, or just under 50 kilograms.”

“We’re American.”

“And the Imperial system is fucked.”

Virgil let out a surprised bark of laughter. Logan wasn’t laughing.

“Virgil, I believe you’re underweight.”

Virgil scoffed. “Yeah L, anybody with eyes can see that. I’ve actually put on 8 pounds since I- a couple months ago. I know I’m a skeleton, it’s gross, can we move on?” He felt himself getting more and more defensive as he spoke.

“Virgil, you are not gross. I am not judging you, and you’ve no reason to be ashamed. I believe that this is due to chronic malnourishment combined with anxiety, sleep deprivation, and excess stomach acid. None of these are your fault, and all of these are fixable.” Logan paused. “I apologize for making you uncomfortable. I believe I may have gone about this in an incorrect way.”

Virgil let go of his resentment and slumped. “No, I’m just an asshole. I didn’t mean to be an asshole to you. You’re right, it’s not good for me to be like this. I don’t like looking like this.” Virgil let his head fall forward to hide the tears that were coming to his eyes. He hadn’t expect to get this emotional.

Logan’s voice, when he spoke next, was soft. “You do not need to apologize. I understand why you became defensive. Anyone would have.” Logan chuckled self-deprecatingly. “I would be more than happy to help you become healthier and be happy with how you look.”

*I’ll always have my scars.* “Thanks Lo. Are there any other tests you want to run?”

Logan nodded. “Only if you feel up to it. We can take a break.”

Virgil ground his teeth. “Stop treating me like I’m made of glass. I’m not.”

“My apologies Virgil. You are correct. I will stop treating you as fragile, but I will always treat you as a priceless treasure. I would like to take your blood pressure next.”

Virgil was bowled over. *You can’t just say shit like that and continue on like nothing happened!!* The fuck?! “O-okay.”

“Please take a seat.”

Virgil sat on his bed, followed by Logan. Logan summoned a blood pressure cuff and a stethoscope. “Could you remove your hoodie please? I may not get an accurate reading otherwise.”

*Long-sleeved t-shirts for the win!* Virgil shrugged off his hoodie. Logan attached the cuff and placed the stethoscope underneath it. “The sphygmomanometer-”

“Gesundheit.”
“blood pressure cuff will tighten on your arm. It may be somewhat uncomfortable for a few moments. Let me know if you need to stop and I will immediately.”

Virgil nodded, and Logan began taking his blood pressure. A flashback was trying to break down the door in his mind, but Virgil kept his body weight against it. The cuff loosened suddenly.

“107 over 75. Your pulse is also 80. All within normal limits.”

Virgil was relieved that something about him was normal. Logan vanished the stethoscope and blood pressure cuff.

“I have one more series of tests. I would like to perform blood tests, but only if you’re comfortable.”

Virgil shrugged. “Sure... Wait! Y-you don’t take a lot, right?” he asked, suddenly nervous.

“No. Only a few small vials this size.” Logan held up a small vial.

Virgil breathed out. “Okay.”

Logan frowned. “Virgil, I hate to repeat myself, but this will be the most invasive test I've performed so far.”

Virgil was a little nervous, but he felt okay enough to continue. “I’m good. Go ahead.”

Logan accepted that and summoned a syringe and needle. As soon as Virgil saw the needle, his eyes locked on it and he whimpered. Logan’s astute eyes snapped up to him and Virgil pushed himself back into the far corner of his bed, which met a corner of the wall. He brought his knees up to his chest and wrapped his arms around them, hiding his face in his legs.

“No, no, please no…” Virgil whimpered. He felt the air shift as something was vanished.

“It’s alright Virgil, it’s gone. I’ve vanished it, I won’t bring it back. You are safe, I promise.”

Virgil did a few breathing exercises before he slowly lifted his head. Logan had been talking to him all the while, soothing him and encouraging him through his breathing. Virgil offered a timid half-smile.

“Are you feeling better Virgil?”

Virgil nodded shakily. “Yeah, I’m sorry, I didn’t know…”

“It’s quite alright. It is not uncommon for individuals to discover they have a phobia later in life.”

Virgil groaned. “I really don’t know why that needle freaked me out so much. It’s just a metal stick, it’s- oh.” Virgil paled and felt sick. He became light-headed. “I gotta lay down.” The flashback that had been banging on his consciousness finally broke through as he reclined. He could hear and see everything in his flashback, even though he was hearing Logan calling for him and seeing the logical Side looking around for something. The only thing he could feel was the flashback though, the pain, the sounding rod they used, the straps holding him down, the hands touching him…

Virgil closed his eyes and surrendered.
Logan and Roman didn't do the wild thing that night (yet, don't worry our temperamental boys will get some), they just cuddled and Roman runs way too hot so their shirts were discarded. Virgil's head went to the gutter though.

Idk about other folks, but if I get really badly triggered I can feel light-headed like I'm about to pass out. I actually have passed out a few times.

Edit: the line where Logan is telling Virgil that he is a priceless treasure, is very similar to a line in a fic titled "fearful of the night". I definitely didn't intend to draw from that fic at all, but the lines are similar enough I wanted to give a shoutout! And you should all go check it out, it's a really good fic!
Chapter 49

Chapter Notes

Hey all! First off, massive TW for the first part of the chapter. It contains a graphic depiction of sexual assault. It's the block of italicized text before the line of tildes.

Also, Logan does mention needles a few times in the section before the forward slashes, but no needles are summoned or conjured.

Feel free to yell at my on Tumblr at lilfellasblog! I've had a couple folks reach out and it's so much fun!! I usually respond fairly quickly as long as I'm not sleeping or in a meeting. I also post on there whenever a new chapter goes up, and we can geek out about it together! I've had some very accessibility requests come in through there and I've had some lovely convos about the fic! Sometimes, when I'm in a good mood and/or a couple glasses of wine in, I give out tiny little spoilers.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman held Virgil’s arms on the ground in a bruising grip as he thrust into him. Virgil had tried fighting him off in the beginning, not willing to let go of the idea of a prince saving him, but Roman was just too strong. Virgil was feeling emotion for the first time in a long time while being taken and he seemed to be letting out everything he felt at once. He could only lay there and cry uncontrollably as he was violated by someone he’d never thought would force him.

“God you’re ugly. You’re lucky I’m too turned on to care. Are you usually this much of a mess? Crybaby. You’re not even that tight, it can’t hurt too much. What a weak little bitch.”

Wherever Roman grabbed was aggressively tight. Virgil was sure he’d have broken bones by the end of this. Logan and Patton were eagerly waiting their turns over to the side, staring at Virgil, Logan’s face as impassive as ever and Patton smiling a little too widely. Virgil could see most of the Dark Sides’ unconscious bodies scattered around from when the Light Sides had broken in to yell at ‘Anxiety’ for ruining Thomas’ audition. They’d found him being used, and decided to use him themselves.

Roman released inside of Virgil and rode out the aftershocks before pulling out and spitting on him. He delivered several swift kicks to his ribs.

“That’s for ruining Thomas’ life!”

Logan was next and he brought over several implements. When they had happened upon Virgil, Logan’s eyes had been drawn to the toy cart almost immediately. He held up a sound.

‘Thank gods it’s not one of the ridged ones.’

Logan showed Virgil the item. “This is a sound. It has been sterilized. I’m going to insert this.”

“Please, please don’t.” Virgil whimpered. Logan responded by grabbing and squeezing Virgil’s soft genitals. Virgil’s vision whited out and when he came back to, Logan’s face was still neutral but there was fury in his eyes.
“Do not speak back to me again. Understood?”

Virgil weakly nodded.

“Excellent. After I’m done, M- Patton, would you like to go next?”

“Yes!”

“Very well.” And with that, Logan began.

~~~~~

“Virgil! My god, please wake up!”

Virgil opened his eyes and saw Logan leaning over him, hands on his shoulders. Virgil screamed, and Logan leapt away, falling to the floor.

Virgil lay there sobbing, not wanting to incur more punishment but too terrified and devastated to stop crying.

“Oh dear, Virgil…”

“What’s going on?!” Roman yelled as he burst into the room.

Virgil saw Roman come in, sword in hand and looking ready to kill, and let out another scream, this time with his double voice distorting it.

“Virgil’s having a flashback! I tried the ice cube, but it didn’t work! He’s too scared to let me touch him.”

Logic isn’t this emotional. Why is he so upset?

“Oh my loves…” Roman whispered.

“What’s- oh baby.”

Virgil saw Patton approaching him and scooted so his back was pressed against the wall. Patton stopped once he saw Virgil move away from him. Roman had sheathed his sword and was staring at Virgil. He had an arm wrapped around Logan’s shoulder and was rubbing his upper arm. Logan looked distraught.

Something’s not right, everything about this is wrong.

Patton had gotten down on one knee and held his hands up. “It’s okay sweetie, I won’t come near you if you don’t want me to. I won’t hurt you baby, I swear.”

Why wouldn’t he? That’s what I’m here for.

Virgil was still crying but tilted his head in confusion.

Patton seemed to catch on to his confusion. “Can you tell me where you are honey?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked around, wanting to answer as fast as he could.

This is my room. Virgil reeled back a bit, not knowing where that thought came from. He both recognized and didn’t recognize the space he was in, so he guessed.
“I—I’m in the Dark Side?”

Patton’s face crumpled for a moment before he regained composure. “No, honey, you’re in your room. You’re in the Light Side now baby. You’re safe, I swear to God you are.”

Seeing the emotion and love on Patton’s face brought Virgil back fully into the present.

“P-Patton? I’m sorry…” Virgil said roughly, his voice hoarse from screaming. He was still hiccuping and tears were running down his face.

“No, no baby, you don’t have to apologize! Do you want a hug?”

Virgil wanted to throw up at the thought. “N-not right now, sorry P-Pat.”

“It’s okay baby. Do you know where you are?”

“Y-yeah.”

“Oh good! What do you need?”

“I, I don’t…” Virgil didn’t know and he was too tired to think of anything. He laid down and closed his eyes, intending to rest.

“It’s okay baby. Why don’t you rest? Come and get us or text us if you need anything, okay?”

Virgil nodded. He jumped as Logan let out a strangled sob. His protective instincts kicked in, and he sat up and looked at Logan. He was still on the ground with Roman trying to comfort him. Virgil’s eyes met Logan’s.

“Virgil, I… I am so incredibly sorry. I don’t have the words to describe how very sorry I am for frightening y-you s-s-so…”

Virgil shook his head emphatically. “It’s not your fault Lo.”

“P-please do not feel c-c-compelled to t-try to make me feel b-better, I was the one who upset you, I should have known that a needle resemb-”

“It was the Dark Sides!” Virgil blurted.

The other Sides paused, and Roman looked around the room.

Virgil huffed. “No, they’re not here, but they…” He didn’t want to say it, but he couldn’t let Logan think it was his fault Virgil got scared.

Virgil laid down on and pulled part of his hoodie over his face.

“Th-the Dark S-Sides w-would s-sometimes p-pretend to be y-you guys wh-when th-they’d… y’know…” Virgil mumbled. It felt like a bomb had gone off in the room, except instead of flak, it contained silence. Virgil just stayed hidden under his warm hoodie.

Roman’s voice was thick when he spoke. “Virgil, I… I’m so fucking sorry…”

“D-don’t apologize Princey, it’s n-not y-y-your fault they’re sick bastards.” he sighed. “I’m really tired, I think I’m g-going to take a nap.”

Roman spoke again, being the only one who could. “Okay. Do let us know if you need anything.
I… We love you. So much Virgil.”

Virgil curled up and started to doze off as his bedroom door closed.

Out in the hallway, Roman was supporting his two boyfriends. He had an arm wrapped tightly around Patton and was squeezing him as hard as he dared against his body. He had his other hand resting on Logan’s opposite shoulder, Roman’s arm dangling behind Logan’s back. Logan’s face was tight, trying to maintain control but he had two rivers running down his face. Patton had both hands over his mouth and was sporadically gasping in loud, whimpering breaths. Roman opened the door to his room with his mind, not wanting to let go of his loves, and led them to the bed. Roman and Logan crawled in and held each other while Patton went to the bathroom to throw up.

Roman pulled Logan to his chest and felt Logan begin to shake as his cries began to break through.

“I sh-should have kn-known. I’ve seen w-what he’s been th-through, I shouldn’t have summoned a needle, I should have known better.”

“Hush professor. Aren’t you kind of jumping to conclusions? If you’d known, you wouldn’t have done it. What would you say to one of us if the roles were reversed?”

Logan chuckled wetly. “I’d say that it was a moment of inference observation confusion. But I am still so guilty…”

Roman tightened his arms around his nerd. “You aren’t guilty, you feel guilty.” Roman kissed the top of Logan’s head.

After a more few minutes and some running water, Patton came over to the bed, openly crying. Roman lifted his arm. Patton crawled in. They held each other, and cried.

/////  

The next week passed as the previous ones had. Virgil struggled with flashbacks, panic attacks, and sleep, the Light Sides tried their best to support their stormy friend, and everyone tried to work to keep Thomas afloat. Virgil noticed a difference with the help of the antacids. He had also been spending a lot of time online. It helped to see other people like him and what worked for them. Curiously, Roman noticed Virgil hadn’t been back to see Dr. Picani.

Roman hadn’t missed how the Neutral Sides had been supporting his dark love. So one morning during breakfast, he announced to his loves that he was going to visit the Neutral Side on a quest.

“What kind of quest Princey?” Virgil asked warily, watching Roman out of the corner of his eye.

“A beauty quest!”

“Only so much lipstick you can put on a pig.”

Roman let out a high-pitched scoff. “Virgil!” Roman wasn’t terribly upset, he knew that Virgil enjoyed a verbal spar and didn’t truly mean it. As expected, Virgil let out one of his adorable snorts that occurred as he tried to stifle his laughter. Roman was on cloud nine whenever he caused Virgil to make that sound.

Breakfast finished up and Roman bid farewell to his loves. Before he left, he conjured a few items he thought the Neutral Sides might like. He focused and sunk down.

He popped up in a living room that smelled like coffee and… sweat?
“Hello Roman!” Saul greeted.

Roman turned and saw Saul coming towards him with a smile. He had a tight black t-shirt, khakis, and hiking boots on. His t-shirt was tucked into his khakis and he was wearing a brown belt.

“Greetings Saul! How fares thee?”

“I’m good, about to head out. Busy day today.”

“I wish thee good fortune on your quest!”

“Thanks Roman. I’ll catch ya later.”

“Wait! Saul!”

Saul turned in surprise.

“I have something for you!”

Roman reached into his basket and pulled out a bottle of port wine.

“I thought you might like this for a night with Remy!”

Saul smiled and took the bottle from Roman. “Thank you Roman, this is very thoughtful. I’ll keep it in my room for later this evening.” He winked at Roman, and Roman smirked back. They both tried to fluster each other like a strange game of chicken that neither ever really lost. Romance and Lust were two evenly matched competitors in a contest of flirting. Saul sighed, conceding to Roman for the time being. “I’m afraid I must get to work. I’ll see you around!”

Roman waved after Saul. He turned his attention to finding Remy, which did not take long. He was sitting in the kitchen, nursing a large mug of what Roman could only assume was coffee. Remy waved his eyebrows at him.

“Hey babes, what’s up?”

“I simply wished to spend time with you! And to give you this!” Roman handed a French press to Remy.

“Oh baaabe this is so nice! What’s the occasion?”

Roman met Remy’s eyes. “You’ve been very helpful with Virgil, and I am very grateful. I would like to get to know you better, and you seem to do a very good job with Virgil’s nails, so I was wondering if I could trouble you for a manicure?”

Remy glowed. “Awww I’d love to! I’m very flattered.” Remy let his voice drop flirtatiously. Roman was about to show off his skills when he noticed Remy looked a little red.

“Remy, are you alright?”

Remy looked surprised. “Yeah hon, why?”

“You look a little flushed. I wasn’t sure if you were feeling ill or uncomfortable?”

Remy waved him off. “Oh no Princey! I love flirting, you’re good! As for looking flushed...” He just smirked.
Roman understood. “Nice.” and high-fived Remy.

“Now gurl, do you know what color you want for the base?”

“Rainbow!”

“Oh George Rainbow, calm down. How about gold with holographic sparkles?”

“That’s perfect!!!”

“I don’t know how Thomas does it, all of his Sides are too gay to function.”

Remy got a base coat and a few layers of pale, reflective gold on the royal’s nails. When he grabbed the holographic sprinkles, he held Roman’s hand a little tighter.

“Now I know I wear these sunglasses 25/8, but I keep an eye on things, especially where Virgil is involved. He’s like if you combined a son and a little brother, that’s what he means to me. I’ve also seen the way you look at him. You’ve been very supportive of Virgil, and I’m grateful for that, but I need to know; what are your intentions with my coffee bean?”

Roman gulped. He heard the very clear threat in Remy’s question. Roman considered his response for a moment and sighed. “I want him to be happy. Whatever that looks like for him.”

Remy stopped painting Roman’s nails. Roman could feel a cold sweat break out on his skin. Did I say the wrong thing?!

Remy looked at Roman. Roman looked more vulnerable than Remy could ever remember seeing him. He could tell Roman was telling the truth; that he wouldn’t do anything to make Virgil unhappy. He refocused on Roman’s nails.

“Good. Because if you hurt him I will kill you.”

“And I would let you.”

Remy raised a brow at the dramatic Side’s statement as he continued to put on the holographic sparkles. “I’m glad to hear it sweetie. Let’s talk politics.”

Roman and Remy talked about the state of LGBTQ laws and the increase in discrimination and hate crimes until Roman’s gel manicure was done.

“Thank you Remy! They look fantastic!”

“Not a problem sugar! I appreciate you looking after my boy.”

“And I you.”

Remy rolled his eyes. “You’re so dramatic. I’m gonna try to get Thomas to take a nap, I’ll catch you later.” Remy spun around and was gone.

Roman sunk back into his room to continue working. He took a minute to appreciate the beautiful work Remy had done on his nails. He couldn’t wait to show them off at the next meal!

Chapter End Notes
If the scene from the flashback was a little confusing, that's okay. More will be explained in a later chapter. This one is also drawn from my own experience, minus the face changes of course. It doesn't take super intricate special effects to convince a scared little kid that a rescue attempt failed and tell them to give up hoping for a change.

Also, I noticed that I would be really energetic after flashbacks/panic attacks until my body just got too exhausted, then it'd be like, "Okay, we are sleeping NOW." That's why Virgil was tired and just wanted to sleep.

And just to be extra clear, those weren't actually the Light Sides. That'll be explained more in later chapters. The Light Sides have never done anything like that.
Chapter 50

Chapter Notes

Hey hey hey folks! We're over 400 kudos, 6000 hits, and we're at 29 bookmarks!!!

Oh, did I forget to mention that we are at almost 1000 comments?!?!?!?!!?

And just a heads up, Virgil is continuing to deal with some internalized ableism, specifically sanism and referring to other people as "normal". He'll get through it in the future, but he's still fighting it.

Finally, a very sweet, very nervous Tumblr user reached out to me and asked if I could pick a celeb to compare to Roman's physique that I described in chapter 43 during the Royality (°_¬°) scene, and after an hour of Googling I landed on Taylor Lautner circa 2012 for Roman's upper body for the closest approximation. My Google search history is irreparably altered with "shirtless celebrity" variations. The funniest part about this to me is Google probably thinks I'm straight now. LOL.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil lay in his bed, stewing over his journal. He had found a couple of things that helped, but none of them eliminated his desire to self-harm completely. Am I always going to be like this? Constantly fighting the urge to not take my skin off?

Virgil summoned an ice cube and focused on his breathing. He decided to get his phone out and hop back on the forums of folks who were recovering from self-harm as well. He scrolled past the repetitious posts and trolls. He kept seeing the same damn list everywhere!! Didn’t anyone have any new ideas?!

Virgil did see a suggestion that he hasn’t tried yet but seemed to be present in each of the lists. Snap a rubber band on your wrist. Virgil had avoided it because he didn’t want to have a rubber band bouncing around and tickling his wrists, but if it would get rid of his self-harm urges he’d be willing to give it a shot. He rummaged around his desk, but couldn’t find any rubber bands.

Who’s most likely to have rubber bands?

Roman.

Virgil went to Roman’s door and knocked. He could hear some concerning sounds come from inside, namely roars and the sound of metal clashing. Roman opened the door, panting and looking slightly sweaty.

“Greetings Virgil! How are you?”

Virgil shrugged, hiding his suffering as best he could. “The usual. Do you have a rubber band I can use?”

Roman smiled. “Certainly! Come on in!”

Roman opened the door wider, but Virgil hesitated.
“Should I get my suit of armor?” he asked dryly.

Roman laughed. “No, not at all my dark knight! I vanished the creatures back to their den for now.”

Virgil hesitantly stepped into the room and looked around, his wary eyes searching for any sign of danger. Then,

“Wait, creatures? What creatures?!”

“Manticore-chimaeras mostly.”

“Dude, don’t die.”

“Never fear, my damsel! I will not lose to such monsters!”

“If you call me damsel again I’m burning all your Disney posters.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Don’t test me.”

Roman squinted his eyes playfully at Virgil as he opened one of the cabinets in his room. He pulled out a tray with tiny plastic boxes.

“What color would you like?”

“Do you have purple or black?”

“I do! Which one would you prefer? I have several shades of purple.”

“Black’s good.”

“Black it is!”

Roman opened one of the boxes and pulled out a black rubber band. Virgil slipped it on his wrist, waiting until he was alone to try snapping it.

“Can I ask what it’s for?”

Virgil looked up at Roman from beneath his bangs.

“Um, it’s an experiment.”

“Very well. I hope your experiment goes well!”

Virgil gave him a half-smile, a two finger salute, and walked to the door. Just as he was about to close the door behind him, he turned.

“Don’t actually die though. I was serious.”

Roman laughed. “Don’t worry my prince! I won’t!”

Virgil stared at him seriously for another moment, then turned and shut the door. He headed down to the kitchen, knowing he needed some light to feel better. He grabbed a cup of coffee and sat down, thankful he was alone.
Virgil wanted to scratch at his arms or grab one of the knives, but he wanted to try the rubber band first. He lifted the rubber band, and let it snap on his wrist. He jumped even though he was expecting it. The urge to self-harm didn’t go away though! Virgil stretched the rubber band farther. It hurt more, but it wasn’t the right kind of pain. The only thing it did was kind of piss him off. He pulled it as far as it would go and let it snap, not willing to give up. He tried again. And again. And again. And again, until a patch on his wrist was a dark red. Virgil was fighting back tears of frustration and hopelessness.

*Why isn’t this working? Dammit, it helps so many other people! Why isn’t this working for me?*

Virgil started snapping the rubber band faster and more frantically, until he pulled it, and the band snapped and hit his fingertips. Virgil was frozen, his bruised wrist on the table and his other hand hovering in the air gripping the broken band. He stared at it, in shock, until the tears that he had been fighting back by being angry began filling his eyes. He closed his mouth and started sniffling, his breaths becoming hiccups.

“Oh heya kiddo, I was just about to start- oh baby, what’s wrong?!” Patton rushed over to Virgil.

“What’s this?” Patton gently touched the frayed ends of the broken rubber band.

“I-it b-broke.” Virgil whimpered. It was stupid, he knew it was stupid, but when it broke, the wall he had built up broke too. “I-I didn’t w-want it t-t-to b-break.”

“Oh sweetie, it’s okay, we can get you a new one! I’m sure Roman won’t mind conjuring one up for you!”

“I g-got this f-from R-Roman.”

“And I’m sure he won’t mind. It’s okay honey.”

Virgil just laid his head down in his arms and sniffled.

“Do you want a hug honey?”

Virgil shook his head. “C-can you just rub my back? L-Like not go d-down too far?”

“Sure honey.”

Patton gently rubbed Virgil’s upper back and murmured soothing words to him as he calmed down. After a couple of minutes, he was able to lift his head back up.

“Thanks Pat. I’m sorry, I don’t know what that was…”

“It’s okay! You’re dealing with a lot, sometimes it’s the little things that catch you off guard.”

Virgil offered Patton a wobbly half-smile which Patton returned in spades.

“Why don’t I make us some tea and we can relax?”

Virgil and Patton quietly chatted until it was lunch time. It was clean-out-the-fridge day, so he just helped Patton line up the leftovers. Logan came in with his notebook, furiously scribbling away, until Patton took it from him.

“No working at the table!” he chirped.

Logan sighed. “It’s just a few more changes.”
“Then it can wait until after lunch.”

Logan knew when he was defeated.

Roman swept in and excitedly showed off his new gel manicure, courtesy of Remy. The pale gold and rainbow holographic sparkles certainly suited the prince. Patton gushed over them and Logan gave his measured approval, which meant that he loved them.

Virgil managed to eat twice as much as he had prior thanks to the omeprazole, but it was still less than the other Sides. He hadn’t realized how much pain and discomfort his stomach acid was causing him until it decreased.

Logan and Roman were going over the schedule, while Virgil helped Patton pack up lunch and then left for Roman’s room. He was excited that he had made it a week since seeing Picani, but he was a mess. Whenever he tried to think about what he wanted to talk about, his thoughts turned to air.

Well that’s not good.

Virgil stepped through the mirror and made his way back to the therapy room. He wasn’t sure why, but he was really antsy. He stared at the door. Come on, come on…

“Hellooooo nurse!”

Virgil gave him a half-smile. “You already used that one.”

“Whoops! My apologies! Should I redo it?”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “Naw, I’m good.”

“Awesome!” Dr. Picani flopped down in his chair. “How are you doing Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged. “I don’t know, same as last time I guess?”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Alrighty then! What would you like to talk about today?”

Virgil frowned and chewed on his lip. “How often do people come to therapy?”

“Ah! Now that’s a very good question! And the answer is a little less than satisfying: people come as often as they need to. Are you trying to figure out how often you’d like to come to therapy Virgil?”

Virgil looked down. “Yeah. I heard that once every week or once every two weeks is pretty common for normal people?”

“It sure is! Some people come in less often, some more often. And that’s all fine! The important thing is that you’re coming as often as you need to. Do you have a number in mind that feels right for you?”

Virgil shifted a little. “Once a week sounds good.” He was surprised by a lump in his throat as he said it.

Dr. Picani tilted his head and softened his face. “Is once a week good for you, or is it because you want to be more like what you consider “normal people” to be?”

Dammit.
Virgil felt his emotions start coming out of the cracks in his box. “I just w-want to be normal.”

Dr. Picani wordlessly slid the basket of comfort items over and Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish.

Dr. Picani smiled gently. “I think now would be a good time to bring up the Yerkes-Dodson curve.”

Virgil snorted into the stuffed fish-mammal.

“It’s a bell curve, which means that there are experiences in the middle, sure, but there are also experiences on the ends. It doesn’t mean that the experiences on the ends are any less valid. From what you have told me, it’s fairly common for people who have experienced what you’ve experienced to come in more often than once per week. Now, what feels good for you?”

Virgil had to chuckle to himself. He knows what he’s doing. “I think every other day maybe? Sometimes less?”

Dr. Picani smiled at Virgil with a very sappy expression on his face. “That sounds good to me Virgil. Do you have any other questions about therapy sessions?”

Virgil shook his head.

“Okay! Is there anything else on your mind?”

Virgil looked down and caught sight of his still-red wrist.

“My self-harm?”

“We can talk about that! Anything in particular you’d like to focus on with that?”

Virgil started to shake his head, but paused. “I’ve been trying different techniques, and some of them help, but none of them completely take it away.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “It’s frustrating to feel like you’re doing everything “right”, but still be struggling.”

“Exactly! I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing, but I still feel the urge to be stupid and hurt myself.” WHY did you SAY THAT?! You want him to respond all sweet and shit, but you’re just pushing him away with all of your negativity. Who wants to be AROUND that? You’re just seeing how far you can push him until he breaks because you’re a toxic, useless-

“I hear you. I will challenge the idea that your urges are “stupid”. They’re what helped you survive! They’re just not the best idea any more, now that you’re safe. You can’t judge survival actions without the context of survival; survival was the whole point! And I think we can find better options. You’re very strong to have survived what you did. That strength is still there, it didn’t go anywhere. Let’s try to harness that, yeah?”

Virgil smiled a watery smile at the doctor. “Yeah.” he said thickly.

“Great! When it comes to self-harm, especially at first, coping mechanisms may not completely get rid of the urge to self-harm, just decrease it-”

“That’s normal?!“ Virgil blurted.

“Yep! Totally!”
Virgil and leaned back on the couch. “Holy shit, whew!”

“I’m glad you’re relieved to hear that Virgil. What kinds of self-harm coping mechanisms have you found helpful?”

Virgil nodded and pulled himself back up. “I like the cold shower thing, but I sometimes switch between cold and hot. The ice cube technique works really well, and sucking on a breath mint helps too. Lotion can help sometimes, if my skin is dry it makes it less tight. And then distracting myself with my friends.”

Dr. Picani was writing quickly. “That’s all wonderful Virgil! I’m so glad that you’ve found so many in such a short amount of time!”

Virgil shifted in his seat. “Wh-whatever.”

The doctor only smiled. “What else would you like to talk about in regards to your self-harm?”

Virgil shrugged. “Those were the big things.”

“All right. Are there any other big things you want to talk about?”

This guy’s too good. Dammit. Fuck, I guess I have to.

When Virgil spoke, his speech came out slow and slightly slurred. “Sometimes when I want to scratch my skin off, it’s because it feels gross and I want to get the gross off me, but I know that my gross is deeper than my skin and I can’t get it off. The showers help a little.”

“Okay. You said you feel gross?”

Virgil nodded slowly. He was trying to keep his grip on reality.

“All right. And you said it’s more than skin-deep. What happened to make it more than skin deep?”

Virgil was feeling very fuzzy, almost like he had been given novocaine all over his body. He wanted to get some stuff off his chest, that’s why he came to therapy, right?

“They hurt me.”

Dr. Picani allowed a pause, just in case Virgil wanted to add more. “I’m so very sorry you were hurt Virgil. Can you tell me what they did to hurt you that made you feel gross?”

Virgil squeezed the stuffed animal tighter. “Fucked me.” There. It’s out in the open. Virgil felt a small weight lift from his ears and shoulders.

“I believe you. I’m very happy you felt comfortable enough to tell me that. I’m so sorry you went through that. Do you want to talk more about that?”

Virgil was scared. He pulled his knees to his chest and whimpered.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to tell me! Just know that the door’s open. Do you want to tell me why that made you feel gross?”

“They made me gross.”

“Their actions did?”
“Yeah. And th-” Virgil cut himself off. “I don’t like that they made me gross.”

“You didn’t deserve it. Would you like to do a grounding exercise Virgil?”

Virgil nodded. Dr. Picani led him through the grounding exercise twice before he felt back to his normal self. Unfortunately, that also meant that he felt mortified at what he had told the doctor.

“I’m sorry.” Virgil mumbled.

“You don’t have anything to apologize for Virgil.”

Virgil just shrugged.

Dr. Picani knew enough to let that go for now. That was layers deep. “How would you feel talking about feeling gross?”

Virgil shrugged. Dr. Picani took that as a hesitant yes.

“Alright. Tell me if you feel uncomfortable and we can stop. You said that their actions towards you made you feel gross, right?”

“They made me gross.” Virgil corrected.

“Gotcha. How could their behaviors make you gross? You didn’t have a choice.”

Virgil hid his face in the doll. “I kinda did.”

“Did you?”

Virgil paused. “I had to protect them.”

“Protect who?”

“Thomas, the Light Sides, the Neutral Sides.”

“It sounds like you weren’t given any real choice. Were you always doing it to protect them?”

Virgil hugged the doll closer. “No.”

“What was happening then?”

_Goddamn his voice for being so fucking non-judgmental and safe and shit. This would be easier if he was an asshole. I know what to expect with assholes. When is he going to turn on me?_

“I was little then. Smaller and weaker than them.”

“How old were you when they started?” Dr. Picani ventured. It was a risk, but that could help Virgil feel more comfortable if he could share it.

Virgil opened his mouth to speak, but his voice was choked off. He couldn’t push any air past his vocal chords. He closed his mouth and shook his head.

“That’s okay Virgil. It sounds like when you were with them, you didn’t have control or autonomy over your body, is that correct?”

Virgil nodded.
“You had your autonomy taken from you when they sexually assaulted and tortured you, and those actions from them made you feel gross. Is that correct?”

Virgil flinched but nodded.

“It’s not uncommon for victims/survivors to feel gross afterward torture or sexual assault. Do you know why that is?”

Virgil didn’t. “I’ve read that from people on the Internet, but I don’t know why.”

“Well I’ll tell ya! It’s because the abusers’ actions were vile, and because they had taken autonomy from you their actions felt more overlapped with your person. You’re not gross because you didn’t do anything gross, because you were being forced against your will. You’ll get rid of the gross feeling in time.”

Virgil was feeling sick and light-headed. “I don’t feel so good doc.”

“Do you feel like you’re going to pass out?”

“Dunno.”

“It’s okay. Can you put your feet flat on the ground for me?” Virgil complied. “Perfect. Do you think a grounding exercise or a breathing exercise would feel better for you?”

“I don’t- I don’t know. Neither. I don’t feel good.”

“Why don’t you lay down on the couch and put your feet up on the armrest?”

Virgil did as he was told. “Feels stereotypical doc.” he slurred.

Dr. Picani chuckled. “It does, doesn’t it? Can you open your eyes please?”

Virgil did as instructed.

“Perfect. Let’s try a breathing exercise shall we?”

Dr. Picani led Virgil through ten rounds of breathing exercises before Virgil felt well enough to do a grounding exercise. He slowly sat up and looked sheepishly at the doctor. He hadn’t let go of the stuffed animal the entire time, clutching it to his chest.

“Sorry doc.”

“No apologies needed! You just told me a lot, we worked on some pretty deep wounds, and you let me know when you weren’t feeling okay. I think you did really well!”

Virgil shifted. “Thanks.” he muttered, not quite willing to believe the praise but knowing accepting it was usually the easier route.

“Not a problem! Let’s talk about anything besides *Avengers: Endgame.*”

Virgil chuckled. They talked about *Rugrats* theories for the next ten minutes until Virgil felt a little more grounded and stable.

Virgil paused at the door. “So, uh, I’ll see you next time?”

Dr. Picani smiled. “I look forward to it.”
Virgil smiled at him and left for the mirror. He had some Googling to do.

Chapter End Notes

You know when Virgil was speaking slowly and feeling faint? That's caused by something due to the "tonic immobility" and "collapsing immobility" during the "defense cascade". We'll get more info on that later, but I just wanted to give a little bit of context for those scenes!

Being mad at websites for not having the info you want is real. OMG the rage lol. And the feeling when a coping mechanism that's "supposed" to work doesn't work is the actual worst.

Also, Picani is so sneaky. You don't think he forgot about the greeting, did you? Or did he give Virgil an opportunity to correct him in a safe, light-hearted way?
Hello all! First and foremost, there is a description of sexual assault in this chapter. It's in the section contained by tildes.

Also, we officially surpassed 1000 comments!!!!! It's because you're all so awesome and amazing! I love chatting with all of you beautiful people!! *cries happy tears*

You know what 1000 comments means? *jazz hands* (courtesy of Jasper01)

Virgil flopped onto his bed, safe in his darkened room. He decided to get out his laptop since he figured he’d be pulling up a lot of tabs. Virgil set his hands on the keyboard and paused. He wasn’t entirely sure what terms he should be searching for.

*Time to throw spaghetti at the wall.*

Virgil first tried searching for “body positivity”, but most of the websites he found were aimed at people who were trying to feel comfortable with their weight. Virgil had the opposite problem, and problems that weren’t even addressed. The articles were nice and he was glad they existed, but they weren’t what he was looking for.

He tried “how to like your body” next, but got a lot of the same results. He scrolled to the 6th page of Google before he gave up on that search.

Next was “how to be comfortable with your body”, and he was finally starting to see more of what he was looking for. Although a lot of the advice was from people challenging themselves to wear skimpier clothing and to ignore trolls on social media, most of it echoed what Dr. Picani had been talking about in regards to battling the inner voice. At this point, he’d been browsing articles and forums for 2 and a half hours.

Virgil was about to give up when he finally decided to vent his frustration onto Google.

“How to stop hating your disgusting body after being raped.”

New results came up, but Virgil wasn’t holding out much hope. He clicked on a few links, and they seemed to be saying different things than the previous articles.

*Take a bath.*

*Touch your body as much as you feel comfortable doing so. Don’t push it.*

*Try to be naked in your room, or less clothed than you normally would be.*

Virgil felt his skin crawling at the suggestions, but he knew somewhere in his gut that this was at least something he could do. He wanted to do something besides yell at his brain.

Virgil scoured a few more websites, and came across a forum for survivors. One person in
particular stood out.

Robin here! She/her/hers.

I used to HATE taking baths. It was always really triggering for me. But then I read on a website, I can’t remember which one, to use bubbles so you can’t see your body but you’re still in the bath. And it worked!

Also, I am a HUGE endorser of walking around naked and just living your life whenever you can. It seems weird, but it really helps! I think because it normalizes it or something? You kinda force your brain to get used to your body.

Finally, treat your body with the love it deserves. Whoever hurt you didn’t treat your body with love and respect. They had your body and made you feel as though you were as gross as them because your body was no longer yours. It doesn’t seem like it’ll help, but it actually helps a lot. Put lotion on. Take multivitamins. I like gummy ones! The pills upset my stomach. If you’re able to, work out, even if it’s just a short walk around your house. When you put effort into your body, you’ll start treasuring it more.

Virgil stared at the screen in awe. He was stunned at how these suggestions seem to ring true with him. He quickly signed up for the website and made a profile. Then he felt defeat.

I don’t have a bathtub.

Virgil felt tears prick at his eyes. He was awful at conjuring things. To make his bathroom accessible he had needed to sneak into Princey’s room while Roman was laying on the common’s couch with a bruised ego, lamenting to anyone that would listen willingly or was at least within moping-range. He got a headache and bloody nose and would sometimes pass out whenever he had to conjure a new plumbing item or piece of hardware in Roman’s realm.

Okay, so no bathtub yet. Try living naked. The article said I shouldn’t push myself or it would have the opposite effect.

Virgil stood up from his bed and paused. He took his phone out of his pocket and wrapped his headphone cords neatly. He placed both items on his nightstand. He grabbed both sides of his hoodie, and with a final breath, shrugged it off his shoulders. He wrapped his arms around his torso and shivered. He was cold, but he was determined to be okay in only a long-sleeved t-shirt.

Okay, this is good, I can deal with this. Robin said that I should try taking better care of my body to hate it less. That’s probably not a bad idea anyway.

Virgil went into his bathroom and checked to see how much lotion was left. He winced when he saw that he was down to a quarter of the bottle.

Princey can help me with that. Multi-vitamins, multi-vitamins… Logan! He’s been wanting to help me with nutrition stuff.

Virgil winced as he remembered how Logan’s last attempt to help him with his weight and body composition and shit went, and how Logan hadn’t brought up anything close to the topic since. Maybe I can make it up to him. He likes feeling like he accomplished something.

Virgil rubbed his arms for warmth and pocketed his phone before he went out into the hallway. He ended up at Logan’s door, slightly warmer than before. He knocked, and heard a calm, “Come in.”

Virgil opened the door and saw papers everywhere. Roman was running around excitedly and Logan was desperately trying to catch new pages that Roman was producing and put them into
some kind of order.

Logan looked at Virgil tiredly. “Hello Virgil.”

“Hey L. Should I come back another time?”

Roman actually fucking pirouetted and landed with a hand extended grandly to Virgil. “Nonsense! We have all the time in the world for our handsome gothic vampire!”

“...holy shit.” was all Virgil could manage.

Logan visibly bit back laughter. “What can we help you with?” he asked, trying and failing to keep the amusement out of his voice.

“Well, for one, I was running low on lotion?”

“Say no more!” Roman swirled his hand and a massive 60-oz bottle of shimmery lotion, this time scented with lavender, sandalwood, and oud, appeared.

“Thanks Princey, this should last me a while.”

“It is my pleasure!”

Virgil turned to Logan. “I was wondering if you could conjure some chewable gummy multi-vitamins? I read they’re good for you and easier on the stomach than pills.”

Logan nodded, his face neutral but pride in his eyes. “Certainly. One moment.” Logan frowned and closed his eyes. Roman filled the silence by gushing, nearly yelling about what he and Logan were working on. After a few minutes, a bottle of dark-colored gummies appeared on Logan’s desk. Logan grabbed them and stretched his arm over to Virgil. “Take two per day whenever you remember to take them.”

“Thanks L.”

Logan smiled. “Not a problem Virgil.”

Virgil’s stomach flip-flopped at Logan’s smile and the look in his eyes. He mumbled another thanks as he turned to leave Logan’s room.

“Oh, Virgil?” Logan called after him. Virgil turned and saw the ghost of a smile on his face.

“You look very nice in your shirt.” Logan commented before turning back to his desk.

“Agreed! You look lovely wearing anything, but you also look dashing in this!”

Virgil was bright red. “Uh, I, ah, thanks!” and he scampered out.

He closed his bedroom door behind him as his face burned.

Smooooth.

Shut up.

Virgil grit his teeth against his brain’s continued malevolence and moved into his bathroom.

Okay, two down, one to go. Let’s see, I just spent time around Roman. Maybe I can summon a
Three and a half hours and several nosebleeds later, Virgil was no closer to getting a bathtub in his bedroom. Virgil had been fighting off frustrated tears all day. He collapsed face down on his bed and resolved to let himself go for a bit.

He felt a hand in between his shoulder blades shove him down into the mattress, his broken ribs protesting, his lash and burn marks screaming, his stomach churning. Virgil stayed still, horrified.

“You’ve been very disobedient.” Virgil heard hissed into his ear.

It’s just a flashback, it’s just a flashback, it’s just a flashback-

His thoughts were abruptly cut off as he felt someone roughly enter him. He cried out and got a punch to the back of his head.

“Stay quiet whore!”

Virgil whimpered. He could feel every bit of pain, shame, and violation. He stayed still, only letting out small whimpers. He felt someone release inside of him, his insides burning, and get off him.

He lay motionless on the mattress, knowing it was a flashback but too scared, hurt, and traumatized to move. Despite his best efforts, another whimper escaped him.

“Greetings Virgil! Patton sent me to collect you for dinner!” Roman called through the door.

Virgil wanted Roman to come in and save him, but he was too scared to make a sound.


“If you’re awake, I’m coming in to make sure you’re alright or to see if you’re asleep.”

He heard the door open and Roman pause in the doorway.

“Virgil?” Roman called softly. Virgil wanted a prince to come and save him, he wanted to be rescued and safe. But he knew he’d never be safe. An unbidden whimper escaped him, this one quieter than the others. No way he heard that.

“It’s okay, I’m here, you’re safe.” Roman’s voice was closer. “May I touch you?”

Virgil felt a little braver with Roman so close, so he moved his head slightly up and down. In the next moment, he was being picked up and turned.

“Shhhhh, it’s okay, you’re safe.” Roman murmured.

Virgil curled into the prince’s chest and let out the tears he’d been holding in. Roman shushed him and held him tightly. After several long moments, Virgil sensed four more Sides come into his room. Searching their energy, Virgil realized it was the two other Light Sides and the two Neutral Sides. Virgil curled further into Roman and cried. Roman just held him protectively and hummed into his hair. Once Virgil ran out of tears, he relaxed into Roman’s chest. He was just glad he wasn’t feeling repulsed by touch; the entire past week he hadn’t been able to stand touch from
Roman rubbed Virgil’s back. “Feeling better now my little stormcloud?”

Virgil just sighed and rested his head against the knight’s clavicle. He did feel protected and he didn’t want to leave. Virgil felt an amused huff against his head.

“We can stay here for as long as you’d like. Do you want to tell me what happened?”

Virgil breathed in the scent of cinnamon and roses for a moment. He didn’t detect as much fresh air as he usually did, but it was there.

Roman had sat with him for who knows how long while he blubbered like a child over a simple fucking memory. He owed Roman at least an explanation. I owe him a hell of a lot more than that.


Roman’s arms tightened on Virgil. “I’m so sorry my love.” he whispered, voice rough.

Virgil let himself indulge in the comfort, knowing it wouldn’t last.

“I don’t know why they mess me up like this.”

Way to make it last as long as it could.

I didn’t mean to! It just- fell out of my mouth?

Because that’s definitely a thing that actually happens.

Virgil heard Logan clear his throat.

“I… may have an answer to that if you’d like.” Logan said, sounding unusually hesitant.

“Okay.” Virgil allowed.

“Right. Well, flashbacks aren’t normal memories. For many people, it is like they are re-experiencing the trauma. Not everyone, but that is the case with many individuals.”

“Oh! That… that makes sense.”

Virgil heard Patton gasp, and the subsequent movement must have been Logan going to comfort him.

“I’m tired.” Virgil had hardly been able to get any sleep at all, maybe a couple hours per day, and he had discovered over the past few months that when his sleep-deprivation hit the one or two week mark, his flashbacks and anxiety attacks would make him sleepy instead of riled up.

“Would you like me to stay with you?” Roman asked.

Virgil nodded. Roman gently laid them both down on the bed, and Virgil quickly scooted up underneath the offered arm. He rested his head on Roman’s chest as two strong arms came down around him. One hand came up to lightly scratch at the back of Virgil’s head, which caused Virgil to let out a contented rumble from deep in his chest. As he drifted off, he could hear people leaving his room. He fell asleep to the smell of roses and cinnamon and the dream of a valiant knight in shining armor.
Virgil and Roman got cuddles! Do you forgive me for all of the angst I've put you through? (plz forgive me)
Chapter 52

Chapter Notes

Hey

Hey

This is the 7th most commented on Sanders Sides Fic in AO3

^Look at that

I seriously can't thank all of you enough. You all have been so amazing and I'm so lucky to have such great people interested in my little old fic. You've all been so sweet as I've shared my experiences and applied them to characters I relate to, and I couldn't ask for a kinder reading audience.

And to folks who may be reading this later, I see each and every one of you. Goodness knows I was late to the party, and I hope you can enjoy this fic as well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil was groggy when he woke up. He registered two arms around him, but thankfully was with it enough to remember he had fallen asleep with Roman.

Virgil groaned and shifted.

“Are you awake?” Roman asked softly.

“Yeah.” Virgil’s rough voice grated out.

“Welcome back Virgil.” he said a little more loudly, but just as gently.

Virgil just grunted. Roman chuckled and shifted his arms. Virgil just wanted to enjoy being held and comfortable without his anxiety getting in the way.

“You purred.”

“Wha?”

“Before you fell asleep. You purred.”

“Did not. I rumbled.”

“Yes dear.”

Virgil hissed, to which Roman chuckled.

Does he know you’re using him?

Virgil inwardly groaned. Oh hey, perfect timing.
Shut the fuck up you useless bitch. What if he’s going to _finally_ fuck you?

What?

You two are alone, in bed. No one’s expecting either of you until morning. He willingly stayed behind to, what exactly? Hold your limp, disgusting, useless body? Not even you can be _that_ stupid.

Well, actually, yes _you_ can, but try to put your one remaining brain cell to use. They’ve been having to deal with you for so long, it’s about time Roman got his compensation, don’t you think?

Virgil began feeling sick and frightened. _No, no, Roman wouldn’t do that to me, he’s better than that._

*Maybe he won’t force you yet, but if you offer…*

_No, Dr. Picani said that you’re a liar. I offered in the castle and Roman didn’t want it!_

_That’s because you were ugly crying. You’re ugly anyways, but it’s like, ten times worse when you’re crying._

Virgil curled miserably into Roman’s chest. Roman tightened his arms on Virgil.

“Are you alright?”

Virgil opened his mouth to lie, and decided against it. “My brain is spewing bullshit.”

Roman rumbled deep in his chest. It sounded like a muffled growl.

“Virgil’s brain, kindly shut up. Or not so kindly, if you’re being cruel towards my raven.”

To Virgil’s shock, it got quieter. Naturally, that made a flashback come forward. _Because of fucking course it would._ Virgil could almost see the Dark Sides and visiting Sides standing in the middle of his room. Virgil felt like a coward, but all he could do was whimper and draw back.

“Virgil?”

Virgil buried his face in Roman’s chest to hide his embarrassment. “The D-Dark Sides… I s-see the Dark Sides…”

“What? Where?!?”

Virgil lifted his hand and pointed. Roman’s chest was moving up and down faster, and Virgil felt the pause when Roman realized what was going on.

“Are you having a flashback?”

Virgil whimpered again and nodded. Roman tightened an arm around Virgil and used his other hand to snap the room soundproof.

“BUGGER OFF!!!”

Virgil jumped and Roman snapped the room back to normal. “I apologize my love. Did it help?” Roman rested his arm back on Virgil and rubbed the back of his neck.

Virgil risked a glance to the center of the room. The shock seemed to have broken him out of his flashback.
“Y-yeah, thanks.”

“It is my pleasure to help you, my sparrow. How are you feeling?”

Virgil took stock of himself. His skin was starting to crawl and he wanted to stop being held. And he was actually feeling pretty hungry.

“I-I’m hungry, can we go downstairs?”

“Certainly!”

Roman and Virgil got out of bed and headed downstairs, with Virgil making sure that Roman couldn’t touch him. When they got downstairs, Patton was just finishing wiping the table down. He looked up and smiled widely.

“Hey kiddos! Ya feel up for some supper?”

“You know it padre!”

Patton giggled and started taking food out of the fridge while Roman got plates and silverware out. Virgil stood awkwardly in the middle of the kitchen, feeling useless for not helping. After Roman set everything down, he asked what Virgil wanted to drink and got him some tea. Patton heated up a chicken breast with pasta aglio e olio for Virgil. The chicken breast was seasoned and had basil pesto, a couple of slices of tomato, and mozzarella baked over it. Once it got out of the microwave, Virgil wolfed it down so fast he almost beat Princey. Almost.

“Do you want some more?” Patton asked.

Virgil shook his head. “Nah, I think I’m good.”

“Okay! Just wanted to let you know that I’ve got some oven-roasted veggies too! The plate was already full.” Patton smiled sheepishly.

Virgil smiled. “I’ll take some of those, sounds good.”

Patton beamed and passed Virgil a serving of veggies. He had to force the last couple down, but he knew it was good for him. He stood to help Patton, but Patton had sneakily cleared away almost everything while Virgil was eating. He sat back down and stared into his tea, his face burning with humiliation at his inelegance.

“So kiddo, what did ya get up to today?”

Virgil raised his head. “I, uh, went to Dr. Picani’s.”

“Oooh! How did that go?”

Virgil shrugged. “Fine I guess. We talked about some stuff we hadn’t before, so that’s good.”

“That is good! That’s very hard to do!” Roman declared.

Virgil’s lips twitched. “Yeah, I guess.”

“That was before you came to me and Logan?”

“Yes. I was looking up stuff online and found a couple things that might help me, so I wanted to try them out.”
“Awwwww that’s great! You’re doing research and trying new things! That’s hard and scary! I’m so proud of you!” Patton gushed.

Virgil felt his face getting red again. “Wh-whatever.” He cleared his throat. “Then I tried conjuring a bathtub but I’m useless at conjuring shit-”

“Language.”

“Sorry. And I couldn’t for like three and a half hours, so I’ll try again tomorrow. And then you know the rest.” Virgil groaned. “I was lucky when I found stuff that might work for me, and today was supposed to be a good day-”

“It still can be. You’ve got some hours left.”

Virgil could practically hear then record scratch in his brain as his thoughts that had been spiralling about how awful today had been so far screeched to a halt.

“Yeah. I guess you’re right.” he said in awe.

“Dads always are! Wait,” Patton paused. “This is a normal day for you?”

Virgil shrugged. “Yeah, I usually have a couple flashbacks and panic attacks per day. I usually only get one or two that are like the one you saw though.”

Patton’s eyes were growing shiny. “Oh baby, I’m so sorry…”

Virgil was quick to wave him off. “It’s fine, I’m used to it, it’s been a couple of months. It’s better than where I was before. Besides, it’s not happening anymore, so…” Roman and Patton didn’t have to ask what Virgil meant.

“Didn’t Logan say that flashbacks are re-experiencing what happened?” Roman asked.

Virgil ducked his head down and futzed with his mug. “Yeah, but it’s not actually happening.”

Virgil felt the air of determination wafting off the prince. Oh boy.

“But you’re re-experiencing it. That’s… that’s horrible. I can’t even imagine. Virgil, I’m sorry. You know that you can always, always come to one of us, right?”

Virgil risked a glance at Roman. He definitely looked determined (stubborn, whatever), but there was also this… vulnerability that he usually hid. Virgil looked back down at his mug.

You’re hurting them. You’re taking so much of their time already, don’t you dare actively seek them out. You’re just a burden, a walking bottomless pit of emotional labor.

“Yeah, I know.” he muttered.

“We mean it kiddo. It’s not a chore or task to help you. We like being there for our favorite little shadowling!”

Virgil looked up at that and gave Patton a half-smile. Patton beamed.

“What do you want to do for the rest of the night?”

Virgil considered. “I think I need some quiet time by myself for tonight. I’m just tired.”
Patton smiled gently. “Okay kiddo. Let us know if you need anything.”

“Hey coffee bean!”

Virgil jumped as Remy and Saul rose up.

“How are you Virgil?” Saul asked.

“Fine. I’m fed, about to turn in for the night.”

Remy pretended to check his non-existent watch.

“Whew! It's not after midnight, we should be good.”

“Shut up.”

Remy snickered. Roman had moved over to Patton and wrapped an arm around his waist.

“I think I’ll retire for the night soon as well. Goodnight my love.” Roman murmured, inches from Patton’s face. Patton giggled and kissed him.

“You two are sickening.” Remy teased.

Roman and Patton moved apart, Patton blushing and Roman staring at him starry-eyed. He kissed Patton’s cheek.

Remy shook his head. “Just sickening.”

Patton leaned into Roman. “Sorry kiddos, didn’t mean to make you feel left out.”

“No problem sweetie, just giving you a hard time. Besides,” Remy looked at Saul. “I prefer the Neutral side of things anyway.” And pulled him into a very passionate kiss. Once Remy let out a moan, Virgil decided it was time to leave the happy couples.

“Aaaaand I’m out.” Virgil hopped out of his chair and prepared to sink out.

A chorus of, “Good night!” rang out while Virgil sent them his two-finger salute.

Chapter End Notes

That part where Roman yelled at the flashback to "bugger off" and it did? That's an almost word-for-word experience I had with one of my friends. He's very much like Roman. He's dramatic, artistic, and creative. He's very Italian and consciously and proudly embraces all of the passionate Italian stereotypes. And he's almost as gay as Roman (he loves Roman). When I was having a sleepover at his place and started having a hard time with a flashback and seeing the people, that scene played out and... it worked? Somehow? Lol, I was just happy it did!

I also put in here how Virgil wanted touch and then didn't want it. Touch can be very fickle.
Virgil woke up and groaned. He checked the time. *At least I got a couple hours.* Not wanting to be late for breakfast, he stretched and got out of bed. He was nearly at his door when he caught sight of his plastic spider, Shelly. She’d been with him for years and though it was weird because she’s an inanimate object, Virgil was very attached to her. He smiled, and went downstairs groggily. He’d had a pretty typical night, and was just grateful it wasn’t a worse-than-usual night. He slipped into the kitchen and ate breakfast with the other Sides. They were just about to depart for their rooms when they felt Thomas summoning them.

All of the Sides rose up in Thomas’ living room, and Thomas was looking at them nervously.

“Hey guys,” Thomas began, “how are things going inside my brain?”

Virgil looked at the ground in guilt.

“Actually, we inhabit far more than just your brain Thomas. We can control various bodily functions, such as-”

“Nope!” Thomas threw his hands up. “Don’t need to hear about that! I’ve been feeling… weird.”

“Weird how?” Logan asked. Virgil’s heart dropped. He kept his eyes on the ground as guilt consumed him. *I knew it, I knew Thomas needed me to be hurt.*

“It just feels like I have this really empty feeling, in my stomach. And it’s been getting worse for the past couple of months. It feels chaotic.”

Virgil’s eyes filled with tears. He forced them down and his nose began running.

“Interesting. Since very little is known about people with your abilities, it is difficult to know what may be causing that symptom. But I digress, we must first look at the most common and likely causes. Have you been losing interest in things you once cared about or felt excitement for?”

Thomas wrinkled his forehead. “I don’t think so?”

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
“Have you been feeling depressed or hopeless?”

“No, not really. Things have been going well!”

“I am glad to hear that. Have you experienced any changes in your sleep, energy level, or appetite?”

“No, I- wait, are you trying to figure out if I’m depressed? Wouldn’t Patton know?”

“Not necessarily. Depression can be very insidious and we do not know how depression would impact Patton.”

Patton chimed in, his eyes wide and filled with worry. “Have you been feeling depressed kiddo?”

Thomas looked surprised. “No, not at all!”

Patton sighed. “Thank goodness. I was worried I’d missed that you were hurting! I’m glad you’re not feeling depressed!”

“Me too Patton. But what’s this weird feeling?”

“You mentioned that you had the feeling in your stomach. Perhaps you are developing an ulcer?”

Virgil felt his anxiety skyrocket at that. *Ulcers can kill people, does Thomas have an ulcer?!!*

Thomas frowned. “I don’t know, maybe? It doesn’t hurt, it just feels… empty.”

Logan hummed. “Thomas, can you point to where the emptiness is coming from?”

“Yeah.” Thomas pointed at his lower abdomen.

Logan sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “That’s more like your lower intestines than your stomach.”

“Oh, heh sorry.” Thomas said sheepishly.

“What could that be Teach?” Roman asked.

Logan frowned. “I’m not sure, to be honest. Perhaps it has something to do with your unique abilities.”

Virgil knew it was time. “I’m sorry Thomas.” he said thickly.

Everyone turned to Virgil. Virgil sniffled and lifted his head as the tears he had been fighting escaped his eyes and ran down his face.

“I didn’t mean to hurt you, I swear.” Virgil felt his insides twist at the thought of unknowingly hurting his wonderful, loving Host. “I… I’d never hurt you on purpose.” Virgil let his head fall forward as a sob tore out of him.

“Virgil, it’s okay, you’re not hurting me! I feel a little weird, but that’s it! Do you know what’s going on?”

Virgil sobbed again. “I didn’t mean to, I didn’t know…”

*Oh, but you DID know, didn’t you? You were just too selfish to do what had to be done.*
Virgil sucked in a deep breath. “Wh-when I, um... got rescued from the D-Dark Sides, I was worried that me l-leaving them w-would hurt you. I,” Virgil sighed, defeated. “I was selfish. I’m sorry.” Virgil sobbed again.

“Virgil, I am certain it’s not that.” Logan stated.

“How do you know?!” Virgil blurted out angrily. “You yourself said that little is known about people like Thomas! What if I’m right? Maybe I need to be hurt by the Dark Sides to keep Thomas healthy. That’s how it’s always been, and Thomas never felt like this before! I should have stayed! That’s all I’m good for!”

“Virgil no! That’s not it!” Patton cried.

“**How do you know? It’s the only thing that makes sense!**” Virgil lost hope. **“I don’t want to go back, I don’t want them anymore, but I have to protect Thomas!”**

“Virgil, buddy, it’s okay! Can I hug you?” Thomas asked.

Virgil just shook his head as he sobbed.

Logan moved closer to Virgil. “Virgil, it is true that we don’t know much about people like Thomas. However, what we do know is that at most, the likelihood that... what you’re suggesting is true is only 50% at the most, and all of us do not agree with your assessment.”

“**Because you don’t want it to be true.**” Virgil fired back.

“No. Because it does not make sense. There is no visible connection between Thomas’ wellbeing and your… abuse.”

“**Yes there is! He’s never felt like this before!**”

Logan opened his mouth and paused. “That-that’s the second time you’ve said that. What do you mean by that?”

Virgil felt himself lose steam when he realized he’d revealed more than he initially wanted to. **“No going back now.**”

“It’s just, Thomas has never felt like this before. And before... You guys know what was happening.”

Logan paled and raised a hand to his mouth. Virgil heard sounds of heartbreak, whimpers and gasps, all around him.

“Virgil,” Patton’s voice trembled, “the entire time before...”

Virgil winced. He hadn’t meant to upset them. And having Patton upset was like seeing a sad puppy and crying kitten all in one. “M-most of it, yeah. Th-there was a bit of time-” Virgil had to swallow around the lump in his throat before he could speak again. “There w-was a bit of t-time after I got accepted a-and just before we filmed the f-f-first part of the “Moving On” series that I...”

“Virgil...” Thomas whimpered.

Virgil felt like garbage for making them all feel so terrible. “I’m sorry.”
“Do NOT apologize.” Logan said firmly. “You have nothing to apologize for. Is it alright if I touch you?”

Virgil shook his head. He knew he’d have a flashback if he was touched right now.

“Alright. Virgil, we are not upset with you. Can you breathe with me?” Virgil nodded. “Very well. In for one, two, three, four…” Logan helped Virgil through a few breathing exercises. Now, he just felt embarrassed.

“M sorry.”

“If you keep apologizing for things that don’t require apologies I’m going to physically fight you!” Patton joked, his voice still warbly. Virgil huffed a laugh. He chanced a look up.

Everyone was pale and had tear tracks on their faces. Roman and Thomas were on the couch, with Roman holding Thomas. When Virgil looked at Thomas, Thomas smiled shakily at him. Virgil averted his eyes in shame. Logan and Patton went over to the couch and Virgil followed them. Patton squeezed in between Thomas and Roman, and Logan went to Roman’s other side. Virgil took the last spot next to Logan.

Logan adjusted his tie. “To get back to the matter at hand… Virgil, I believe you said that there was a span of time when you weren’t being hurt by them?”

Virgil shrugged. “Yeah.”

Logan cleared his throat. “Thomas, did you experience this feeling during the aforementioned time?”

Thomas’ voice came out shaky and thick. “No.” Virgil had never wanted his Host to feel so awful.

Virgil saw Logan sit up taller out of the corner of his eye. “Then I would believe that it is safe to assume that Virgil’s separation from the Dark Sides has nothing to do with Thomas’ strange feeling.”

Virgil wanted to believe that, God did he want to, but he still had a reservation. “But the feeling appeared soon after you guys rescued me.” His voice came out much rougher than he wanted it to.

Logan was confident. “That may be. However, there are likely other factors at play, as this did not occur during any other point of Thomas’ life. Correlation is not equal to causation.”

“Yeah, it feels like there’s an empty room or something. That’s the best way I can describe it.” Thomas interjected.

“Hmmmmm. Perhaps there is a connection to the Dark Side, but not the one we think. The Dark Sides were locked up almost immediately after we rescued you. I believe the answer may lie in their domain.”

Virgil tensed and fought the urge to vomit. He never wanted to go back there again, but if it would help Thomas…

“Let’s do it.” Virgil said, right before he sobbed. He slapped a hand over his mouth.

Logan moved his hand towards Virgil, and then retracted it. “You don’t have to go.” he said.

Virgil shook his head, and spoke when he felt like he could. “I do. I know that area better than any
of you. None of you have even been down there.” He hated how his voice shook.

Logan started to protest. “Virgil, we could go by ourselves and come and get you if we needed you.”

“I’m Anxiety. I’ll just be worried about you guys the entire time.”

Roman sighed. “If you’re certain…”

“I am.” Virgil said firmly. “We should stay together though. I don’t know how the Dark Side of the mindscape will affect you guys.”

Logan sighed. “That is… a good point.”

“Should I go? Will it help keep you safer if I’m there?” Thomas asked.

Logan adjusted his glasses. “On the contrary, it seems that when you accompany us in the mindscape and we go into another’s room, we all become affected by that room. We will inform you if the opposite is true in the Dark Side.”

The group was silent for a moment.

“I am holding back so many Star Wars quotes right now.” Roman said solemnly.

Virgil snorted. Logan even cracked a smile before he became serious again.

“Shall we depart?”

Silence fell over the group as the Sides stood. Thomas scrambled to stand with them.

“Be careful, okay guys?”

Patton smiled at Thomas. “We will kiddo. We’ll be back before you know it!”

Thomas smiled. “I trust you guys, just… be careful.”

Roman nodded. “We will Thomas.”

Thomas noticed how the Light Sides moved to Virgil’s side and smiled. He was glad Virgil had them. As they sunk down, Thomas felt his fear for them, especially Virgil, resurface. Once they were out of sight, Thomas sat down and focused on his breathing exercises to hopefully help Virgil.

What the hell is going on inside my head?

///

Virgil rose up and immediately started shivering. It was chillier than the Light Side, but he wasn’t just shivering from the cold. He hadn’t missed how the Light Sides had surrounded him before they sunk out, which was nice, but there was only so much they could do.

Virgil cleared his throat. “Okay, so we’re going to want to stay together. I don’t know how the Dark Side of the mindscape might change after there’s been no one in it.”

“Agreed! Everyone should tell us if they feel strange or unusually negative. If anyone sees any movement, tell me and I will slay them!” Roman declared. Virgil saw that Roman had his sword in
its sheath.

Virgil only raised an eyebrow, too frightened and upset to manage a chuckle.

“Virgil?” Patton’s careful voice came. “Let us know if you need to stop. We can. Thomas isn’t hurting, so this isn’t an emergency.”

Virgil nodded. “I know. And it’s not an emergency now, but I want to stop it before it becomes one.”

“Guys?”

Virgil jumped as Thomas’ voice sounded down from above.

“Yes Thomas?” Logan asked.

“I just wanted to let you know that you’re in the right spot. I can… feel you guys. I’ve never really connected with this part of me before. It’s weird.”

“I would advise you stay away from this unless you sense something very wrong. I do not know how you tapping into this part of yourself will affect you.”

“Y-you’re right Logan. I’ll see you guys later!”

Thomas’ voice cut off abruptly, and was replaced with deafening silence. Virgil felt like his ears were stuffed with cotton.

“Someone say something.” he ground out.

“How large is the Dark Side?” Logan asked.

Virgil frowned and chewed on his lip. “I don’t know exactly, but it’s pretty big. There’s a lot of rooms.”

Logan hummed. “Should we split up to cover more ground?”

“Oh my god you’d be the first to die in a horror movie Logan. No, we are not splitting up.” Virgil felt his voice echo on the last sentence.

“Alright, alright! Perhaps a, less than wise suggestion. It appears that we are in the commons of the Dark Side.”

Logan looked around. There was a layer of dust over everything. He didn’t see any foot prints or disturbances in the dust, which was a relief. However, he spotted something strange in the living room by the couches and television. He squinted his eyes. It appeared to be a mattress connected to the wall by a chain? No, the chain was laying on top of the mattress. Upon second glance, there were several other chains on the other end of the mattress nearest the group. What then was it?

“I’ll start by looking over there. I see something a little unusual.”

Virgil looked towards where Logan was heading. The hairs rose on the back of his neck rose and his mouth ran dry.

“No, don’t go over there!”

Logan stumbled a bit as he stopped and looked back at Virgil. Virgil was staring at the mattress,
deathly pale. He felt his mouth fill with spit, and that was the only warning he got. Virgil turned to the wall, supported himself against it, and threw up. He heard shouts from behind him, but all other sounds besides his retching was nearly drowned out. Once he had emptied his stomach, he spat out what he could from his mouth. Before he could wipe his face on his sleeve, a handkerchief entered his vision. Virgil took it gratefully, cleaned up his face, and blew his nose. He leaned back and held the handkerchief awkwardly.

“Uhhhh…” he said eloquently.

Roman waved his hand and vanished the handkerchief.

“Do you want to go back to the Light Side sweetie?” Patton asked. Virgil saw the redness in his eyes and the way his body was shaking.

“N-no, I want to stay here with you guys. I have to make sure you guys are safe.”

“Awwww kiddo! That’s really sweet! We don’t want you getting hurt though. Would it help if one of us stayed up in the Light Side with you?”

Virgil slumped. “No, that would make it worse because then there would only be two of you down here. I’ll stay, I’ll be good. I’m sorry.” Virgil ducked his head as he felt his cheeks heat up.

“Virgil, I am going to join Patton by saying that if you keep apologizing for things that are not your fault I am going to engage you in hand-to-hand combat.”

Virgil snorted. It was a good attempt by Logan. “I’ll remember that L. Let’s just search this rotten place. Do you have any ideas that we should keep our eyes out for?”

“Anything that appears out of place. I noticed the layer of dust covering everything, so if it seems to be disturbed in an area that may be an indication of something amiss. Otherwise, look for anything that doesn’t belong.”

“Got it. You know, this area is set up much like our commons. Since it’s such an open layout, why don’t Virgil and I take the kitchen and you two take in here?” Roman suggested.

“Satisfactory. Virgil?”

Virgil scuffed the floor with the toe of his shoe. “Yeah, just yell if anything happens.”

“We will.”

Virgil followed Roman into the kitchen. He braced himself for the royal asking about the table.

“The dust is in here, it looks undisturbed. what is that?” Roman exclaimed.

Virgil picked at the lint inside his hoodie pocket. “They’re cuffs, those were here before. I’m gonna look in the fridge.”

Virgil turned his attention to the fridge and refused to look at the prince. The food was expired and rotten, but nothing seemed out of place.

“Hey Princey, do you think moldy food could be causing Thomas’ weird feeling?”

When he didn’t get an answer, he looked over at Roman. Roman was staring at the installed cuffs on the table, chest heaving, face red, and breath loudly going in and out of his nose.
“Roman?” Virgil asked tentatively.

Roman looked at Virgil and *holy shit he’s pissed*. His eyes were hard and Virgil swore the irises were red. He flinched instinctively, and the royal’s eyes softened.

“Hey, i-it wasn’t that bad-”

“Yes it was. I don’t know the extent of what they did to you, but yes it was. You are so strong to have come out the other side of that. Please do not minimize it.”

Virgil was a little jarred by not being able to minimize as Roman had called it, but he knew Roman was right.

“Y-yeah, okay. Let’s just get this over with.”

“Of course.”

Roman and Virgil finished searching the kitchen when they heard a sob come from Patton. Both raced out of the kitchen to find Logan holding Patton against his chest, about two feet away from the mattress, with Patton’s back to it. The logical Side met the eyes of Roman and Virgil. He looked lost.

“Let’s just get this over with.” Virgil grumbled. Logan nodded. Patton pulled away from Logan and gazed at Virgil, face wet. Logan opened up a small pack of Kleenex he kept in his pocket and offered one to Patton. Patton pulled himself together and hesitated. Logan just put his arm around Patton’s shoulders and led him away from the mattress.

Once they were closer together, Virgil had to know, “Pat, are you okay? Do you need to stop?”

Patton smiled shakily. “I’m okay kiddo. I’m more worried about you.”

“I’m fine enough. Not great, but it is what it is. You’re the center of Thomas’ emotions, so just tell us.”

“Same.”

Virgil grunted.

“Did either of you find anything?” Logan asked.

Roman sighed. “I’m afraid not my friend. We must continue searching.”

Logan nodded curtly. “Virgil, do you know which direction we should search in next to maximise our efficiency?”

Virgil pursed his lips. “Let’s knock out upstairs. There’s only one level and it’s all bedrooms.”

“Very well.”

Roman took charge and led them up the stairs.

Virgil grimaced at the thought of the rooms he’d have to lead the Light Sides through. *It’s only going to get worse from here.*

Chapter End Notes
Logan would absolutely be the first to die in a horror movie because he'd be trying to prove the demon doesn't exist and taunt it out in the open and then his friends who are actually hiding would see his head get turned around.

We got a little more backstory with this one! I hope that helps you forgive me for the next few chapters. Q.Q

Edit: the name for Virgil's plastic spider came from Bloodbone! They suggested it because it's a cute name and Mary Shelley wrote Frankenstein, and Virgil would absolutely stan Mary Shelley as a little emo.
Hi folks! First and foremost, there are two new tags that both apply to this chapter (they're the two before the last tag. No dentistry in this chapter). Please read them and consider if that's something that will be upsetting to you. Also, basically the entire section before the line of forward slashes is just plain ugly, in that many of the warnings in the tags will apply, including vomiting. There are no graphic descriptions of sexual assault, but there are heavy implications, including a few non-graphic flashbacks. I'll be putting a brief description of that section in the ending A/N's so it can be read by those of you who would prefer it that way.

The first door they came across was Greed’s door. Virgil was going to open the door, but he couldn’t make his body obey him. Luckily, Roman seemed to pick up on what was wrong and opened the door, one hand on the hilt of his sword.

The room smelled of rotting food and dust. Roman wrinkled his nose.

“Greed liked to store food in here, that’s why it’s so gross.” Virgil explained.

“What in the name of Zeus are in these jars?” Roman wondered aloud.

Virgil looked at the jars Roman was referring to and paled. His skin felt cold.

“Indeed, these are strange…” Logan observed.

Well, there’s no nice way to put this.

“They’re fingernails and toenails.” Both curious traits jumped backwards in disgust.

“EEEEUUUGGHHHH!” Roman shrieked.

“WHY. ON EARTH.” Logan spluttered.

Virgil stared at the ground. “It was kind of a friendly competition between him and Jealousy.”

“Why are they different at the top?!” Logan shuddered.

Virgil sighed. “Because the ones at the top are mostly toenails. That’s after I started appearing in videos.”

Virgil knelt down to look under the bed and yep, there’s the rotting food. Gross. Virgil shivered. As he was putting the quilt back down, he heard,

“I will fucking murder them.”

Virgil stared in shock at Patton, whose fists and teeth were clenched. His stiff body was shaking and his face was red.
“Pat, are you-” Virgil started.

“This isn’t me being affected by the Dark Side.” Patton stared at Virgil, who flinched and gulped. Patton softened his features. “I’d never hurt you baby. What they did… it was sick. This isn’t your fault honey.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, tears pricking his eyes as he hunched his shoulders. Now he knows how gross you are, how tainted you are, and there’s no going back. He’s only going to learn more. “Yeah, I know, let’s just search this place.”

Patton knew, of course Patton knew. “What they did doesn’t mean you’re sick, it means they are.”

“Let’s just search this place.”

Virgil heard Patton sigh and walk over to the closet. Logan searched the desk while Roman examined the walls. Virgil walked around the floor, testing for trap doors.

“Nothing. Anybody else find anything?”

“Nay.”

“Nothing that would explain Thomas’ symptoms.”

Both Roman and Logan still sounded pissed. Virgil knew he’d just have to tiptoe around them.

Or you could let them fuck you to relieve some of their pent-up stress. You ARE in the Dark Side after all. Why not one more for old times’ sake?

Shut up, you’re a liar.

Am I? You don’t think they’d be more relaxed if they got to fuck you?

I mean they would, but-

But nothing. Be useful for once in your miserable life. You’re nothing, you useless, disgusting, ugly, toxic-

“Virge?” Patton called softly.

Virgil inhaled shakily and met Patton’s eyes.

“Do you need to stop?”

Virgil closed his eyes and did several rounds of breathing exercises.

“No, I’m good. Let’s just go faster.”

“Okay honey. Just let us know.”

Virgil kept his eyes down and walked silently out of the door. He heard the other Sides following him.

The next room they reached was Apathy’s. It was a mess, with junk food wrappers and TV dinner containers littered around the floor. Virgil avoided looking at the chair in the corner of the room. Apathy always made him do all the work.
The searched quietly, thankfully there weren’t any… souvenirs in Apathy’s room. Finding nothing, they went to Jealousy’s room next. Roman had to kick it open since it was locked. Virgil saw the Sides in front of him pause. He knew they were seeing the jars. Virgil cleared his throat.

“Let’s just get this over with.” The others nodded solemnly. Virgil made his way to the closet before the others could. He didn’t want them to find the whips and belts and paddles and canes…

Virgil tried to stay grounded while searching the closet, but he felt himself slipping away more and more. When he had to move the largest cane that had a darkened end, he couldn’t stop the flashback.

Virgil collapsed and curled into the fetal position. He felt fluid dripping out of him, could hear Jealousy circling him. The feeling of the cane was always so painful. Virgil tried grounding himself, especially since he could still see and hear what was going on in the present, but he kept slipping back into the past. He felt a hand on his shoulder, and whimpered and pulled away. The hand left his shoulder.

“Virgil, please hear me. Can you breathe with me, please?” Logan’s worried voice filtered through. Virgil opened his eyes and the flashback ended. He lurched forward and grabbed the trash can just in time to throw up into it. Virgil could hear Patton and Roman trying to soothe him. Once he finished, he spat out what he could and turned around so he was sitting facing the others. Roman offered him another handkerchief and a small travel-sized bottle of mouthwash, which he gratefully accepted.

Once he was done with the handkerchief and mouthwash and Roman had vanished it, he joked, “You’re gonna run out of those if you keep giving them away.”

“Nonsense! I am a prince! I never run out of handkerchiefs.”

Virgil snorted and rolled his eyes. He shakily pulled himself to his feet.

“Darling, if you need to stop-” Logan began.

“I’m fine.” Virgil interrupted.

Logan frowned. “You just got triggered into a flashback. I am concerned for your mental health. Going back to where one was sexually assaulted and tortured would be extremely traumatic for anyone.”

“Kiddo, we won’t judge you.”

Virgil sighed and wiped a hand over his face. “I can deal. I just want to get this over with. I don’t want to have to come back a second time.”

Logan sighed. “Very well. I can understand not wanting to come back a second time.”

Virgil curled his fingers against the desk. “Are we done searching this room? Did we look everywhere?”

“Yes. We should move on.”

Virgil jerked his head in agreement and left the room. He had to avert his eyes from the walls where he had been taken so many times. He froze and had to wipe at his eyes with his sleeves.

“My love?” Roman tentatively asked.
Virgil looked at him, desperately trying to keep the pain off his face, and knowing he was failing. _The hyperventilation and crying are probably cluing him in._

“Oh Virgil, my sweet stormcloud, please let me take you back.” Roman begged.

Virgil took a step back and sobbed, seeing all-too-familiar stains on the carpet. He gasped, trying to get a handle on his breathing. Once he managed to calm his breathing into a somewhat healthier pattern, he moved past the other Sides towards the next room. He couldn’t stop the tears now that they’d started.

Virgil shoved open Rage’s door and froze. Rage had clearly been planning to bring Virgil back to his room after that night he was rescued. There were too many things set up. Virgil felt every memory from each of the objects. All of the pain, the violation, the false tenderness.

Virgil realized the other Sides were moving around him, but he couldn’t make his body budge an inch. His vision began tunneling until it was all black. He only had one final thought.

_I hope the Light Sides will be okay if I’m unconscious._

///

“Virgil!!” Roman cried as he caught the limp body of his love. Virgil’s eyes were unseeing, wide open and staring at the ceiling.

Roman let out a single sob as he adjusted his dark angel so his head was on Roman’s shoulder. Roman brought the hand not holding Virgil up to gently close his eyelids. He looked up at Patton and Logan, unsure of what to do.

Logan and Patton were staring at Virgil with a mixture of rage and heartbreak. Patton straightened his back.

“We’re going back up to Thomas’ plane of existence. He can look after Virgil while we look around here.”

Logan shivered as he saw the harnesses and tools out of the corner of his eye. “I agree Patton. However, Virgil did say that he didn’t want to come back down here.”

“He won’t.” Patton said firmly. “We will.” Patton had a fire raging behind his eyes. Roman and Logan knew that there was no changing the moral Side’s mind.

“Alright.” Logan agreed. Roman just looked back at his fallen angel’s face.

“Roman, take Virgil up to Thomas’ room and set him on the bed. Logan and I will let Thomas know what’s going on.” Patton said, a little more gently.

Roman nodded at him and sank out to Thomas’ realm. He stared at his beloved’s face before delicately setting him down. Virgil still had tear tracks and snot on his face, so Roman conjured a slightly damp, warm towel and began cleaning his face.

Roman reflected on how he’d had to catch both his Host and his love in the same day. Thomas’ knees had given out shortly after Virgil confessed how long he had been abused by the Dark Sides. Roman sobbed at the memory. He had felt like his own legs wanted to buckle at Virgil’s confession, but he’d had to nearly drag his Host to the couch.

Meanwhile, in Thomas’ living room, two very upset Sides rose up. Thomas jumped up when he
saw Logan and Patton.

“Hey guys! How- where are Roman and Virgil?”

Logan’s face was as impassive as ever, but his eyes were distraught. Patton spoke for him.

“Virgil had a flashback and passed out. Roman’s up in your room putting Virgil to bed. Can you watch over him while me, Roman, and Logan continue to search the Dark Side?”

“Of course! How… how is he?” Thomas asked quietly.

Patton grimaced and looked down. “He’s not okay. But he will be.”

Thomas let out a breath. “Is it safe for you guys to be in the Dark Side without Virgil?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe so. We did not experience undue ill effects by being down there, and unlike your presence, the presence of another Side has never amplified the effects of any of our rooms or realms.”

Thomas chewed his lip and looked down. “Okay. Please be safe guys. Should we go upstairs?”

“Let’s.” Logan decided.

Thomas grabbed his laptop and charger, along with some granola bars and a couple of bottles of Gatorade. When the three walked into Thomas’ bedroom, they found Roman kneeling by the bed, just finishing up drying Virgil’s face. He looked up with red, wet eyes. Patton, Logan, and Thomas went to Roman immediately and held him.

Patton got there first and wrapped him up in a bear hug, while Thomas and Logan got on either side and wrapped one arm around him. There were soothing fingers stroking through his hair and comforting words being spoken into his ear. Roman felt the others shaking along with him. Once the comfort of physical contact had triumphed over his anguish, he pulled his head back and looked at the other three surrounding him. They seemed to pulling themselves together well enough, so with one final squeeze from his arms he leaned forward to check on Virgil. Virgil’s breaths were deep and even, and his face was relaxed. Roman was glad for the miniscule miracle that Virgil was resting. Logan handed everyone a Kleenex. Roman knew what Patton’s plan was and while he wanted to protect his boyfriends, his precious dark dream looked so… helpless. Roman just wanted to curl around his sweet little emo and protect him from everything.

But he couldn’t do that. No, if he did that, then all of Virgil’s suffering would have been for naught.

Roman stood, and the others followed. He turned his attention to Thomas. “Patton has told you our plan?” he asked.

Thomas nodded. “Yeah. I’ll stay here with Virge. I’ll keep working because he’ll worry if I don’t.” he finished with a small smile. He tilted his head and frowned.

“What’s that on his t-shirt?”

Logan followed his Host’s line of sight and winced.

“Virgil vomited twice when he became upset.”

Thomas frowned and was clearly trying not to cry.
“I’ll keep an eye on him.” Thomas said wetly.

Patton clapped a hand on his shoulder. “We know kiddo. We’re going to take care of whatever’s been going on and then we’ll be back up, okay?”

Thomas nodded silently. He walked around to the other side of the bed and got settled, expecting a long watch ahead of him.

The Light Sides all took one final look at the youngest member of their group, and sank out.

Chapter End Notes

Description of the 1st half of the chapter and rationale for it is below the forward slashes.

Also, I'm not the brightest bulb on the tree. Credit for the name for Virgil's plastic spider goes to Bloodbone. I only realized I forgot to credit them in the last chapter several hours after I posted it so I edited the A/N's there, but I wanted to give an on-time shout-out to them because they deserve it. We were chatting about the fic, and they suggested the name because 1) Shelly is a cute name, and 2) it pays homage to Mary Shelley, the author of Frankenstein, who Virgil would likely stan because he's a little emo child.

///// In Greed's room, they find jars of fingernails and toenails. Logan notices that they look different at the tops of the jars. Virgil explains that it was a competition between Greed and Jealousy to see who could collect the most fingernails and toenails from Virgil by separating them from the nail bed and ripping them off. He also explains that there are more toenails because once he started showing up for videos, they had to hide what they were doing more.

The rationale for this is unfortunately similar to the rationale behind a lot of this fic: personal experience. When someone damages a nail bed, the nail's alway's going to grow funky. I have a few toenails that won't grow quite right. Some people liked taking home trophies. Also, the separating from the nail bed part is WAY more painful than just ripping it off HOLY HECK IT HURTS SO HECKING BAD. If you want to see what that process is, the Toe Bro on YouTube has videos. (I use his videos as a way to sort of process and re-expose myself to that stuff, since one of my toenails might need to be removed in a similar fashion in the future due to the damage it incurred.)
Chapter 55

Chapter Notes

Hello again! There are graphic descriptions of sexual assault in this chapter. Since there's more than one, they're blocked off by a line of tildes and of forward slashes, so it'll look like this:

Safe (but dark)
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TW
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/////\
Safe (but dark)
/////\
~~~
TW
~~~
/////\
Safe (but dark)

Also, the safe but dark sections do include pretty heavy implications of sexual assault, including descriptions of objects, vomiting, sounding, and vague descriptions of visual media. There's a very brief mention of dentistry near the end. I'll put a brief description of the chapter in the ending A/N beneath some forward slashes if folks would prefer to get the info that way. Stay safe!! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Patton rose up in the Dark Side, he was happy to see that his boyfriends had popped up in the same area as him. They were standing outside of Rage’s room. The door was ajar and they could see what Rage had set up. Patton knew it would be best if they could finish searching the Dark Side before Virgil woke up, but he didn’t know how to proceed. He looked at the others helplessly.

Logan’s eyes were red and his face was a mask. Roman’s entire face was red, but it was growing redder by the second for an entirely different reason. Logan was the first to move, entering Rage’s room with long strides. Patton and Roman followed him. Logan searched the area around the corrupted objects. Patton gratefully went over to check underneath the bed and the closet, while Roman searched the desk, walls, and floor. Patton tried his best not to look at the items laid out, but he couldn’t help it. The ropes, knowing the context, were enough to give him chills. But that combined with the cane, cat o’ nine tails, belt, and frighteningly large insertable toys were enough to make him feel faint. Patton was a little confused by the small bumpy stick, but decided he didn’t want to think about it.

They didn’t find anything in Rage’s room. Patton noticed the rust-colored and off-white stains on the wall and carpet and fervently hoped that they weren’t what he thought they were. He ignored the voice in the back of his mind saying that the stains were exactly what he feared.
Oh my sweet baby. How much did you suffer?

Patton felt himself becoming devastated, but did everything he could to hold it off. He swallowed thickly and breathed in through his nose, needing to sniffle a few times. Patton felt nauseous and his hands were strangely cold as they went into Malice’s room. Malice’s room looked mostly normal except for the large, 3-inch binder filled with papers on his desk. Patton shivered as he walked in.

Logan noticed. “Patton?”

Patton smiled weakly at Logan. “I’m okay Lo, just… sad. And sick.”

Logan’s face softened, his mask slipping a bit.

Roman came up behind Patton and rubbed his back. Patton smiled at him and allowed himself that small comfort for a few seconds. Once he felt the tension in his chest fade a bit, he smiled again and pulled away towards the desk. Roman went to search the closet while Logan searched the rest of the room. Patton opened up the first folder and his heart stopped.

///// 
~~~~~

It was one of clearly many pictures. This picture had Virgil, no older than 9, tied to some kind of table, covered in blood and come, his eyes staring blankly at the ceiling while blood covered his thighs and genitals. There were lash marks and bruises everywhere, and Patton saw a ring around the base of his penis keeping it erect and... something coming out of it?

~~~~~
///// 

Then he remembered what Logan had said about sounding. And the bumpy stick in Rage’s room.

Patton let out a sound that was more like a wounded animal than a sob as he fell backwards and landed on the floor. Patton heard Logan and Roman react immediately, but he couldn’t hear their words over the roar of blood in his ears. He pushed until his back was against the bed, and even then he kept shoving his feet against the floor to try to escape the image. He was hyperventilating, his breaths noisy with the sound of distress; terrible whines and keens that came from the bottom of his diaphragm. His awareness was hazy and his body felt so numb and hyper-sensitive at the same time. He was vaguely aware that his breaths were fast and shallow, but he was in too much shock to care. He felt his boyfriends’ hands on him, and for once that didn’t feel good. He let out a pained moan and the hands left. He drew his knees up to his chest, wrapped his arms around them, buried his face and sobbed. He cried as emotions dominated his consciousness and he was reduced to reacting to his trauma. Sobs tore themselves violently from his throat as tears escaped his eyes and ran down his cheeks. Some sobs almost felt like screams in his throat.

Patton felt his cries dying down and becoming weaker. He could hear his boyfriends talking to him but still couldn’t make out the words. Patton could sense awareness coming back to him, and with it the burning sensation in his lungs. Patton remembered 4-7-8, which caused him to remember Virgil. He cried harder for a few moments before starting on his breathing.

Boy howdy this sure does work well! I hope it works as good for Virgil. After 10 rounds of breathing, Patton was feeling more in control. His breaths were still coming in violent hiccups, but he noticed he could hear better.
“That’s it Patton, keep breathing, you’re doing very well my dear.”

“My sweetest love, you’re alright, Virgil is safe now, he’s okay, you’re safe.”

Patton let out another sob as he allowed the loving words from his boyfriends be a balm to his anguish. The combination of breathing and soothing words helped Patton come back to the present. He lifted his head and was met with the concerned, tear-streaked faces of his boyfriends. Although his initial instinct was to comfort them, he knew that he needed to calm down first.

“Hey guys.” he said, his voice wrecked. Roman tried and failed to smile at him.

“My angel, my sunlight, we are here. Should we go back to the Light Side or Thomas’ bedroom?”

Patton breathed in and out slowly, then shook his head. “No. W-we need to finish this. I’m not letting Virgil come back down here and I don’t want you two down here by yourselves.”

“Why not?” Roman asked.

Patton quirked a half-smile. “Because we don’t know what will happen to Thomas if the Dark Side gets burned down.”

“Fair enough.”

Patton chuckled wetly. He used the bed behind him to support himself as he stood, his boyfriends watching closely and standing with him. Patton was offered a handkerchief and smiled as he took it. He knew that Roman had rushed to beat Logan to giving him something to blow his nose with. With a final sniffle, he said, “Let’s keep looking.”

Patton saw various pictures of Virgil scattered on the floor. _They must have fallen out when I fell backwards._ Some pictures had his kiddo suspended in tortured positions, others had him tied to a table and covered in blood and other fluids, some where he was being actively abused, and so many more. Patton tore his eyes away from them, needing to hold it together for his shadowy little songbird.

Patton walked over to the desk and saw that the folder had been closed at some point. He turned back to his boyfriends who were looking at him with drawn faces.

“We both saw them.” Logan supplied. Patton whimpered and started searching the desk.

_He was so young. My little songbird. There was so much blood..._

Patton shook himself and kept looking through the drawers. _We have to finish this before Virgil wakes up. I’m not putting my shadowling through that again._

Logan found more instruments of torture and abuse in the closet, but they didn’t find anything else. Patton noticed the tension in Roman’s body, but didn’t know what to do.

As they were heading towards what looked like the last bedroom in the hallway, Roman suddenly cried out and lunged at a wall. With a final cry of rage, he punched through it. He stood there with his arm still in the wall, panting. Logan and Patton were frozen in shock. Roman had never done _anything_ like that before; he was aware that he was the most muscular and physically strongest out of all of them, and always avoided taking his frustration out bodily when in the presence of the other Sides.
Once Roman had extracted his arm and flexed his hand, Logan spoke up. “We need to wrap this up as soon as possible.”

He was met with no opposition.

They quickly searched Deceit’s room. As Logan searched the desk, he avoided the computer until the last moment. It was the only room in the Dark Side that they had seen with a computer and it was logged in, seemingly paused on a black video. Roman and Patton had noticed the computer as well and decided against mentioning it. Once they were done, Logan was still staring at the computer screen, a feeling of dread like a leaden weight in his abdomen. He did some code searching and found that most of the computer was taken up by nearly a terabyte of videos. As he heard the other Sides come near him, he hit the play button.

The video glitched a few times before it started playing properly. Once it did, each Side felt their blood turn to ice.

/////  
~~~~~  
Virgil was sitting in a chair in the middle of a mostly-empty room. He looked to be around 12. Even at that age, he had scars, old and new injuries covering his body. They noticed blood coming from the tip of Virgil’s penis. A deep voice that they didn’t recognize was giving Virgil instructions. Virgil was tearfully following the instructions and openly crying as he was forced to touch himself.

~~~~~  
/////  
They only watched for a few seconds before Logan stopped the video and slammed the top of the laptop down, but they had seen enough. Patton had his hands to his mouth and was silently crying. Logan had tears running down an enraged and hard face while Roman seemed to be in shock. Once a whimper emanated from Patton, though, Roman took Patton into his arms. Logan put a hand on Roman’s shoulder and one on Patton’s back, and leaned his forehead onto Patton’s shoulder. Patton hid his face in Roman’s chest while Roman buried his face in Patton’s shoulder. After a few minutes, they gently parted. Logan kept his eyes trained on the ground. He knew that he couldn’t stay calm if he saw his loves’ faces. They silently went downstairs with all the solemnity of a funeral procession. There were two more doors; one was underneath the stairs, and the other was off the living room area.

Everyone paused at the bottom of the stairs, so Logan took the initiative to head towards the door underneath the stairs. His mind unhelpfully supplied a similarity to *Harry Potter*.

He opened the door and was met with a 3 foot high rolling utility cart with three levels. A cursory glance showed him a well-organized variety of sounds, vibrators, ropes, whips, belts, toys, and what looked like electrodes, among other items. Logan quickly stepped back and slammed the door, fighting the urge to punch a wall like Roman had. He turned to his boyfriends, who had gone pale.

Logan breathed in through his nose slowly, keeping eye contact with his dears. They copied him, and he led them through 5 rounds of breathing exercises. Logan met each of their eyes, nodded, and turned to the last door. Logan avoided looking at the vile mattress and chains as he walked past them, but he heard a whimper behind him. He placed his hand on the door handle and hesitated. His body began to shake as he felt his carefully maintained mask breaking apart.
Patton placed a hand on Logan’s shoulder and his other hand on top of Logan’s. He caught his sweetheart’s intelligent eyes, smiled, and pulled Logan’s hand away. Patton straightened his back and pushed the door open. The room was dark, so Patton felt around for a light switch and flipped it on.

The sight they were met with was like something out of a horror movie. After a few silent seconds, both Roman and Patton ran to vomit. Logan’s body was as stiff as a board, completely unable to move. Once the sounds of retching died down, Patton came over to Logan and squeezed his upper arm, pulling ever so gently to let Logan know that he could come closer. Logan wrapped his arms around Patton as he buried his face in his chest and sobbed. He felt Roman join them a moment later, Patton supporting both of them. Once they’d caught their breath, they met each others eyes with determination. They all noticed a long hallway extending out of the room, but waited to explore it.

The room had a table in the center of it that had several adjustable sections. Numerous chains and restraints hung from the ceiling around the table, as well as in an open area of the room and by a chair. The chair was near the table and also clearly adjustable, and looked like something one might see at a dentist’s office. The walls of the room were as horrific as the implements in the center of the room and hanging from the ceiling. There was a seemingly endless supply of whips, canes, paddles, belts, prods, toys, harnesses, ropes, and other devices that they couldn’t place. Thankfully, the room was mostly bare besides that, so they didn’t have to search for very long in that hellscape.

They all wordlessly gathered near the entrance to the darkened hallway. They felt a strong force pushing them away, like a corporeal feeling of doom. There was an ominous draft exuding from the passageway. Roman drew his sword and flipped the light switch. The hallway illuminated, showing an open door at the end with a grey fog swirling behind it. The Light Sides knew immediately what it was, and Roman ran forward to slam it closed. Roman sheathed his sword and looked to his loves. They nodded to each other, and wordlessly sank out to Thomas’ bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was really hard to write for a lot of reasons. One of them was that I tried to have the reactions of the Sides somewhat match the reactions of the Interpol agents when they liberated me and the other survivors from the place we were at. Trying to blend Interpol agents with lovable Sanders Sides characters was definitely a writing challenge! I also did my best to describe the stuff they found and the rooms.

///// The Light Sides explore Rage’s room and find several toys and devices used to hurt Virgil. In Malice’s room, they found a large binder with a variety of pictures of Virgil, both during and after abuse, referencing a flashback Virgil had in chapter 42. Patton had a breakdown and needed to be comforted by his boyfriends for a while before they could continue. In Deceit's room, they found more toys and devices. Logan found a laptop that was mostly taken up by a terabyte of videos. They played a video that had been paused on and it showed Virgil being instructed to do things by an unrecognizable voice off-camera. They went downstairs and found a closet underneath the stairs that had a rolling cart with a lot of toys and devices. They entered a room and found in it an adjustable table and adjustable chair in the center, restraints and
chains attached to the ceiling, and lots of things hung up on the wall. They explored a hallway off that room and found an open door to a grey swirling fog, closed it, and sunk into Thomas' room.
Chapter 56

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! First things first, there is self-harm and suicidal ideation in this chapter. If that might be triggering for you, please take care of yourselves. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As soon as the Light Sides sank out, Thomas buried his face in his hands and wept quietly. *What happened to Virgil? What did he see? Oh my god, poor Virgil.* Thomas had been supporting his internal worrywart as much as he could over the past several months by hanging out with him, but any time Virgil had a panic attack or flashback he’d leave. Virgil explained to Thomas that it was easier to manage Thomas’ anxiety when he was in his own shadowy room, but Thomas wished there was more he could do.

*How much did poor Virge go through? He said it was almost his entire life. It’s not fair!! He didn’t deserve it! He’s hurt so badly…*

A fresh wave of cries escaped him, but Thomas did his best to control his volume. God knew Virgil needed as much rest as he could get.

*He was so young…*

Thomas didn’t know exactly where that thought came from, but he had to choke back the sobs that wanted to escape him if he wanted to let Virgil sleep. It took him a long time to calm down. Once he did, he forced himself to edit a new shorts compilation video. He felt waves of grief wash over him, and although it was similar to the past several months after he had learned what happened to Virgil, these seemed to be coming in more frequent bursts.

*What are Roman, Logan, and Patton seeing?*

He tore himself away from that train of thought. Thomas looked back over at Virgil and smiled. *He looks so peaceful when he’s sleeping.*

Virgil had his bangs over his forehead. His eyes were closed and his lips slightly parted. Although his cheekbones seemed to stand out more compared to Thomas or the other Sides, his face looked very soft. His chest was moving up and down evenly, his breaths steady and deep. Thomas wanted to lean over and brush the hair out of Virgil’s face, but he didn’t want his emo Side to wake up. Virgil looked so comfortable and warm and relaxed laying on the bed. After thinking it over, Thomas carefully stood up and draped a thin cotton blanket over Virgil. *Just in case.*

Virgil grabbed the blanket in his sleep and turned to his side, snuffling and curling up a bit. His bangs were now covering less of his eyes and his mouth was in an adorable “O” shape. He relaxed and was breathing deeply again. Thomas had to stop himself from squealing at the sight.

*Virgil can deny it all he wants, but he’s fucking cute. Too bad it conflicts with his aesthetic.*

Thomas gingerly sat back down on the bed. He got some more editing done, and then he felt the empty, chaotic feeling disappear. Thomas remembered that he had been warned by Logan not to go
looking for them when they were in the Dark Side, but he wasn’t sure how much longer he could resist checking on them. Thankfully, just as he was about to cave, three pale Sides popped up in his room.

“Hey guys. I feel better. How… how did it go?” Thomas asked quietly.

All three looked about ready to cry, but Logan was able to school his features into a mostly blank mask.

“We discovered that the likely cause behind your strange feeling was due to a door that was opened to the subconscious.”

“What?” Thomas had never heard of a door leading to his subconscious. “What does that mean?”

“Every Side of the mindscape - the Light, Neutral, and Dark - has a doorway to the subconscious. For whatever reason, it was left open in the Dark Side.”

“Huh. Okay, I guess that makes sense, I guess subconscious thoughts are everywhere. Why would it be left open?”

“We cannot be certain. Do tell us if the feeling develops again though.” Logan’s eyes and the corners of his mouth tensed.

“I can do that. Are you guys okay?”

Logan’s mask fell back into place. “We are physically unharmed.”

Thomas smiled sadly at Logan. “That’s not what I meant buddy.”

A sob escaped Patton. He quickly covered his mouth and stared at Virgil. When Virgil didn’t stir, he turned to Roman and hid his face in Roman’s shoulder. Roman wrapped his arms tightly around Patton as silent tears rolled down his face. Logan’s calm facade was cracking.

Thomas felt a ball of pressure in his stomach. “What the hell happened down there?”

Another sob, this one muffled by Roman’s shoulder, left Patton. Logan’s body was shaking with effort.

“I believe the mental and emotional stress we are under is caused by the other findings we encountered.” Logan’s voice wavered at the end of the sentence. He cleared his throat before continuing. “We found a great deal of evidence regarding Virgil’s abuse and torture by the Dark Sides including jars, stains, pictures, video, and their various… tools and rooms whose intent was quite clear given the context.”

Thomas felt like throwing up. Both Roman and Patton had joined Logan in shaking and he could see their shoulders jerking with silenced sobs. “T-tools? What?”

“Yes, tools. Dozens.” Logan’s voice broke and wavered. “Please pardon our abruptness, but if you’ll excuse us, I believe we need to go cry.” Logan said wetly.

“Of course! I’ll keep an eye on Virgil. Go.” Thomas paused, his own voice thick. “I love you guys.”

“We love you too Thomas.” Logan said just before they sank down.

Thomas looked over Virgil’s sleeping form. He felt his own tears fall. Virgil was so sweet, and he
looked so vulnerable asleep like that. Thomas just wanted to protect his anxious aspect, but he knew that Virgil wouldn’t allow it.

*Maybe he’ll open up to me about what he went through. My God, what did you go through?*

Thomas turned to face his wall, let his feet fall off the side of the bed, and cried. He brought a hand up to muffle the sound. His grief for Virgil felt like a physical pain in his chest that was stabbing, burning, squeezing his heart.

He jumped when he heard a raspy, “Thomas?”

Thomas spun around and was met with a pale, wide-eyed Virgil.

“Are you okay? Did someone hurt you? What happened?” Virgil’s speech was becoming faster by the second.

“Woah, buddy, calm down! I’m not hurt. I’m okay, just sad.”

“What about the Light Sides?”

“They’re okay, they fixed the issue, they sank back down into the Light Side. Breathe buddy.”

Virgil completed a few breathing exercises. Thomas took the opportunity to grab a few tissues and pull himself together a little. He grabbed a Gatorade and drank some. Virgil refocused on Thomas a few minutes later.

Thomas sent him a small smile. “There you are.”

Virgil huffed and gave Thomas a half-smile. “Yeah. What happened?”

Thomas’ smile grew more melancholy. “The Light Sides decided to go and finish exploring the Dark Side-”

“They did WHAT?!”

Thomas winced at the volume. “They finished exploring the Dark Side and they fixed it. A door was open to the Subconscious. They’re fine! I mean…” Thomas grimaced, not knowing how to tell Virgil what Logan had relayed to him.

“Okay, okay, fuck, that’s… that’s not good.” Virgil stammered.

Thomas looked up at him. “What? Why not? Are the Light Sides not supposed to be down there?”

“Not really no. I don’t know if they got corrupted…”

“I don’t think they did. They seemed normal?”

“The way you said that makes me worry.”

“No, it’s just, they seemed like themselves, but they were… really sad.” Thomas bit his lip, knowing what was coming but wanting to avoid it.

“Why were they sad?” Virgil asked, fear coloring his voice.

Thomas closed his eyes. Virgil deserved to know, but he hated the thought of causing his friend more pain. “They found stuff from your past.”
Virgil somehow sounded resigned to his fate and on the verge of tears at the same time. “What stuff?”

Thomas swallowed in a vain attempt to keep the emotion out of his voice. I’m about to hurt Virgil and I don’t want to. God I can’t stand the thought of hurting him. But he deserves to know, I’ve got to tell him, or he’ll be more hurt later. God, he doesn’t deserve this!!

“Th-they found pictures, videos, and um, t-tools and rooms?”

Virgil sobbed from next to him. Thomas opened his eyes to see Virgil curl into a ball. His back was against the wall and he had his face hidden in his knees. He was crying.

“Virgil, oh my God, I’m so fucking sorry. I’m so sorry.” Thomas whispered. “Can I hug you?”

Virgil shook his head. “I c-can’t.”

“That’s okay Virge.”

“I n-n-need s-some time a-a-alone.”

“Okay buddy. Please let me know if there’s anything I can do.”

Virgil nodded and sank out. Once he was completely gone, Thomas laid down on his bed and cried for his friend.

////////

Once the three boyfriends sank into Roman’s room, they all headed towards his bed at once. Logan crawled on first, with Roman in the middle and Patton nearest the edge of the bed. Roman had the broadest chest and shoulders out of all of them, so he often found himself in the middle. Not that he minded.

Roman held Logan tightly against him. Roman felt his boyfriend quaking and a patch on his shirt getting wet. Logan was silent, save for desperate gasps. Patton was not quiet, sobbing loudly and holding onto Roman’s shirt for dear life. Roman hugged Logan tighter and buried his face in Patton’s vanilla-scented hair.

“H-he w-w-was just a b-b-baby!!” Patton wailed. “He was a l-little b-b-baby! D-did you s-s-see w-what th-they d-d-did to h-him?!?”

“We did.” Logan tearfully answered, vocalizing a few of his own cries. Roman let out several sobs that had been stuck in his throat.

“What he went through… I can’t, I can’t…” Roman trailed off, unable to continue. He had to close his eyes and take a few deep breaths before he started to hyperventilate. He felt his boyfriends tighten their hold on him. Patton kissed his cheek.

They held each other until they were out of tears. Roman felt like his chest was tearing itself to pieces, and he whimpered as the waves of pain hit him. With his boyfriends supporting him, they all fell into an uneasy slumber.

////////

Virgil sank into his room and trembled. They know they know they know oh god they saw…

Tomorrow morning they’re going to tell you that you’re not worth it. That you’re too much work.
You’ve never been worth it. You’re disgusting, fucking disgusting. They know how tainted you are now. You’re disgusting, so disgusting.

Virgil looked down at his arms. He saw the polluted skin below his clothes and it was disgusting and he hated it. Virgil tore off his clothes and began scratching at his skin, hoping to peel it off.

Get it off get it off get it off get it off get it off get it off!!!

Virgil felt frustration like an inferno in his gut. He let out an exasperated yell and stalked to the bathroom. He turned the water as hot as it would go and took the rest of his clothes off. He scratched and burned under the water for an hour until the scalding fog lifted from his mind and he’d realized what he had done. He stared at his arms and thighs in shock. Belatedly, he reached back and turned the shower to cold. When it hit him he gasped and turned it off.

Look at you. You’re all cut up and bleeding. You can’t stop hurting yourself. Hurting others. You’ll never be anything more than a mental illness. You scourge.

He pulled his knees up and cried into them. He stayed naked in the middle of the cooling shower, crying as his brain continued to torment him. His back burned, his arms and legs stung, and it all only served to remind him what a burden and failure of a Side he was.

I should just kill myself. They don’t deserve to have to put up with me. They’re going to get rid of me tomorrow anyway. Maybe a new, better Side will take my place. I hope so. Virgil let out several particularly painful sobs as the thoughts crashed down around him and cut deeper than a razor ever could. Thomas, I love you so much, I’m so sorry I hurt you so much. I love you. Virgil froze. Remy! Saul! They don’t hate me as much yet! They deserve a note. They all do.

Virgil dried himself off carelessly and went to his desk. He grabbed a plain sheet of printer paper and a pen.

Hey guys,

Sorry to do this to you. But I’m tired of hurting you. I know you deserve better. You don’t deserve to have to put up with me. Everyone will be better off without me.

Remy and Saul, thank you for being my big brothers and substitute parents when I was littler. Thank you for tolerating my awful, annoying, hurtful, grating presence with a smile. I love you guys.

Roman, Logan, and Patton, thank you for pretending to accept and love me. There were a few times I believed it. I know you were only trying to make sure Thomas was healthy, and that’s good. You shouldn’t worry about me. And, I know you’ll never feel the same way about me, and I would never expect you to, but I love you. More than family love. I know it could never happen, was never meant to be, but maybe you’ll like the new Anxiety better? I hope so. You deserve it.

And Thomas, my Host. You’re so wonderful. You’re the most incredible person I know. You bring joy to so many people and spread a huge message of love. You deserve a better Anxiety than me. Please don’t hate me. I love you.

-Virgil

Virgil was crying as hard as he had been in the shower. He felt all of the guilt from over the years tearing apart his organs and shredding him from the inside out. He looked back down at the letter and was horrified.
I don’t want to die.

Virgil cried harder at that. He tore the paper and threw it to the far side of his room, wrapped his arms around his middle, and sobbed. He was leaning forward a little and shaking with the force of his weeping.

Thomas needs me. If- If I die, he won’t have an Anxiety. I don’t want to die!

Virgil sobbed and pushed himself away from his desk. He focused on breathing exercises as much as he could through his crying. Once he had stabilized somewhat, he thought back to Dr. Picani.

Okay, our plan was to find one of the Light Sides and call Dr. Picani if I needed help. But I don’t want to die! And the Light Sides are exhausted already from having to deal with Thomas’ issues without me because I’m weak and pathetic.

Thomas.

Virgil wept as he put his clothes back on, sticking to him in places he hadn’t properly dried off. He sat on his bed and focused on his breathing exercises again. When only intermittent whimpers were leaving him, he looked up and did the grounding exercise. He did another breathing exercise, and stood to leave. His eyes fell upon his plastic spider. Normally, it gave him comfort to look at. He loved spiders. But this time, it only caused his eyes to fill with new tears.

I’m so sorry Isaiah…

Knowing that train of thought would only bring fresh tears, he tore his gaze away from it and concentrated on appearing in Thomas’ bedroom.

Virgil focused on a corner in Thomas’ room. Thomas still had the light on and was editing when Virgil appeared.

I probably look like shit.

Thomas jumped and looked up at Virgil. His smile quickly turned into concern.

“Virgil?”

Virgil kept his mouth closed around a sob that his diaphragm forcefully punched out of him. Thomas put his computer aside and jumped up to help him.

“Oh Virge…” Thomas paused. “Do you want a hug?”

Virgil chewed his lip, then shook his head slowly.

“Okay. What do you need?”

Virgil hiccuped in a breath. “C-can I s-s-stay h-h-here t-tonight?”

“Oh of course! Do you want to stay in the bed?” Virgil nodded. “Okay! It’s about time I start getting ready for bed anyway. Do you need anything?”

Virgil whimpered. He didn’t want to, but…

“A-antiseptic?”

“Sure, wh- Virgil, are you hurt?” Thomas’ eyes were wide.
Virgil nodded.

“Can I see?” Thomas asked gently. Virgil answered by pulling up his sleeves. He heard an intake of air from Thomas.

“Oh Virgil…”

Virgil felt something in him break. “I didn’t mean to! I don’t want to! I’ve been trying to stop, and Dr. Picani’s been helping, but I felt everything at once and I was gonna die! My skin is so gross, disgusting, I hated it and wanted it off! And the shower burned and I’m such a burden, and I wasn’t thinking I was just feeling! I didn’t want to kill myself, I don’t want to die, I love you Thomas, you deserve so much better than me, I-” Virgil was cut off by a crushing hug.

“I love you too Virgil.” Thomas said wetly. “I don’t want you to die. Please don’t die. I love you. You’re not gross, and I don’t care how much we have to support you, you’re worth it. I know you’re suffering so much right now and I’m so sorry. But we are here and we love you for YOU and nothing’s going to change that.”

Virgil broke down. He held the sides of Thomas’ jacket and cried with Thomas. Thomas was sobbing loudly into Virgil’s shoulder.

Once Virgil felt his tears run out, he pulled away. Thomas looked at him, his face crumpled and wet.

“Please don’t die Virge.”

“I won’t. I promise. I don’t want to hurt you. That’s w-why I came here. I don’t want-” Virgil’s voice caught in his throat. Thomas knew what he was trying to say.

“I’m glad to hear that. I’m so happy you came here.”

“I didn’t want to kill myself. I don’t want to die. I just wanted it to stop. I just wanted to stop hurting you guys.” Virgil ducked his head, embarrassed at having said so much. He knew it was only because he was so emotional.

“Virgil.” Thomas said shakily, but firmly. Virgil knew he had to look up. “We are sad to see you hurting. I’m not going to deny that. That’s because we love you. You help us and make us happy so much more than you make us sad. I promise.”

Virgil smiled a small smile at Thomas, who returned it. Thomas squeezed Virgil’s shoulders.

“Let’s take care of your cuts?”

Virgil nodded. “They… They’re scratches.”

Thomas smiled sadly and led Virgil to the bathroom. Thomas picked up the bottle of antiseptic when Virgil spoke up.

“Can… can I do it myself? I don’t like other people seeing me…”

Thomas set the bottle on the counter. “Of course. Let me know if you need anything.”

“I will.”

Thomas left and closed the door behind him. Virgil made quick work of his injuries and bandaged himself up.
“I’m done.” he called.

Thomas opened the door slowly, then smiled at Virgil. He quickly went through his nighttime routine and walked out of the bathroom. Virgil followed him back into the bedroom. Thomas offered a bottle of Gatorade to Virgil, who accepted it and drank half of it in one go.

“Which side do you want?”

Virgil sat down on the side closest to the door. Thomas slept on the second story, and the architecture made it so that they wouldn’t have to worry about someone coming in through the window as much as someone coming up the stairs.

Virgil got under the covers only when Thomas did.

“Do you want to cuddle?” Thomas offered.

“Not tonight.” Virgil said, his voice still sore.

“Ohkay. Let me know if you need anything. Good night Virgil. I love you.”


Thomas just chuckled. “I got you dude.”

Virgil snorted and snuggled into the pillow.

Chapter End Notes

We got some ThVi fluff! I think we needed ThVi fluff, don't you?

I did my best to represent what spiralling looks like for me. I hope it helps someone out there who needs to see it so they know they're not alone and that it's not the end.

<3
Hi folks! A couple of things: first, there is a description of sexual assault. It's the italicized block of text inside the tildes. Also, there's elements of rape culture, including victim blaming, in the second section, as well as vomiting. Take care of yourselves! <3

Virgil stayed awake most of the night watching Thomas. Whenever he heard a noise, he carefully crept out of bed to investigate, and then returned to continue watching over Thomas. When 4 AM rolled around, Virgil smelled coffee behind him.

“Hey babe.”

Virgil jumped and shot a look at Thomas. Fortunately, Thomas seemed to sleep through it. He turned back to glare at Remy.

Remy just shrugged. “You’re in his plane of existence, I sensed someone not sleeping next to Thomas, sue me.”

Virgil sighed out his nose and relaxed back into the pillow. Remy leaned down and brushed Virgil’s hair out of his face.

“It’s time for you to sleep too, boo. You’re in this realm, you’re vulnerable to Mr. Sandman.”

Virgil shook his head, already losing the battle to sleep. “No… I gotta protect him…”

Remy just massaged the top of Virgil’s head. “He’s safe sugar. Go to sleep.”

And so he did.

~~~~~~~~

He could hear heavy breathing and rustling clothes all around him. A Side of the superintendent - Virgil thinks it’s Fury - is thrusting in and out of him.

“Now boys, you want to be careful not to break your new toy. It’s fun to push them to the edge, but it’s hard to put them back together again. Just like Humpty Dumpty!”

‘Oh, it’s Entitlement.’ Virgil thought distantly.

“This one’s still little, so you do have to be more careful with it. But, you can train them and they tend to learn pretty quickly. And once it’s older, you can have more fun!”

Sounds of agreement echoed around him. Entitlement finished inside him and stayed there for a few moments before pulling out without a care.

“Deceit, if I remember correctly, you have some… unique features that can push this one?”
“I would think so.”

“Great! Once you’re done, the others will have a turn and we’ll see how much more it can take.”

Virgil was scared. He knew that Deceit was different, but he’d always only done one at a time.

‘He couldn’t be thinking about-’

Virgil screamed as his question was answered. Despite having been trained not to move, he was desperately trying to get away. He couldn’t help it; his body was responding at its base instinctual level.

Deceit slapped him. “Don’t move!”

Virgil just kept screaming and crying. He knew he should relax, but it was like he couldn’t control his muscles. His body was trying to protect itself from the tearing that was taking place. It felt like he was being split in two up to his chest. Fury came around to his front and held his shoulders, locking him in place.

“It can take it, keep going.”

Virgil cried as his muscles turned to liquid. He hated losing control like that, but when hopelessness set in he didn’t have a choice. He kept crying with the occasional scream as Deceit kept going. His body decided to completely stop responding, and just like that he stopped screaming and crying. He wanted to, gods did he want to, but he was completely limp. Deceit released inside of him and relaxed for a few minutes before roughly pulling out. Virgil twitched at that. Deceit walked around the table, each footstep like a gunshot to Virgil’s ears. Deceit leaned over and Virgil could smell his cologne and sweat.

“See? That wasn’t so bad.” Deceit patted his cheek. Virgil twitched again.

“Excellent work! Fury, why don’t you show Rage his assignment?”

“Oh, gladly.”

~~~~~

Virgil’s eyes were assaulted by bright lights coming from the other side of his eyelids. He groaned and threw his arm over his eyes to protect them from the light’s wrath. He never understood why the Dark Sides insisted on frickin’ sodium lights in the Dark Side, but regardless of the reason it hurt every time.

“Morning Virge.” Thomas chuckled beside him.

Virgil bolted upright and whipped his head around. Once he established that Thomas appeared unharmed, he looked around for the Dark Sides. He could feel the contents of his stomach creeping up.

“Virge? You okay?”

Virgil leapt off the bed and barely made it in time to the toilet. As he was puking what little was in his stomach, Thomas came up behind him. He rested a hand on his Side’s back.

“Hey, easy there…”

Virgil wrenched himself away from the toilet and pressed his back against the shower, watching
Thomas with wide eyes. Thomas put his hands up.

“It’s okay! I’m sorry I touched you, I won’t if you don’t want me to!”

Virgil’s breathing was coming faster as he descended into a panic attack. He could hear Thomas trying to talk to him, but he couldn’t make out the words. Virgil slumped down onto his side as his vision blacked out. He could still hear everything, and the lack of vision seemed to help him.

*Breathing, focus on breathing. Exhale. One, two, three, four…*

Virgil led himself through a dozen breathing exercises before he opened his eyes. Thomas was looking at him in alarm with wide eyes. Virgil groaned and pushed himself up. He was fighting off a flashback, and he knew his Host would never hurt him, but he kept seeing one of the Dark Sides in his place.

“Virgil, oh buddy, what do you need?”

Virgil was shaking and trying not to throw up again, though he’d doubt anything would come up if he did.

“I-c-ice c-c-cube.”

“Okay, I’m gonna go get that, will you be okay here for a minute?”

Virgil nodded his head shakily at Thomas. When he left, Virgil let out a sigh of relief. *At least I won’t see them anymore.*

He was sure his brain did it just to spite him, but the image of the Dark Sides reappeared, this time standing over him. He flinched back and whimpered. They started walking closer to him.

*They’re so solid, are they back? No, no they can’t be back they’re locked up in the Imagination. Oh shit Roman! I haven’t checked on them! Are they okay?!!*

Thomas came back with an ice cube and to Virgil’s relief, the images became far less real. Thomas knelt in front of Virgil.

“Here you go buddy.”

Virgil took the ice cube and squeezed it, doing his breathing exercises. Once he felt more present, he did a grounding exercise. He looked back at Thomas and offered him a shaky half-smile. Thomas did the same.

“Sorry ‘bout that.” Virgil said roughly. He winced at the gravelly sound.

“Oh no, you don’t have to apologize! It’s not your fault! I just didn’t want you to suffer! How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. “Better-” he broke off into a coughing fit. *Damn my throat hurts.*

“Oh hey, easy there! Let’s go downstairs and I can make you some tea, maybe get you some cough drops.”

Virgil had little choice once Thomas went into mother hen mode. The thought made him smile. *Thomas is too good for this world.*

Thomas sat Virgil down in a dining room chair and started the tea in the microwave. He got Virgil
a lemon and honey cough drop and got out lemon juice and honey for his tea. He also got Virgil a
glass of water, a banana, and a container of blueberry Greek yogurt.

Thomas set the tea in front of Virgil with the rest of the items. He pointed at it. “No working until
you’ve finished that.”

Virgil smirked. “Yes Patton.”

Thomas laughed, an unbound, joyful sound. Virgil smiled a full smile; he loved hearing his
wonderful Host laugh so freely and he was thrilled that he was the one who made him do it.
Thomas brought his laptop downstairs and worked in silence while Virgil ate and drank. Virgil felt
dread building in his stomach at the thought of having to see the Light Sides again after they’d
been in the Dark Side. If they’d seen a tenth of what he feared, then he knew that they knew way
more than they had previously.

*How are they gonna look at me? How much will things change? They’re gonna not want to be
associated with me anymore. It makes sense, I’m just going to make them uncomfortable.*

Virgil finished eating and drinking, and stood to sink out.

“Hey Virge.” Virgil looked up at him. “I’m glad you came to me and let me help you. That was
really brave and I’m proud of you. I like helping you and hanging out with you, so the door’s
always open.”

Host and Side smiled at each other, and Virgil sunk down into his room.

Virgil sighed in relief. He collapsed on his bed and checked the time. 9:30 AM.

*Shit. I missed breakfast.*

Virgil plugged in his headphones and scrolled through Tumblr, idly keeping an eye on the outside
world. After 2 and a half hours, he put his phone and headphones down and got up to go to lunch.

*Now or never.*

Virgil smiled at Shelly and saw a note underneath his door. His breaths coming faster, he picked it
up with trembling hands.

*Virgil,*

*Please come find one of us when you feel ready. We would like to discuss yesterday.*

*Logan.*

*Virgil gulped. That doesn’t sound good. Shitshitshitshitshitshitshitshitshitsh...*

There was a letter attached to it. Frowning, he opened it and jumped as another letter fell out of that
one.

*Greetings Virgil, our favorite emo!*

*Forgive Logan’s letter for being more ominous than a darkly-enchanted cloud. We are not upset
with you!*

*Forever yours,*

~*Roman*
Virgil picked up the third letter, a small amount of tension leaving his chest.

**Heya kiddo!**

*Just wanted to let you know that we love you and that you’re not in trouble and that we love you SO MUCH!!!!*

**Hugs!**

**Patton!**

Virgil quirked a small smile and put the letters in his pocket. The letters said that he wasn’t in trouble, but he couldn’t escape the anxiety.

*I’ll have lunch with Saul and Remy. I haven’t had lunch with them in a while.*

**Totally not a cop out at all Virgil.**

*Shut up.*

*Oh, I’m not a liar this time?*

Virgil growled as he focused on the Neutral Side’s kitchen. He could feel tears pricking his eyes as he felt everything he’d been through since yesterday.

*Fuck, that’s a lot. Shit, I need to talk to Dr. Picani about this.*

“Hello darling.”

Virgil turned and smiled. “Hey Saul.”

Saul grinned and ruffled Virgil’s hair, earning him a hiss. He chuckled and brought his hand back down. “We’re just about to start lunch. Would you like to join us?”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

Saul brought Virgil into the kitchen where Remy was. “Hey coffee bean! How’d you sleep?”

Virgil shrugged. “Fine. I got a couple hours.”

Remy tilted his head forward and raised his eyebrows. “How many hours?”

Virgil broke eye contact and looked down. “Like, 5?”

Remy sighed. “I suppose that’s better than you have been doing, so I’ll take it. How do grilled paninis sound?”

“That sounds good.”

Virgil offered to help with the paninis but Remy refused and made him sit. They had caprese paninis with basil, tomato, mozzarella, balsamic vinegar, prosciutto, and parmesan. Virgil didn’t comment on the extra cheese and prosciutto that was added to his sandwich. He knew he was gaunt and hideous.

Virgil stretched and leaned back, not wanting to go back to the Light Side or even think about yesterday.
“We noticed a lot of chaos yesterday bean. What happened?” Remy asked.

Fuck.

“I, ah, nothing much, really, just—” Virgil inhaled nervously, already feeling adrenaline fighting for control. “Thomas had some issues, but we took care of them. Well, the Light Sides did more than me, but, um, yeah.” Virgil cringed at his awkwardness.

“What kinds of issues?” Saul asked.

Virgil cleared his throat. “Well, he felt this weird empty feeling, so we had to explore the Dark Side.”

“Oh baby.” Remy breathed.

“It’s fine, I’m fine, it’s okay.” Virgil hurried out.

“Are you sure honey? That place was hell for you.”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m fine.”

“Is that why you’re hiding from the Light Sides?”

Virgil’s head whipped up in shock. Remy smiled sadly.

“You get very jittery when you’re nervous sweetie. And you haven’t mentioned them once. Plus you’re not very subtle when you’re trying to avoid talking about something.”

_Dammit._

“You know you can talk to us, right?” Saul seemed worried.

“I know.”

Remy slid a dark chocolate mocha over to Virgil. “You don’t have to tell us everything, but why don’t you tell us why you’re avoiding the Light Sides?”

Virgil clutched the mocha and took a sip. _Perfect temperature, perfect balance. Dammit Remy._ “I’m just nervous.” he muttered into the lid.

“We have time baby. What are you nervous about?”

Virgil ducked his head lower. “I don’t want them to look at me different.”

That gave the Neutral Sides pause. “Why would going to the Dark Side make them look at you differently?” Saul asked. He felt rage like a flash fire go through him. “Did something happen?” he growled. Remy put a hand on Saul’s shoulder and squeezed, also worried for the smaller Side.

“N-no, not exactly.” Virgil hedged, trying to avoid it. “It’s just… they’ve seen… some stuff. Y’know, from m-my past.” Virgil felt his eyes burn and his throat harden with the attempt to control his voice.

“What did they see baby?” Remy asked gently.

Virgil let out a sob. “Th-they saw, um, l-l-like s-some of the t-tools th-th-the Dark S-Sides l-liked t-to use. And the l-living r-r-room m-m-mattress and ch-chains and some of the o-o other stuff they
installed other places. Th-Thomas said they saw the rooms they’d use and some pictures and,”
Virgil sobbed, “a-and videos too.” Virgil rested his forehead against the counter. “I-I d-don’t w-w-want them t-to k-k-kick me out!”

Remy rushed over and started rubbing Virgil’s back, stopping when Virgil flinched. “Oh baby, I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry you went through so much. We’re here for you sugar pie. And I’m sure they won’t kick you out.”

Virgil sobbed. “B-but y-you don’t kn-kn-know what they s-s-saw! A-a-and I’m already s-such a b-burden…” Virgil trailed off into breathless cries.

“Sweetie, I don’t need to see everything they saw to know that they care about you. I think you’re underestimating yourself hun. You make them - and us - so happy. Think of it this way: if Roman went through what you did and was having understandable trauma reactions like you are, would you cut him out of your life?”

Virgil was offended. I’d never do anything like that to Roman! My God, if he went through what I went through, I’d just want to help him!

“No! Of course not!”

“Then why is it so different for you?”

“Because Princey is worth something!” Virgil shouted. Silence fell over the kitchen. Virgil realized what he had done and began weeping into his arms again.

“Sweetie… You know you’re worth something too, right?”

Virgil just kept crying into his arms, not bothering to answer. Saul sighed.

“Okay, so you think the reason they’re gonna kick you out is because you’re not worth anything while everybody else is and you’ve been traumatized?”

Virgil nodded his head in his arms. I’m never gonna see them again. I love them.

“You make me smile.” Saul said.

Virgil paused. Where the hell did that come from?

“You’re funny and sarcastic. It’s really entertaining. You’re good at holding a conversation or just being with someone quietly. You’re also really smart.”

Remy joined in. “I love watching trashy, low-brow TV with you because you don’t judge me, we just judge the actors. Harshly. And I echo everything Saul said. You’re thoughtful, and kind, and vigilant, and so much more.”

“Okay, okay, I get it, you guys like me.” Saul and Remy shared a triumphant look over Virgil’s head.

“But that doesn’t mean they do.” Virgil said quietly.

Remy sighed. “Sugar, if the looks they send you mean anything, I think they care about you a whole lot.”

Virgil looked up at that. Remy winked and Virgil blushed. “Shut up.”

“No. Wanna watch some B-roll creature features?”
“Yeah, I guess.”

“Excellent! Saul, baby?”

“Why not?”

Remy ushered everyone in front of the television and conjured kettle corn. They spent the next few hours laughing at the terrible CGI and aiming popcorn at the protagonists’ heads.

When it was around 4, Virgil sat up. “I don’t think I should put this off any longer.”

Remy and Saul sat up. “I think that’s very brave of you.”

Virgil scoffed and rolled his eyes. Saul laid his arm across the back of the sofa. “You’ve got this.”

Virgil sighed. “Thanks guys.” He stood and with a two-fingered salute, sank out.

Remy shifted over to Saul and rested his head against Saul’s chest. Saul wrapped his arms around his boyfriend.

“H-he s-s-said tools. And r-rooms. What the fuck did those sick bastards do?! He thinks so little of himself…” Remy snifflled.

Saul squeezed his partner tighter. “They did terrible things to him. But our boy will come out on the other side of this. He’s so fucking strong. He survived. Now he just has to heal.”

Remy nuzzled his face into Saul’s chest. “I know. I just… Healing is hard… and he didn’t deserve that…”

“No one does.”

“Why did he have to suffer so much?!”

“He didn’t have to. Those bastards didn’t have to hurt him. They chose to.”

Remy and Saul stayed there, hugging each other for a long time.

Virgil sank back into his room.

“I’m just… gonna make sure I look good. I’m not avoiding them.

Sure you aren’t.

I’m not!

You have got to want to Deceit out of that prison, don’t you? Miss him that much?

Virgil ignored the voice and went into his bathroom to check his hair and makeup. To his chagrin, everything was in place. He sighed and walked over to sit on his bed. His eyes caught the air vent that was just at ground level. He reflected on how much he missed crawling through the vents. He knew it was only a dream, but the vents were the happiest he’d ever been. It was the greatest adventure with animals and dinosaurs and other creatures, all in an idyllic environment. Everything always ended up good. It would become nightmarish as he woke up, but the part that was good was the purest joy he’d ever felt. The vents were perfect, the closest thing to Heaven.
Is that why you want the other Dark Sides out so bad?

I don’t!

Then why do you constantly do things that make them stronger, like lying, being greedy, being jealous-

Shut up! I don’t want that!

Oh, but you want the vents, no? You only went through the vents when you were being raped. Although, can it be considered rape if you secretly wanted it?

I didn’t!

But you want the vents.

Virgil let out a frustrated scream and pulled at his hair. He tried doing breathing exercises, but the voice was too loud. He threw on his headphones and blasted Adam Lambert music. He leapt around his room for song after song in a strange sort of aerobic dance, until he was entirely out of breath. He ripped out his headphones and was happy to hear that the voice was quieter. He caught his breath, then went to the bathroom. He had to fix his hair, but he couldn’t stall too long. Steeling himself, he stared at his own reflection in the mirror.

“You can do this. Just get it over with.”

Virgil squared his shoulders, and marched over to his door. With a final breath, he pulled it open.

Chapter End Notes

Man, I keep realizing how hard it is to describe the vents. The vents were the best, and I still find myself missing them. My brain takes the opportunity to try to victim blame me for missing the vents, which I did my best to represent here.
Virgil went downstairs, moving faster now that he was closer to whatever the hell was about to happen. As expected, the three Light Sides were in the living room. They turned and smiled when they saw him.

“Salutations.”

“Virgil!!”

“Greetings brave knight!”

*Okay, not the reaction I was expecting. Maybe they’re just softening the blow?*

“Hey guys.” he said thickly.

“Do you feel up to eating kiddo?”

Virgil chewed the inside of his cheek, wincing when he felt some of the skin give way.

“No. I just w-want to get this over with.” he ground out. *Dammit.* He was way closer to crying than he wanted to be.

“Of course. Would you like to sit?”

Virgil wordlessly made his way to an armchair.

Logan adjusted his tie. “We would like to apologize for having you down in the Dark Side.”

*Wait what?*

“Wh-what?”

Logan looked down, shoulders slumped, and adjusted his glasses. “We were able to explore the rest of the Dark Side without it affecting us preternaturally, and your exposure to such a massive trauma was unwarranted. We feel at least partially responsible for the trauma you endured by revisiting the Dark Side as we did not make as much of an effort to keep you out of there as we should have. We are very sorry.”
Is Logan getting choked up? What the fuck?

“Woah, woah, woah, wait, hold up. Do you actually think I wouldn’t have gone with you guys?”

Logan looked back at him, eyes misty. “We should have done more. We truly apologize for putting you through such needless trauma. We-”

Virgil let out a somewhat hysterical laugh. He stopped laughing pretty quickly from sheer embarrassment.

“I thought you guys were going to kick me out.”

“WHAT?!” Patton cried. Roman’s mouth was open and he was leaning backwards, staring at Virgil. Logan raised his hand to cut off any further interjections.

“What made you think we were going to kick you out Virgil?”

Virgil drew his knees up. “Because you saw more of how much of a mess I am.” he mumbled. “You already have to put up with a lot from me and you don’t get anything in return, so, y’know, it made sense you wouldn’t want me around anymore. I know you saw some… stuff. I just make you sad or upset. I’m honestly surprised you lasted this long. Look it’s fine, I just want-” Virgil had to swallow to keep his voice steady, “I just want you guys to be happy.” he finished in a whisper.

Now they’re going-

Virgil’s thoughts were abruptly cut off when a large mass collided with him. He flailed for a moment before he realized that it was Patton giving him a tackle-hug. He was crying.

“Don’t you ever think you only make us unhappy! We love you so much!!” Patton sobbed. “We will never kick you out!!”

Virgil was trying and failing to hold back his own tears, though he was able to keep his cries to silent, hitched breaths.

Were Saul and Remy right?

“I would like to reiterate what Patton said.” Logan began. “We love you, and you bring us so much joy. We did indeed see many horrific things, but we would never think less of you for enduring such horror. While seeing you distressed saddens us, it does not compare to the happiness you provide.”

And Roman, of course Roman, nearly shouted poetry:

“A person who will listen and not condemn
Someone on whom you can depend
They will not flee when bad times are here
Instead they will be there to lend an ear
They will think of ways to make you smile
So you can be happy for a while
When times are good and happy there after
They will be there to share the laughter
Do not forget your friends at all
For they pick you up when you fall
Do not expect to just take and hold
Give friendship back, it is pure gold.”
Virgil knew it was ridiculous and cheesy to cry at poetry, but that was what broke him. He hid his face in Patton’s shoulder to soak up the tears with fabric. He was able to regain control fairly quickly, and Patton calmed down soon as well. Patton stayed in Virgil’s lap, not that Virgil minded.

“Did you spend last night with Saul and Remy?” Patton asked, arms still wrapped around Virgil.

Virgil tensed. I guess I had to tell them sooner or later. “I, uh, actually stayed with Thomas.”

“You were asleep for 16 hours?” Logan asked, mildly concerned.

Virgil shrunk in on himself. “No, I came back to my room for a bit. I, I didn’t feel very good so I stayed with Thomas. I figured you guys were tired, so—”

“Even if we are tired, please still come to us if you are in distress.” Logan interjected.

I can’t burden you guys so much. “I know, I will, I was with Thomas.”

“I am glad to hear that you reached out to someone.” Logan conceded. “You said you weren’t feeling well?”

Virgil stared at the ground. “Yeah, I started spiralling, y’know, and figured being around someone might help.”

“What do you mean by spiralling kiddo?”

Virgil bit his lip. “I… I wasn’t feeling safe.”

There was a silence, and then Logan adjusted his tie. “That’s very brave of you to tell us Virgil.” he paused. “Were you having suicidal thoughts?” Logan asked gently.

Virgil closed his eyes and nodded. He heard gasps from Patton and Roman and a choked-off sob from Logan.

“I didn’t want to die, I just wanted to stop hurting you guys. And I knew that that wasn’t a good idea because it would hurt Thomas and it wouldn’t help him, and you wouldn’t get a new, better Anxiety, so I went to Thomas before my brain got too bad.” he blurted out. He hid his face back in Patton’s shoulder, and Patton responded by petting his hair.

“I’m so glad you didn’t want to die baby. We love you so much sweetie. If you ever feel like that, please come to one of us, okay?”

Virgil sniffled. “I—I will. I went t-t-to T-Thomas.”

“And we’re so happy you did kiddo.”

“We are more than happy to help someone who enriches our lives so greatly.” Roman added.

Virgil swallowed thickly. “Thank you.” Virgil didn’t know what else to say. He was dumbfounded at what the Light Sides were saying.

“Of course. We are happy to repeat such affirmations as many times as needed.”

Virgil took a couple deep breaths, then pulled away from Patton. Patton’s eyes were shiny with both tears and love.
“Whaddya say we get some supper kiddo? I think we could all use it.”

Sounds of agreement came from around them, and they made their way into the kitchen. Patton heated up some leftovers and everyone was chatting amiably. Virgil helped Patton clean up, and then he went up to Princey’s room. He slowly opened the door when he didn’t hear anything behind it. Virgil walked to the mirror *(since when is walking through a magical mirror portal a normal thing for me?)* and stepped through.

Virgil felt his heart speeding up as his leg bounced up and down. He wrung his hands. *What will he do, what will he say, oh God what-

“Have you seen my son?”

Virgil glanced at the door and gave a tense smile. “Hey doc.”

“Hello Virgil! It’s good to see you again!”

“Good to see you too doc.”

Dr. Picani sat down in his chair. “So, how have you been since our last therapy session?”

Virgil looked down. Dr. Picani hasn’t freaked out when I told him about stuff in the past, so he won’t freak out now, right?

This is different and you know it.

Virgil still felt… weirdly comfortable. He didn’t feel like Dr. Picani was going to freak out at him, even though his brain was telling him otherwise.

“Not good.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head and gently furrowed his brows in sympathy. “I’m sorry to hear that Virgil. What’s been not good about the past few days?”

Virgil paused. How the hell am I going to sum up the past few days? Realizing he’d been silent for too long, he quickly apologized. “I’m sorry, I’m not sure how to say what happened.”

Dr. Picani just smiled. “That’s okay. Take your time, there’s no rush.”

Virgil inhaled through his nose. He wanted to talk about going to the Dark Side and his spiralling thoughts, and they were two separate things, but he wasn’t sure how to talk about one without the other…

Virgil looked to the doctor for help. “Uh, it’s kinda two separate things, but they’re really tied together.”

“That’s okay. Why don’t you tell me what happened and then we can talk about each one individually?”

Virgil jerked his head in agreement. His eyes darted to the basket. Dr. Picani hasn’t offered. I must have made the flying dolphin fish too messy.

“Did you want something Virgil?”

Virgil at Dr. Picani, who had an open look on his face, with a strange glint in his eye. He sighed. “No, I’m good.”
“Okay! Let me know if you want a comfort item or anything!”

Virgil flinched in surprise. He thought Dr. Picani didn’t want him to have a stuffed animal!

“C-can I h-have a comfort it-tem please?” Virgil whimpered. He didn’t know why the thought of wanting one and being refused was so scary and hurtful.

“Of course!” Dr. Picani said as he slid the basket over to Virgil. Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish and hugged it. He buried his face in the soft doll and took a couple deep breaths before he began.

“Thomas… he started feeling weird. A couple of months ago, when I was rescued from the Dark Sides.” Virgil had to pause after mentioning them. “I was worried that I had hurt Thomas by not going back to the Dark Sides. I thought Thomas needed me to be hurt for him to be okay. I kinda freaked out because of that. And then, I- fuck.”

Virgil buried his head in the toy again, embarrassed at having revealed so much to the Light Sides and Thomas in an emotional moment and not wanting to tell Dr. Picani. “I told them, kinda accidentally, how long the Dark Sides had hurt me for. I didn’t mean to, it really was an accident. It just fell out of my stupid fucking mouth. They were upset about that, but Logan pointed out Thomas didn’t feel the weird feeling when I wasn’t being hurt by the Dark Sides. Since they’re locked up now in Roman’s realm, we thought that maybe the Dark Side itself might have some answers, so we went down there.”

Virgil inhaled sharply, squeezing the mammalian fish and doing several rounds of breathing exercises. “I didn’t want to go back, ever, but I didn’t want the Light Sides to go alone, and I wanted to protect them. They were worried, but they agreed after I told them I’d just be worrying about them anyway.” he chuckled.

Virgil lifted his head out of the stuffed animal, it was getting a little humid. Dr. Picani had his head tilted to the side, and was looking at Virgil with empathy and a touch of sadness.

Virgil cleared his throat. “So yeah, we went down there, and Logan wanted to split up to cover more ground, which is the first thing you don’t want to do in a horror movie. He saw the, um” Virgil bit his lip for how many times he was stopping, “the mattress. The one in the living room. With, uh, with the chains.” Virgil stuttered out. He heard a barely audible intake of breath from Dr. Picani.

“So I told him not to go over there, and I puked, over just seeing the mattress, and yeah. It was not good. Roman helped me, and we decided to go to the kitchen because it’s kind of an open floor plan, and he saw the cuffs on the kitchen table.” Virgil caught a small twitch of Dr. Picani’s eyebrows. “They installed cuffs if I was gonna, um… be at the kitchen table for a while. My legs tended to give out after like an hour or 45 minutes or something, so… yeah. Um, anyway, Patton got freaked out by the mattress, and he needed to be calmed down by Logan. Fuck, poor guy.” Virgil bowed his head. “I feel so bad for them. They saw so much.”

Virgil inhaled sharply through his nose and sniffled. “We started exploring the bedrooms upstairs. They saw the jars of nails, and I had to tell them about the fucking competition between Jealousy and Greed.” Virgil saw another look of confusion pass over Dr. Picani’s face. “Th-they would see how many of my nails they could collect.” Virgil saw the doctor’s face twist. Virgil had to power through.

“We went through Greed, Apathy, and Jealousy’s rooms and didn’t find anything. I kinda had a flashback in Jealousy’s room. We went to Rage’s room next. He had a bunch of… equipment set
out, probably for after they were planning on bringing me back, and I passed out. Roman brought me back to Thomas’ room and laid me on the bed while Logan and Patton filled Thomas in. Thomas stayed with me while the other guys finished exploring the Dark Side. They found a door to the Subconscious that was open, so they closed it. They also found a lot of the stuff and, um, rooms the Dark Sides would use with me.”

Virgil breathed out. *That was the hard part. Now comes the other hard part.* “I woke up in Thomas’ room. I freaked out and went back to my room and started spiralling. It… got pretty dark. I-” Virgil’s voice choked off. “I started writing a note. I didn’t do anything though! I didn’t want to die, and I don’t want to! I just wanted to stop hurting them. I realized what I was doing and stayed with Thomas. He helped me. I felt better in the morning. Saul and Remy helped me out, and then the Lights *apologized to me* for letting me go down there in the first place! As if they could have stopped me! I’ve got to protect them! I thought they were gonna kick me out. But they were, like, *genuine* about liking me. So I don’t know what to do about that. And, that pretty much brings me up to now.”

Dr. Picani had big eyes watching Virgil, full of kindness and sympathy. “It certainly sounds like you went through a lot these past few days Virgil. You mentioned that there were two things that you wanted to talk about. Would I be right in thinking that your time in the Dark Side and your spiralling thoughts that culminated in a suicide note are the two things?”

Virgil nodded.

“Alright. Which one would you like to start with?”

Virgil frowned. The note happened later in the day, but he couldn’t seem to grab onto any thoughts around the Dark Side.

“The note?”

“We can talk about that. What do you think made your thoughts spiral?”

Virgil felt his face flush. “I got back to my room and I just- they saw! They saw so much of what the Dark Sides used, and they found photos and videos the Dark Sides took of me, and their tools, and I looked at my skin and *hated* it. It’s so gross! I had to get it off, and I,” Virgil paused as he realized he left out something important. “I relapsed.” Virgil sighed. “I scratched myself pretty badly. And I hated myself for it, I hated how much I was hurting Thomas and the Light Sides, and my stupid brain thought that I should kill myself so a new, better Anxiety can take my place and be there for Thomas and the Light Sides and Neutral Sides.”

Virgil hid his head again. “I know that’s not true, and I didn’t want to actually die, so I went to Thomas. He helped a lot.” Virgil sagged as he finished.

Dr. Picani nodded. “I’m so sorry you went through so much, both these past few days and however long you were being tortured by the Dark Sides. I’m very proud of you that you followed through on the safety plan and got Thomas to help you when you felt like you needed help being safe. Did you have a plan of how you were going to commit suicide?”

“No.” Virgil shook his head adamantly.

“Okay. Do you have any means to kill yourself?”

Virgil pondered that. “Not really. I think only, like, maybe the knives in the kitchen or something?”

“Alright. It sounds like your suicidal ideation comes from overwhelming emotions in the moment,
and that outside of those moments you don’t have those thoughts.”

“Yeah! That sounds right.”

“Gotcha. I’m very happy the safety plan worked Virgil. I’m happy you’re still here.” Dr. Picani smiled at Virgil, which Virgil returned. “I’m so glad you felt comfortable enough to share that with me. Do you feel up to talking about what might have triggered your suicidal ideation?”

“Yeah, I’m good.”

“Great. From what you’ve told me, the idea that you’re hurting Thomas and the other Sides is a pretty big trigger for you. It also sounds like feelings of worthlessness and being “gross” can also be a trigger. Would you say that’s accurate?” Virgil nodded. “Okay. Are there any other triggers you can think of?”

Virgil tilted his head. “No, not right now anyway.”

Dr. Picani and Virgil discussed the safety plan and practiced fighting the internal voice together.

“You’ve done really well today Virgil! How would you feel about talking about your time in the Dark Side?”

Virgil preened a little at the praise, but was brought back down to Earth at Dr. Picani’s question. “I guess we can try? It’s hard to think of things. Like, when I try to think about that time yesterday, it’s hard to grab onto anything.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “I’m not surprised.”

Virgil was. “Really? Why?”

“Remember how I said trauma memories aren’t stored properly?”

“Yeah?”

“It sounds like your time in the Dark Side yesterday didn’t quite get stored properly. I’m not surprised your brain went into survival mode. Going back to a location where someone was sexually assaulted would be traumatic for anyone.”

Virgil felt himself swaying. “Yeah. Shit, I’m sorry, I’m starting to feel floaty.”

“Alright. How about a grounding exercise and we call it a day? You did a lot of really hard work!”

Virgil agreed to the plan. Dr. Picani led him through a grounding exercise.

“Want to talk about Toy Story 4 and the Pixar Theory?”

“Sure, that-” Virgil was caught off-guard by a large yawn.

“Sorry doc! I guess I’m tired.” Virgil said sheepishly.

“No problem! Sleep is important, and you’ve been through a lot.”

“Yeah. I’ll, uh, see you next time?”

“See you next time.” Dr. Picani smiled.
Virgil gave him a two-finger salute and walked back through the mirror. He was exhausted, but he didn’t want to be alone in his room. *Too many memories.* The thought of sleeping in the same room as one of the Light Sides made him uncomfortable. He knew they weren’t the ones who hurt him, no matter how many times the Dark Sides wore their faces and staged fake rescue attempts or whatever other scenario they had in mind, but it was sometimes hard to be around them. *Maybe that’s why I get scared of them sometimes.*

Virgil shook himself. He’d done enough self-reflection for one day. Making up his mind, he trudged downstairs, grabbed a blanket, and laid down on the couch in the commons.

Chapter End Notes

Dr. Picani is showcasing a few other little tricks! Do you really think he forgot that Virgil liked holding a stuffed animal for comfort, or is he trying to give Virgil practice in asking for what he needs? Also, any therapist worth their salt is going to assess the situation and not immediately freak out whenever someone brings up suicidal ideation because there are different levels. Virgil was able to institute the safety plan and didn't want to die, plus he has no means or plans. Virgil felt comfortable telling Picani because Picani had built a good relationship with Virgil and showed that he wouldn't freak out at talk of self-harm or suicidal thoughts in the past.

His face twitching is to kind of show that therapists aren't superhumans. He did his best to control his reactions, but when hearing about that kind of stuff most people would have reactions. Dr. Picani is still MVP!
Virgil shot awake. He stumbled off the couch, the blanket tripping him. He barely made it to the kitchen trash can in time to throw up. Once he was done, he checked the clock on the stove. 5:46. Knowing he’d have at least another 15 minutes or so until anyone else was up, he allowed himself a few minutes to grieve the loss of his friend. *Fuck, can’t I have one fucking night without a fucking nightmare? Brain, rest! Direct order or whatever. Just, chill dude.*

Virgil focused on breathing exercises and grounding exercises to try to fight off the panic attack and flashback that were battling for dominance. Once he felt more in control and present, Virgil snapped the vomit out of the trash can.

Wiping his nose on his sleeve, Virgil stood to make coffee and some breakfast. He got a pot of coffee going, then opened the fridge and took out some eggs and breakfast sausages. Thomas had a busy day today, and Virgil wanted to make sure his Sides were well-fueled for their Host. He decided to make pancakes, but didn’t quite feel brave enough to make them from scratch. He went to the pantry to grab the pancake mix when he saw two boxes that he would normally pass over when he wasn’t feeling so vulnerable.

Strawberry and blueberry Poptarts.

Virgil felt tears prickle his eyes. He grabbed the box of pancake mix and angrily slammed the pantry door closed. Swiftly wiping his eyes with his sleeves, irritating his eyelids a little, he got butter for the pancakes and some fruit out. He started slicing up strawberries and oranges before he had to go back to the pantry. He opened the door.

The boxes were still there, staring at him. Virgil stared back. His chest started constricting and his throat was closing up.

*Fine! God!*

Virgil grabbed the boxes irritably and looked inside. To his dismay, each box only had one packet. Virgil could feel his traitorous tear ducts getting to work again.

*I could have one from each packet and combine the leftovers, so then someone else can have two Poptarts before Patton has to get more.*

*You can’t be serious.*

*Fuck. Off.*

*You’re going to take a Poptart from two packets and then combine them in a torn packet to justify being greedy? Do you miss Greed that much?*

*Shut the fuck up.*
Virgil put all of his attention on the wrapped pastries in front of him in an attempt to drown out the voice. Making up his mind, mostly to spite the voice, he carefully opened both packets. The scent of powdered sugar and technically-bread product hit his nose and he started getting emotional for a completely different reason. He turned the toaster dial so it would just warm and lightly toast the pastries - he wasn’t looking to lose his tongue to molten sugar - and turned back to the spares. He was trying to figure out the best way to close the packets so the spare Poptarts wouldn’t get stale when he heard a Side descend the stairs.

“Good morning Virgil.” Logan said, voice rough from sleep. He was impeccably dressed for the day as always, and reading a newspaper. Virgil was too scared and shaking too hard to answer. Upon not receiving an answer, Logan looked up at Virgil and saw how tense he was. When the toaster finished and the pastries popped up, the sudden sound made Virgil jump. Thankfully, the shot of adrenaline seemed to give him his voice back.

“I’m sorry! I just wanted a strawberry and blueberry Poptart, and I was gonna close the packet so these others wouldn’t get stale, and I’m gonna make you guys breakfast, I just thought-” Virgil’s vision was blurring and his throat becoming more painful as he continued to talk. *I just want some warm Poptarts. Why can’t I have some warm Poptarts. I’m bad, I’m disgusting, I don’t deserve it, I’m-

“Please relax Virgil. I am not upset. Poptarts sound delicious. I’ll have the other two so you can eat yours while they’re still warm and not have to worry about packaging these back up.” And with that, Logan grabbed the Poptarts, a small plate, and began eating them.

Virgil grabbed his pastries from the toaster, deposited them on a small plate, and sat next to Logan, eating quietly. He still marveled at how he was able to eat at the table without a massive amount of pain. Virgil enjoyed the peace while Logan scribbled in a crossword puzzle. Virgil savored the sugary fruit inside, the weirdly satisfying dusty “bread”, and the slightly crunchy sugar coating. The strawberry Poptart had a little tartness to it, although it was overwhelmingly sweet, and Virgil’s mouth watered with every bite. The blueberry Poptart was basically pure sugar and it was amazing. Virgil was almost sad when they were gone, but he didn’t want to completely ruin his appetite on sugar.

“Wait…”

“I’m surprised you’re eating those L.” Virgil remarked.

Logan turned to Virgil with a mouthful of Poptart and raised a sharp eyebrow.

“They’re not super healthy, and you’re always making sure we eat healthy, so…”

Logan nodded and swallowed. “Indeed. However, I think I can survive two Poptarts to decrease your stress. If nothing else, it’s a fine excuse for me to have some junk food.” And he looked back at his crossword.

Virgil was in shock. *Logan ate something unhealthy to make me feel better?! WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON.*
Logan seemingly unaware of Virgil’s paralyzing shock, simply asked, “Would you like some help with breakfast since you’re making so many items? I could do the pancakes.”

That got Virgil talking again. “Ah, sure, that’ll work.”

Logan set his newspaper down, his pen casually on the crossword, and stood to stir in the ingredients. Virgil got the sausages heating up and began scrambling some eggs. Just as they were about done, Roman and Patton walked in, Patton looking rather tired and Roman his usual exuberant self.

“Good morning fellow figments! It looks delicious!”

“Yes, Virgil did an excellent job.”

“Don’t you mean egg-cellent?” Patton grinned.

Logan sighed, but couldn’t quite keep the smile off his face.

“Logan did the pancakes.” Virgil insisted. “He did some stuff.”

“Awww, my two kiddos working together!” Patton was about to squeal when he was cut off by a yawn.

Virgil frowned. “Are you okay Patton?”

Patton rarely had nights where he couldn’t sleep. The only times he stayed up was when Thomas was marathoning something on TV that Patton wanted to watch as well.

“I’m good kiddo! Logan and I stargazed in his room last night!”

Virgil smiled. “That’s cool.”

Breakfast passed quickly, with each Side needing to get to work quickly. Once Virgil made it back to his room, he flopped down on his bed and put on some music, closing his eyes and focusing on Thomas’ realm. He had been helping Thomas manage his anxiety levels for several hours when he heard a scream from downstairs. Virgil tore his headphones out and flew down the stairs, skidding to a halt in the kitchen. Patton was on the counter and staring wide-eyed at something on the floor.

When he saw Virgil, he pointed and screamed, “A SPIDER!!!”

Virgil doubled over and rested his hands on his knees as he caught his breath. Roman and Logan weren’t far behind, and Patton pointed out the spider again. Roman was about to dispatch the spider who dared frighten his love when Virgil jumped in.

“Wait! Don’t kill it!” he begged.

Roman froze and looked at Virgil curiously.

“Can you summon some plain paper?”

Roman scoffed. “Of course!” and summoned the requested paper with a flourish. Virgil grabbed a glass and carefully got the spider between the paper and the glass. He opened the door and deposited the spider in the Subconscious. The outside of the mindpalace looked like the outside of Thomas’ apartment, but the Sides didn’t dare venture into the Subconscious. It was far too unpredictable, even for Roman’s tastes.

When Virgil came back into the kitchen, he wordlessly put the paper on the table and the glass in
the dishwasher, his heart still pounding.

“You sure got down here quickly kiddo.” Patton joked.

Virgil shrugged. “I thought you were in danger.”

“AWWW KIDDO!!! THAT’S SO SWEET!!!”

Virgil winced at the painful volume and pitch. He tried waving Patton off. “Don’t worry about it. I’ve always seen it as part of the gig.”

Roman was looking at him with starry eyes. “Always?”

Virgil shoved his hands into his hoodie pockets and ducked his head. “Yeah. I mean, you guys have always been important to Thomas, and I thought you were cool, so I wanted to protect you from stuff. Didn’t want to see anything bad happen to you.”

Logan tilted his head. “Weren’t you under the impression that we disliked you?”

Virgil flinched enough for Logan to pick up on. “You are still under that impression?”

Virgil tilted his head so his bangs covered his eyes. “I mean, I know I’m not the most pleasant to be around, and you guys said yourselves you don’t like seeing me in a flashback or panic attack, so-”

“WE LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!!” Patton cried.

Virgil let his lips twitch.

“You… You’d protect us even when you thought we abhorred your presence?” Roman asked, in awe.

“W-well yeah, duh.”

“AWWW KIDDO!” Patton squealed. When Virgil looked up at Roman, he was sure that if they were anime characters Roman’s eyes would be heart-shaped. He looked back down at his socks.

“I-it’s not a big deal or anything, stop looking at me like that…”

“It is a big deal Virgil.” Logan insisted, slightly breathless. “Your courage and selflessness are… incredible.”

Virgil felt red hot from his scalp down to his toes. “Yeah, well, it’s what I do I guess.”

“Indeed it is.”

Virgil glanced up at Roman when he said it in that… tone. There was something in his eyes that Virgil wasn’t quite able to place. Patton cleared his throat loudly behind Virgil, making him jump.

“Well that was adorable! Why don’t we settle in for lunch? Thomas has been working really hard and he’s gotten a lot of stuff done!”

The Sides agreed, and settled in for lunch. When he was sure no one was looking, Virgil smiled.
Yay for Virgil! Now that we've had fluff, I'm sure everything will be all sunshine and rainbows from here on out!

3>:D

Also, sorry Virge, you're going to lose a staring contest with boxes every time.
Hiya folks! Just a heads up, there are discussions of sexual assault and Virgil's injuries, including sounding, in this chapter, but there aren't any graphic descriptions of sexual assault. There is also a character that dry-heaves, but doesn't vomit.

Also, this is the THIRD chapter posted today! Whooooo!

It was a month later when Logic felt himself cracking. Objectively, Logan knew it was due to a delayed trauma response. Secondary trauma is very real, and he'd done enough research to understand what was happening to him. That knowledge didn't make his ordeal any less frustrating. He could still see the equipment and pictures and video in his mind’s eye. He had to excuse himself more than once to break down alone in his room. He knew his darlings were dealing with the same thing, and he certainly didn’t want to put this on Virgil. Virgil had already been looking at him suspiciously over the past month. Logan admired Virgil’s perceptiveness, but lately it had been quite the challenge to keep his additional struggles a secret.

Logan was finding that his sleep was disrupted several hours per night, and there was a noticeable decrease in functioning as a result. Coupled with rather upsetting nightmares about seeing Virgil hurt, one of his boyfriends being hurt, or Logan being hurt himself, he was finding his bed less of a sanctuary than ever before. He was feeling rather paranoid; he knew that the Dark Sides were locked up, but he couldn’t help but feel that they were just around the corner. He found himself checking in on Virgil more often and listening intently for the footsteps of intruders.

Virgil’s therapy sessions with Dr. Picani seemed to be having the desired effect of early trauma therapy. Although Virgil appeared to be having more flashbacks and panic attacks, it was good that the trauma was being uncovered and released. Logan knew that in order for a trauma disorder to be resolved, the memories that were improperly stored had to be re-processed. Despite this, Logan hated the effect it was having on Virgil. Seeing someone he cared for so deeply being tortured by their own mind was horrific.

Logan had also noticed how Virgil would sometimes flinch away from them. Since Virgil’s admission that those execrable Dark Sides had occasionally taken on their faces Logan supposed it made sense.

It didn’t make his heart break any less.

Logan saw how his boyfriends had been affected by their visit to the Dark Side. Patton had become much more melancholy, crying every day, several times per day. Roman had a great deal of pent-up anger that Logan heard him exorcise in his room, fighting monsters or just screaming at the universe. There was little Roman could do to fight the demons in Virgil’s mind, especially when Virgil didn’t want to be touched, and Roman had never done well with being helpless in the face of injustice.

While less important, their sexual intimacy had taken a hit as well. The three of them had tried to be sexually intimate together a week after their exploration of the Dark Side, but they had difficulty
getting into the mood and Patton began to cry bad tears rather quickly, which of course made them stop to care for their sweet boyfriend.

With that in mind, he made his decision. He was going to ask Roman to grant him a path to see Dr. Picani. Logan’s mind was ill, he wanted his mind back to health, and to accomplish that most efficiently he needed a specialist.

During breakfast one morning while Virgil was sleeping in from a particularly arduous night, Logan raised the issue, as he wanted to figuratively “plant the idea” in his dears’ heads as well.

“Roman, would I be able to see Dr. Picani as well?” Logan asked.

Roman nearly choked on his cereal (none of them had felt like cooking or eating a large meal that morning, or lately at all for that matter. They still put the effort in when Virgil would be attending). The royal looked at him curiously. “Of course you may. I’ll adjust the mirror to your energy so your trip should be smooth.”

Logan nodded. “Wonderful. I believe I am experiencing secondary trauma and would like to resolve the matter with a specialist.”

Roman and Patton looked at him sadly. Roman placed a hand on his shoulder while Patton grabbed his hand.

“I’m so sorry baby. I know it’s been hard on you. It’s been hard on all of us.”

“Indeed. I believe it would benefit all of us if we were to attend therapy to process memories. Trauma disorders are essentially improperly placed memories and feelings, therefore it would be best to process them in a safe environment with a professional.”

Roman hung his head. “That is wise. I believe it may benefit me as well.” he looked up at Logan and smirked. “You have your moments of intelligence, I must admit.”

Logan raised his chin, accepting the challenge. “A pity the same cannot be said for you.” Offended Princey noises followed.

Patton giggled. “You two!” He sobered, “I’m supposed to be the center of emotional intelligence.”

The question was implied. Why didn’t I think of going first?

“My dear, you are also the center of emotions. You have an incredible burden to deal with. Do not discount your own struggles.”

Patton smiled weakly, not entirely believing him but not entirely discounting him either. They ate quietly after that, Logan leaving immediately after he was finished. Roman followed suit.

Roman opened the door for Logan, which he was prone to doing. Roman closed the door behind them and stood before the mirror, closing his eyes and frowning. After a moment, he opened them.

“Alright! All four of us can go through now!” Roman said breathlessly.

“Thank you Roman. I hope one day I can understand the science you wield.”

“It’s magic.”

“Yes dear.”
Roman grumbled. Logan stepped into his personal space, wrapping his arms around his prince’s neck. Roman rested his hands on Logan’s lower back, and they kissed sweetly. With a final smile, Logan stepped back and turned to the mirror. He knew that although it appeared to be a solid object, it was a passageway. Still, he couldn’t help but feel some hesitation at walking directly into it. Trusting Roman, he strode towards the mirror and was deposited into a waiting room. Logan looked around, impressed at the level of detail Roman had conjured. Everything appeared to be in place, from magazines to Kleenex boxes to a reception desk.

He kicked himself when he realized that he’d forgotten to ask Roman how to access Dr. Picani. *Do I wait to be called back, do I sign in, do I just go back?* Logan walked up to the reception desk and found a note.

_The receptionist is gone fishin’, so just come back when you’re ready!_

Logan quirked an eyebrow. _Convenient. Roman must have altered the waiting room._

Logan strode to the only other door in the hallway, and found a room similar to the one from Thomas’ *Cartoon Therapy* series.

“It’s the moment you’ve been waiting for! Daaa, da da da da da da da da daaa…”

Logan watched impassively as the doctor made his entrance. Once finished, Dr. Picani stood there for a few moments, panting, before he sat down in his chair.

“New patient! Do you how do? I’m Dr. Picani, he/ him, and you are?”

“I am Logan Logic Sanders, he/ him.”

“Welcome! And what things would you like to go over in therapy?”

Logan pondered the question for a moment. “I would like my sleep disruptions to greatly decrease or end. Sexual intimacy has been more difficult for my partners and I. I believe I am experiencing hyperarousal and hypervigilance due to paranoia about those who hurt Virgil - our friend who experienced the primary trauma of sexual assault - and the paranoia that those individuals will harm Virgil, one of my boyfriends, or myself.”

Dr. Picani nodded, his face more serious. “I’m very sorry you’re going through that. It sounds like even though you’re suffering, you’re still thinking about how you can best support your loved ones. What are some goals you’d like to accomplish in therapy?”

Logan pondered the question for a moment. “I would like my sleep disruptions to greatly decrease or end. Sexual intimacy has been more difficult for my partners and I. I believe I am experiencing hyperarousal and hypervigilance due to paranoia about those who hurt Virgil - our friend who experienced the primary trauma of sexual assault - and the paranoia that those individuals will harm Virgil, one of my boyfriends, or myself.”

Dr. Picani was writing quickly in his notebook. “Okay! Those all seem like very realistic goals. Would you like to put some numbers to those goals?”

“Please.”

Logan and Dr. Picani spent the next 10 minutes laying out detailed goals to be reassessed in three months. Logan was pleased to have put numbers to something so difficult for him to grasp.

“Alright, it looks like we’ve got some good goals down! Is there anything you’d like to talk about in your first session?”
“I am quite unfamiliar with many aspects of this process. What would you recommend?”

Dr. Picani hummed while he slowly spun his chair a full 360 degrees. “Well, it sounds like the two overarching themes are wanting to help yourself process secondary trauma, and the other is to help your loved ones. Which would you like to start with?”

Logan tilted his head while he thought. “Perhaps if I gained insight on my own struggles with secondary trauma, I may be able to help my boyfriends. I could also see how certain aspects could overlap into helping my friend.”

“Grrrrreat idea! There are a few approaches we can take to this. We could process the events that you believe caused your secondary trauma, we could talk in greater detail about how it’s affecting your life, or we could talk about your friend who experienced the initial trauma. Which would you prefer?”

Logan thought about it for a moment. “I would like to process the events themselves. I have read about improper memory storage being the base of trauma disorders, and therefore I would like to begin re-processing those memories as soon as possible.”

“Alrighty then! Go ahead and start wherever you’d feel most comfortable.”

Logan started from the day of filming that fateful Q&A, when Virgil had thrown up and passed out. He described everything in excruciating detail, up to when the Light Sides rose up in Thomas’ bedroom a month ago. Dr. Picani had been listening quietly, a sad expression on his face. Logan had to pause several times so as to not express the emotion he felt. He came close to breaking down on multiple occasions. Once Logan had finished, Dr. Picani sighed.

“Good grief. Your friend has been through a lot, hasn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“I’m not surprised you and possibly your boyfriends have developed secondary trauma, especially after having to go to the Dark Side and seeing everything you did. You’re very observant, and you’re able to describe things very well! I was wondering what internal observations you’ve made?”

Logan frowned. “What do you mean?”

“Well, you’ve described what you saw in your environment quite efficiently. Let’s take an example. When you started taking Virgil’s clothes off to treat him, what were you thinking about? What were you feeling in that moment?”

Logan froze. Ah, so this is what they mean when they say, “A deer caught in the headlights.” I believe I am the figurative “deer” in this scenario. “I… I…” Logan stammered. He couldn’t seem to get any words out. He felt his body begin to shake and his eyes burn. He looked down, not wanting to show such emotions in front of the doctor. Logan closed his eyes and focused on performing the breathing exercises. They only seemed to accomplish so much however.

Dr. Picani sat silently, allowing Logan to feel. Once 5 minutes had passed, Logan took a shaky breath in. “I… felt… sadness.” Logan looked up at the doctor with wide eyes, seeking approval, that he was doing something right.

Dr. Picani nodded. “That makes sense. Being sad when realizing that your friend had been tortured and sexually assaulted is a very normal response.”
Logan felt air leave him in a rush. *Okay, good, I am responding normally.*

Dr. Picani took a risk. “What else were you thinking and feeling?”

Logan bit his lip, trying in vain to keep tears from falling. *I’m not going to cry.* “I wanted to help him. I… I thought that if I could clean-” Logan was taken off guard by a dry heave. He slapped a hand over his mouth. Once he was sure he wasn’t in danger of vomiting, he lowered his hand.

“I apologize for that. I do not know what that was.”

“No Appa-logies needed! I think that was something that might need to be processed. What do you think?”

Logan just nodded. “Right, of course. I thought that by cleaning and bandaging his wounds, I could make things a little better for Virgil.”

“It sounds like you did a very good job of that!”

Logan adjusted his glasses at the praise. “Yes, well, one never knows when knowledge will come in handy.”

“Very true! I’d like to circle back a little. You started feeling nauseous when talking about cleaning and bandaging Virgil’s injuries?”

Logan shuddered. “Cleaning them, yes.”

“Would you like to talk more about that.”

“No, but I suppose I must. When I became nauseous, a rather intrusive image came into my mind of-” Logan had to pause while images flashed in his head. “I apologize.”

“No need to apologize! We’re talking about some very difficult topics. We can stop if you feel uncomfortable, or we can keep going if you feel up to it.”

Logan inhaled shakily and shook his head. “I would like to push through this. I believe that will help. The-” Logan leaned down and held his head in his hands. “I am sorry, I do not know how to proceed.”

“That’s okay. These are very difficult things to work through. Can you describe what images come into your mind?”

Logan inhaled deeply, then exhaled. “I see seminal fluid on and *inside* Virgil. He had extensive bruising and localized burns with strange edges on his penis and testicles. His urethra showed evidence of sounding. He had tearing and bruising in his rectum, as well as a curiously straight laceration.” Logan frowned. “Why was that easier to say?”

Dr. Picani chuckled. “I have my tricks. Now thinking of those images, how do they make you feel? What do they make you think?”

Logan stiffened. He focused in on the feelings when images came unbidden into his mind.

“Horror. Nausea. Sadness - no, perhaps grief is a better word. Despair?” Logan shivered. *This is far more difficult than narrating observations.*

Dr. Picani nodded. “Let’s talk about that.”
Roman had just beaten the evil dragon-witch and saved the prince when he sensed someone step into his room. Vanishing the daydream, he appeared by his bed. Logan had just left the mirror and was staring in front of him.

“Logan?” Roman called nervously.

Logan jumped and turned his head to Roman. Roman saw tears in his genius’ red eyes.

“Oh love.” Roman walked to Logan, who collapsed into a hug. Roman held his scholar tightly. When Logan pulled away, his eyes were redder.

“I believe I may have some feelings to work through.”

Roman couldn’t help the chuckle. He kissed the tip of Logan’s nose. “I believe we all do my love.”

Chapter End Notes

That thing that Picani did with Logan? It’s teasing out the description from the feelings. Logan is very good at making observations, like with his sleep schedule and hyper-vigilance, but he refused to acknowledge his feelings until Dr. Picani showed him how important it was. So Logan would come across something that was an intrusive thought, ie a poorly-stored memory, and Picani would help him break it down into more manageable chunks.

As my beta and I were chatting after the edit was done, I realized that I was projecting onto Logan. I would intellectualize things so there were no feelings attached to what I was saying, just observations. The first time my therapist did what Picani did here, I Regan MacNeil’d her poor carpet. Press F to pay respects to the therapist’s carpet. Edit: Regan MacNeil was the girl from The Exorcist. I’m referencing the time she projectile vomited green all over the priests. I didn’t puke green, but there was a lot of it.
Chapter 61

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! Just a heads up, there is some talk about sexual assault and a little more in-depth conversation about sex, but nothing actually happens. There's also one very brief reference to the suicide note that Virgil wrote, but you blink and you miss it. Lmk if there's something I should add in the A/N's!

Edit: I accidentally posted the unedited version here somehow. It's been updated!

Logan’s venture into therapy gave Patton and Roman the motivation to go as well. Patton was his usual chipper self at the beginning of his appointment. When Dr. Picani asked what Patton wanted to discuss in therapy, the heart burst into inconsolable tears for 25 minutes. Roman worked on his feelings of anger and helplessness, as well as his self-worth when he wasn’t able to help one of his loves. All three Light Sides worked with Dr. Picani, and their symptoms had diminished greatly after 7 months. They were helped along when Thomas attended a half dozen therapy sessions. He hated the feeling of helplessness around Virgil’s suffering and wanted to know how to best help his friend. He had to change a few of the details of course, but he was able to get some catharsis and good information.

Virgil noticed far fewer flashbacks, panic attacks, and nightmares. He was becoming less and less hyper-aware and felt the need to do fewer midnight searches for the Dark Sides. Although his symptoms were less, they were still a daily struggle, and he didn’t know if he’d ever recover. Without incurring regular abuse from the Dark Sides, Virgil found himself flinching away less from the Light Sides. It was easier to relate them to their kind actions and words when he wasn’t being assaulted by others wearing their faces.

Virgil didn’t tell Picani any more details of his abuse since telling him about the adventure into the Dark Side. When he felt particularly brave, he would drop a hint, but they worked on the surrounding issues and symptoms of Virgil’s C-PTSD. Dr. Picani helped Virgil recognize where his strengths and resiliency already were in surviving, and how to utilize them in recovery and living. Dr. Picani very slowly helped Virgil learn to regulate his symptoms and responses, and helped him explore his feelings and trauma at a safe pace, stopping to ground when needed. Virgil found solace in the Internet when his skin wouldn’t allow him to find solace in the presence of his crushes or his brothers.

It was a year from when Virgil had written his note and torn it up that he decided he wanted to have sex.

He was fucking furious that the Dark Sides had taken something that was supposed to be wonderful and magical or whatever shit and made it inaccessible to him. He didn’t want to keep missing out on good things just because he’d had bad experiences in the past. Just because some assholes forced him didn’t mean every experience was going to suck. He hadn’t talked to Dr. Picani about it because how about no. Virgil had been watching the other Light Sides carefully. He had very briefly thought about going to Saul and Remy, but that was also a no. Just thinking about it was enough to make him shudder. So, by process of elimination, it would have to be one of the
Light Sides. It helped that he was attracted to each of them.

Virgil had been getting more comfortable with his body using baths and wearing fewer clothes while alone. Surprisingly, taking care of his body also helped. He was proud when his skin was moisturized and when he could barely see his ribs. His previously chapped lips were now mostly smooth. Princey had walked in on him crying, holding a handful of petroleum jelly, which had been one of many failed attempts at conjuring a chapstick. Once Virgil had explained the situation to Roman, Roman had conjured a hundred and one different tubes of chapstick, all with different flavors.

Roman had caught Virgil in his realm trying to summon spare parts for a bathtub a week later, and would not be deterred from creating a bathtub. Virgil now had a very gothic bathtub in his bathroom. It was made from black marble, had gold accents (“Gold? Really Princey?” “Yes.”), a dozen pumps for soaps and bubbles, jets, a never-ending cue of bath bombs, and lotions. Virgil finally chased Roman away with a bowl of green hair dye before he installed a fucking waterfall, but Virgil noticed that Roman had sneakily added heated floors to his bathroom on his way out. The bastard.

Virgil still wasn’t comfortable being shirtless, but he was able to wear a short-sleeved t-shirt in his room when he was alone, so he figured he could manage until the Light Sides had finished. He just wanted to get it over with. He was tired of his only experience with something that’s supposed to be awesome be awful instead.

Each of the Light Sides had become more affectionate with Virgil. He hadn’t missed how they’d check in on him more, hang out around him more, and just be… different with him. He only wanted to offer himself to one Light Side, knowing that having more than one of them at a time would almost definitely send him into a flashback or panic attack. His first thought was Patton. He knew Patton would be gentle at least, but he’d be worried about Virgil the entire time and checking in on him, which wouldn’t do. Virgil planned on dissociating just enough so he couldn’t answer questions and coming back to the present when it was over. Logan was the next obvious choice. Virgil figured that Logan would be the easiest to convince that he was ready to have sex, and that Logan would be the most oblivious to any emotions Virgil would be trying to hide. But, the nerd was just too damn observant. He might not know exactly what Virgil was feeling, but he’d be able to tell that something was off.

Which left Princey. Virgil had disqualified him early on because he was the romantic Side and would probably want to actually be attracted to Virgil to fuck him, but Virgil was hoping that he could convince Roman by being honest. He did want to have a positive sexual experience and his attempts to, ahem, take matters into his own hands had ended badly. Virgil was pissed that he couldn’t even get himself off because of what the Dark Sides had forced him to do for videos and for their own amusement, but he was hoping that sex with someone else might take care of that.

Barring a flashback or panic attack, Virgil was confident that Roman would make sure to hurt him as little as possible. He was the romantic Side. Roman would make sure he felt okay.

Virgil didn’t know why he felt like crying whenever he thought about asking the prince for sex. He had this stupid fantasy in his head that he and whoever he was sleeping with for the first time would be completely present and there would be barely any pain and they’d both get off and live happily ever after or whatever it is normal people do. Virgil knew that dream wasn’t meant for him. For one, the Light Sides could never be attracted to him. He was getting more comfortable with his body, sure, but there were only so many platitudes he could tell himself before the fact that he was scarred and used up won out.
So, Virgil was going to ask Roman to have sex with him. He pretended not to be on the verge of tears. Virgil decided to conjure a simple black v-neck t-shirt to wear under his hoodie. He couldn’t bring himself to wear the t-shirt without the hoodie, but hopefully the lower neckline would help seduce Roman. Roman seemed to be into makeup, so Virgil put on some eyeliner and mascara, and laid on his foundation a little more thickly to cover more of his skin up.

It seemed to have the desired effect. Everyone commented on the t-shirt, and Roman had gushed about how “lovely” Virgil looked in it. His throat was tight the entire meal. During dinner, Roman and Logan had been discussing Thomas’ brand deal with Crofters and which new flavor they should come out with next. When Roman had nearly finished, Virgil decided he couldn’t keep stalling.

“Hey Roman, is it cool if I hang out with you in your room after dinner?”

Roman looked like Virgil had just given him the moon. “Of course! I’d love to!”

Virgil nodded. “Cool.”

He had to stop eating after that. He already felt sick, and he figured throwing up on Princey’s sheets might kill the mood a little. Once Roman had left the table, Virgil waited a few more minutes before excusing himself.

Virgil came to a stop before the grand doors that led to Roman’s room. He knew that, once he was in that room, he was going to have to be *naked*, with *someone else there*, he’d have sex, someone would be *touching* him-

Virgil shook his head. *Can’t overthink this. Gotta just do it. Like a bandaid.* Virgil raised his hand and gave several tentative knocks.

When Virgil heard, “Come in!” he entered. Virgil made sure the door latched behind him. He looked around the room; Roman had the room set up for a movie marathon. He brightened when he saw Virgil.

“Greetings my Stormy Night! I was thinking we could watch *The Little Mermaid*?”

Virgil looked down and bit his lip. “Actually, I had something else in mind.” *Look UP, he’s gonna know you’re not into it!* Virgil raised his eyes to meet the prince’s and smiled.

Roman tilted his head, a little curious and concerned. “What were you thinking Night Rider?”

Virgil huffed a laugh. “Well, uh, funny you say “rider”, ‘cause I was thinking we could, uh,” Virgil cleared his throat. *Come on, try to be hot.* Virgil walked up to Roman slowly, in what he hoped was a seductive manner. “I was thinking we could have sex.” *There, you said it, now convince him you want it.*

Roman’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline and his jaw was slack. Virgil fidgeted, anxiety creeping up his throat but wanting to hear what Roman would say so he wouldn’t stick his foot in his mouth. Eventually, Roman managed a stunned, “What?”

Virgil pulled his shoulders back. “I want to have sex with you.” Virgil lowered his voice and tilted his head so he was looking up from beneath his eyelashes. “You know how good you look.”

Roman jerked his head, clearly still surprised. “Forgive me, this came out of nowhere. Why are… Where did this *come from?”*
Virgil forced himself to keep staring at Roman. He wasn’t about to lose his nerve over surprise, no matter how much it hurt. “You’re hot, and I want to have sex that isn’t forced, so I thought you’d be the natural choice.” Okay, sell yourself here. “I’m good at holding still if you want to fuck me, or I can suck you off if you want.”

Roman inhaled and turned his head as he stared into the middle distance off to the side. Virgil saw a tiny quiver in his lower jaw and his eyes growing red and shiny.

*Look at how disgusted he is by the idea of fucking you. You’re basically just the Dark Side’s come sock. Why would anyone want to fuck you?*

Virgil couldn’t take the silence. He took a few tentative paces towards Roman.

“Look, I know I’m probably not your first choice,” Virgil let out a self-deprecating chuckle, “but I figured you’d at least be somewhat gentle with me and make sure it didn’t hurt too bad.”

Roman whipped his head back to Virgil with a horrified expression on his face. Virgil felt whatever resolve he had crumble as tears began to fill his own eyes.

*Look at how horrified he is by the idea of touching you, how could you think he’d want you? It doesn’t matter what they say, look at his face, he’s disgusted.*

“Virgil, my sweet…”

That’s what broke him. Virgil let out a sob and covered his mouth with one hand while the other wrapped around his middle. “I’m sorry, can you just—”

“No, I won’t. Because I don’t think you’re ready my love.”

Virgil looked up at Roman, confused. *That can’t be the only reason.*

“What?”

Roman smiled sadly and stepped closer. “I don’t think you’re ready for sex quite yet, my little stormcloud.”

Virgil felt affronted. “Why?”

Roman lifted Virgil’s hand. “You’re trembling, love.”

Virgil looked at the hand that Roman was delicately holding. *Dammit.*

Roman used his other hand to gently lift Virgil’s face. “Let me be clear. I am not opposed to making love to you. Quite the opposite. However, I will only do so when you’re ready, and not a moment sooner.”

*He’s just saying that to make you feel better.*

Virgil looked down. “Yeah, whatever.”

Roman kept the hand under Virgil’s chin firm. “I can imagine that you’re thinking I am repulsed by you?”

The tears that had been building in Virgil’s eyes escaped. “No need to rub it in Princey.” he said thickly.
Roman quickly wiped the tears away. “No no no, my sweet! I… look at me, please?”

Virgil obediently met his gaze.

“I do not find you repulsive, nor any other negative adjective running through that emo brain of yours.” Roman paused to wipe away two more tears that had escaped. “You are lovely. I will make it my mission to convince you of that, and if I ever do anything to the contrary please do jab me with my sword.”

“Or I could just tell you.”

Roman smiled. “I suppose that works as well. I would still like to spend this evening with you, if you’re willing. Why don’t we have a calming marathon of Disney movies?”

Virgil let out a watery chuckle. “By “calming” do you mean you singing at the top of your lungs and yelling at the screen?”

“What else would I mean?”

Virgil snorted. “No idea.”

Roman brought the hand that had been holding Virgil’s around his dark knight’s shoulder and led him to the beanbags he had conjured for a movie marathon. Roman conjured two large bowls of popcorn, and rested his arm across the back of the beanbags as an invitation. Virgil accepted it and leaned against Roman’s chest. He was asleep before the end of the first movie.

Chapter End Notes

It started sad, but it ended cute, so it evens out?

Also! Just a reminder that my Tumblr is @lilfellasblog if you want to scream at me on Tumblr!
Hey folks, this chapter's a pretty dark one. I have the entire thing italicized intentionally, so that if someone accidentally clicks on this chapter when they intended to go to a different one, they don't start reading this by accident. This chapter deals with an abusive relationship with Deceit, and the dynamics that are involved with that. I intended to write more about the various manipulations abusers use and how they slowly brainwash their victims, but I was dissociating about every 250 words and then I'd be pulling weeds in my garden for 45 minutes. Virgil's already been brainwashed in this universe quite a bit, so there'd be less brainwashing to be done. The many manipulations of an abuser are often subtle, but whenever I'd try to write that I'd blink out. So, this is very much just a few snapshots of what an abusive relationship can look like. I hope I did this very important topic justice!

In addition, there is discussion of sexual assault and vomiting, and there is a graphic description of sexual assault in between the tildes. There is a plot point in here that I'll put in the ending A/N's so if folks don't feel like they can read this chapter they'll still get the plot point. In addition, there is talk of spiders both near the end of this chapter and in the ending A/N.

Stay safe everyone! <3

Virgil was terrified. He had been allowed to shower without anyone coming in, and he had been given more food than just hard bread slices. That ALWAYS meant something bad was about to happen.

Sure enough, as he was finishing drying his hair, Rage and Jealousy came in, grabbed his arms, and roughly led him to the Room. He could identify the visitor from the top of the staircase.

"Unhand me you fiends! I will make you rue the day you were manifested!"

Virgil whimpered and began crying as he was led down the stairs. ‘What are they going to do to him?! Oh Roman I’m so sorry. I’ll save you if I can.’

Rage kicked the door open so hard it bounced back and caused Rage to have to stop it with his foot. Naturally, this angered Rage. He took it out on Virgil by violently throwing him to the ground and kicking him.

"Now now Rage, can’t break our toy before he does his duties."

Virgil coughed and sucked in air desperately. He surveyed the scene as soon as he could with his eyes obediently downcast. Roman was standing, naked, and tied with his hands above him, his ankles bound in rope and spread on the ground. Virgil continued crying. He could never seem to stop crying when the Dark Sides involved the Lights.

"Virgil, stand up and look at Roman."
Virgil knew better than to try to disobey. He used all of his strength to shakily bring himself to his feet. It took a full minute before he was able to raise his head. When he looked, Roman appeared unharmed except for a bruise on his forehead. His eyes were wild, angry and frightened.

“What is the meaning of this?!” Roman thundered.

Deceit walked over to Roman casually. “Virgil’s been pining hopelessly after you. We thought we’d indulge him by letting him fuck you. Virgil? Come over here and prepare the prince.”

Virgil’s entire body began shaking. ‘No, no, he’s the prince, he can’t get hurt, I can’t hurt him. He’s supposed to save me, what’s he doing here? Why is he here, how did he get captured? No, no, no, no, no, I can’t, I can’t hurt him!!’

“Virgil, we’re waiting.” Deceit said threateningly.

Roman turned burning eyes to Virgil. “So this is who you are, huh Anxiety? You’re sick. How could you enjoy what they do to you? It takes a truly fucked up person to want to rape someone, but that’s what you’re about to do to me, isn’t it? You’re a monster. You belong with them.”

Virgil shook his head and took a miniscule step back. “N-no, no I s-s-swear-”

“FUCK YOU!” Roman roared. “I’LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU, AND ONCE I TELL THE LIGHTS, NEUTRALS, AND THOMAS NEITHER WILL THEY!!!”

Virgil screamed and collapsed as he felt his mind shred. He felt the Dark Sides doing everything they could to urge him to move or stand, but Virgil could only lay there limply and scream. His screams petered out into cries, his vocal chords giving out on him. Virgil felt himself getting lifted by a Dark Side - Rage, from the sound of it - and carried over to the living room mattress. He was dropped there, his body still completely limp.

‘It’s hopeless. I give up. I can’t anymore.’

He couldn’t make his muscles move, no matter what the Dark Sides tried to motivate him with. Virgil could only remember a few times when he was in more pain from their games, but still his muscles wouldn’t respond.

After several days of experimentation, familiar tweed pants came into view.

“Did you really break your toy already? What did it?”

“We tried to get him to hurt one of the Light Sides.”

“Ah. It’s fond of them, is it?”

“It would seem so.”

“Hm. Let’s discuss this elsewhere.”

The tweed pants left his sight, and Virgil heard more sets of footsteps follow. He watched as the light transitioned from day to night. At some point during the night, Deceit lifted Virgil’s upper body and leaned it against his.

“Shhhh, it’s alright now, I’ll take care of you.”

Virgil’s mind was too torn to process the sudden shift. He felt an open bottle being held up to his
“Shhhhhhh darling, I’m so sorry I couldn’t get to you earlier. Can you walk?”

Deceit took the bottle away from Virgil. Virgil’s head lolled to the side.

“I’ll take that as a no.”

Deceit put the closed bottle in his capelet and lifted Virgil’s thin frame. Virgil wasn’t sure what happened, but the next moment they were in Deceit’s room. Deceit laid him down on the bed and snapped his fingers.

“There, my room’s locked. No one can get in. You’re safe now.” Deceit looked down, appearing unsure for the first time that Virgil could remember. “I’ll... I’ll just go get the first aid kit.” Deceit left Virgil’s field of vision.

“What the fuck is going on? Why is Deceit doing this?’

Deceit came back quickly. He sat down on the bed next to Virgil and began tending to his injuries.

“I’m so sorry Virgil. I’ve only just now become strong enough to protect you.” Deceit worked on disinfecting the open wounds. “I... I’ve loved you ever since you came into the Dark Side. You walked in, and I could tell that we would be soulmates.”

‘Wait, what? That’s not how that happened…’

Deceit chuckled humorlessly. “I suppose there’s no hope for that now.” Deceit’s voice cracked at the end, and he lifted his sleeve against his face. “I… I’ll take care of you and keep you safe. I just want you back Virgil.” Deceit started crying. “I love you, and I miss you.”

Virgil felt emotion spark in his chest. Deceit continued caring for Virgil’s wounds and finished up some time later.

Deceit started crying louder. “Can you at least move or say something? Please?!”

‘Why is he like this? I’m making him cry, why does he care? Does he actually love me? He’s hurt me so much, but it seems like he really cares about me. He’s crying over me, I’m making him cry. God, I feel like shit.

‘Look at how bad you’re making him feel! You don’t deserve him!’

Virgil felt his mind coming back together. ‘Safe, he’s going to keep me safe? He locked his room and gave me Gatorade. He took care of my injuries.’ Virgil closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He opened his eyes to meet Deceit’s mismatched ones. Deceit was staring at him with wide eyes, still crying but his hands were resting slightly away from his face.

“Deceit?” Virgil’s voice came out rough.

“Oh Virgil!” Deceit threw himself onto Virgil and hugged him tightly. Virgil’s skin was crawling and everything hurt, but he didn’t dare move. Deceit froze and pulled back after a moment.

“Oh Virgil, I’m so sorry! You’re hurt, I probably hurt you, I’m sorry!” Deceit started crying again.

Virgil felt his anxiety spike. “No, it’s okay Deceit! I promise!” Deceit looked at Virgil and Virgil gave him the best smile he could manage.
Deceit smiled. “Call me Dee.”

Virgil did his best to hold his smile. ‘He’s helping me, I should like him, I should be grateful. I can do this.’ “Okay Dee.”

Deceit smiled a wide smile. It looked strange on his face for a moment before Virgil was engulfed in a hug again. Virgil didn’t want the hug, but he was scared to say no.

“That sounds so good coming from you.” Deceit held onto Virgil. Virgil felt like the hug dragged on for too long, but what did he know? His arms were still hanging at his sides when Deceit pulled back.

“Okay, let’s get you some food. I have some really creamy mac and cheese for you!” Deceit grabbed a plate of what looked like a very rich mac and cheese bake with bacon, mushrooms, breadcrumbs, and onions.

“Here you go!” Deceit handed him the plate with a fork. Virgil looked at Deceit.

“May I eat sir?”

Deceit’s happy expression faded. “Well duh. Come on, you know I’m going to take care of you and not hurt you anymore. Haven’t I been doing that? Don’t you trust me?” Deceit appeared to be getting emotional again.

“No, no, I trust you! I’m sorry. I won’t make the same mistake again, I promise.”

Deceit didn’t accept it. “I thought I was doing a good job taking care of you. I guess I haven’t been…” he said defeatedly.

“No! It’s not that! You’ve done really good! I just got confused for a second, I’m sorry.”

Deceit smiled and squeezed Virgil’s shoulder. “It’s okay. I forgive you. I know you must be confused after choosing not to move for a couple days!” Deceit laughed. “I’m going to work on a few items, but call if you need anything, okay?”

“Yes, thanks Dee.”

“You’re welcome Virgil.”

///// Deceit was kind to Virgil for the rest of the night, which was confusing to the younger Side. He ended up throwing up the mac and cheese bake, which Virgil had to comfort Deceit over.

Deceit yawned. “Ugh, my sleep schedule is so thrown off! Not that it’s your fault of course!” Deceit was quick to say. “I just need to sleep, and you probably do too. I’ll... I’ll let you take the bed. I’ll, um, sleep on the floor. I know you’re not comfortable with me, and you probably never will be.” Deceit’s voice choked off. He shook his head and cleared his throat. “You’ll take the bed! I won’t hear it any other way. You’re hurt.” Deceit declared.

“A-are you sure? I don’t w-want you sleeping on the floor…”

“No, it’ll... it’ll be fine...” Deceit trailed off softly and bit his lip as he looked at the floor. “I couldn’t possibly ask you to let me sleep in my bed with you, after all I’ve put you through. I mean, I didn’t really have a choice, but that doesn’t matter!”
Virgil felt guilt eating him alive. “You can sleep in here with me.” he offered, trying to make Deceit less unhappy and to assuage his own guilt.

Deceit looked up with hope in his eyes. “Really?!?”

Virgil tried shrugging nonchalantly, despite his boiling stomach acid. “Yeah, I mean, you’re helping me. I don’t want you to sleep on the floor when you’re just trying to help me.

Deceit smiled. “I’m so glad you see it that way.” Deceit crawled into bed, making Virgil painfully shuffle to the other side of the full mattress. Just as Virgil was laying down, Deceit wrapped an arm around his waist and pulled him flush so Deceit was spooning him.

“I think you need some kind touch, don’t you?”

Virgil suppressed a shudder. “Yes, Dec- Dee.”

Deceit nuzzled the back of Virgil’s head and kissed it. Virgil threw up in his mouth a little and forced himself to swallow it back down. Virgil had something on his mind he’d been meaning to ask Deceit.

“Can I ask y-you a question?”

“Of course you can! Why wouldn’t you?”

“R-right, s-s-sorry. W-what happened to Roman?”

Deceit stiffened behind Virgil. Virgil started stammering out an apology, but Deceit cut him off.

“It’s alright, I should have known you’d be curious. Once the others took you to the mattress, I cut his ropes. He was thankful to me, but wouldn’t believe a word I said about you. I… I don’t think I can quite bring myself to say what he said, but suffice to say that he hates you. He made it clear that the other Lights and the Neutrals hate you quite fiercely as well. I explained what you were going through, begged him to take you with him to keep you safe, but he refused. He believes you deserve it and secretly like it.”

Virgil clenched his jaw around the sobs. He cried for what seemed like hours until he ran out of tears.

“Goodnight Virgil.”

“Goodnight Dee.”

///// 

The next two months passed in a similar manner. Virgil found that he would accidentally upset Deceit frequently and then need to comfort him. It was taking more and more time and energy to comfort Deceit. Virgil was uncomfortable when Deceit would hold or touch him, but if Virgil flinched away he’d upset Deceit and have to reassure him. Virgil learned that it was just easier to do what Deceit wanted. Like Deceit said, they weren’t sexual touches, so what did it matter? Virgil heard Deceit “releasing stress” as he called it in the attached bathroom and was made uncomfortable by the loud moans and repetitions of his name, but he could hardly complain. He knew he was a lot to deal with. Deceit had almost let it slip a couple of times how difficult he was. Although whenever Deceit would finally lose his patience and yell at Virgil, Deceit would always apologize and tell Virgil how he’d be better. Things were better for a while after Deceit apologized, so he was obviously trying.
After a particularly rough day of accidentally upsetting Deceit and Deceit having to work, Virgil wasn’t surprised when he woke up to Deceit palming himself through his pants and staring at Virgil.


Virgil nodded, knowing the answer Deceit was looking for.

‘He’s been so nice to me even though I’ve been so awful, this is the least I can do. I should be a good… partner? Whatever, it’d be mean of me to refuse him at this point.’

“Oh thank god! I was getting so pent up!” Deceit groaned as Virgil heard the clinking of a belt buckle.

“I want to fuck you, but I won’t because I know that hurts you.” Deceit waited.

“Thank you. I’m sorry.”

Deceit smiled. “It’s okay, and you’re welcome. Now,” Deceit panted, moving up so his hips were level with Virgil’s face. “is this okay?” he asked, setting the heads of his dicks on Virgil’s lips.

“Oh-” Virgil said. As he opened his mouth to speak, Deceit slid one in, cutting off the rest of his reply.

“Oh good, oh this feels so good. Are you okay?” Deceit asked Virgil, speeding up. Virgil nodded as best he could.

“Good, just tap me if you need to stop and I’ll stop, I swear I will.”

Deceit kept fucking deeper into Virgil’s throat. When Virgil’s vision got spotty, he tapped Deceit.

“Hang on, I’m almost done, I have to finish.” he panted. Virgil tapped again. Deceit grunted in frustration.

“Hang on I said! You’re really annoying, you know that? Now I’m gonna have to go longer to get off. Goddammit, why do you have to make everything so much more difficult?!” he growled.

Deceit reached down and grabbed Virgil’s head with both hands. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to say that, you know I’m just stressed out, with having to take care of you and not interact with my friends anymore. I’m not saying it’s your fault though!”

Deceit pulled out a little so Virgil could suck in a few breaths, then plunged back in. After a few more brutal minutes, he finished. Virgil swallowed. He knew didn’t know how to act in a relationship, but he knew how to do this. He could be good for Deceit in this. Deceit panted as he rode out his aftershocks.

“God, that was really good. Are you okay Virgil?” Deceit asked. Virgil nodded mutely.

“Good, because I need to go again.” Deceit said as he shoved his other cock down Virgil’s throat. Virgil’s throat spasmed and he gagged a bit, but he couldn’t move with Deceit holding either side of his head. Deceit used him again, praising him and thanking him, asking him if he was okay. Once he finished, he pulled out and tucked himself back in.
“That was really good Virgil, even if the beginning was rocky.” Deceit smiled down at him.

Virgil swallowed. “I’m sorry Dee.” he said hoarsely.

~~~~~

“I forgive you. It’s what you do when you love someone. Now why don’t I make you some tea for your throat? Then we can cuddle on the bed.”

After another month, Virgil knew the routine. This was the nicest anyone’d treated him since Saul and Remy, and they hated him now.

Deceit walked up to where Virgil was resting on the bed. Virgil laid back, waiting to see what he wanted.

“Come with me, I have something to show you.” Deceit smiled, holding out a hand. Virgil took it shakily. Deceit pulled him along roughly, not waiting for him to catch up. Virgil stumbled as Deceit opened the door to his room. Virgil froze in place, causing Deceit to look back at him in irritation.

“What?”

“I-I thought we weren’t safe around the other Dark Sides.”

Deceit only grinned. “That’s what I want to show you! It’s a surprise!”

Virgil reluctantly followed Deceit down the stairs, Deceit keeping Virgil’s hand in a painfully tight grip. Virgil wanted to pull away when Deceit went to open the door to the Room, but he didn’t dare.

Deceit pushed Virgil forward hard enough to have Virgil sprawling out on the floor. When he looked up, he was met with the faces of Thomas’ Dark Sides as well as those of the superintendent’s.

“Welcome back.” Entitlement said.

Virgil heard Deceit shrieking with laughter behind him.

“You actually thought that I was in love with you?!” Deceit burst out into laughter again.

The group didn’t finish with Virgil until many hours later.

Virgil was dragged by his hair and dropped onto the floor next to the mattress in the living room. He was weak and in so much pain he could barely breathe. He began feeling his mind shredding again when he heard shouting from inside the room.

“What moron left the door to the fucking Subconscious open?!”

“I don’t have a clue.”

“Shocker. Truly, an unforeseeable turn of events.”

Virgil was surprised. He didn’t realize the Dark Sides did much of anything with the Subconscious. That was more for Saul and Remy to deal with, being Neutral Sides and all.

Virgil saw movement out of the corner of his eye. He lay still, not wanting to incur further
punishment. He was already worried about the amount of blood he’d lost and whether or not the Dark Sides had done permanent damage this time.

A mostly black tarantula with red hairs on its abdomen came into view. Making sure no one was around, Virgil reached out to the spider. It calmly climbed onto his outstretched palm. The angle was a little awkward because he didn’t have the strength to sit up, but he made it work.

“Hey buddy.” Virgil whispered as he gently stroked the thorax and abdomen. Virgil couldn’t have been louder if he wanted to; his voice was completely gone.

Virgil felt a strange sense of calm and comfort.

‘Emotional support animals must work pretty well.’ he thought to himself.

He heard footsteps approaching, and quickly placed the spider close to the television. Luckily, the tarantula crawled underneath the television stand.

“Still moving huh? Guess we didn’t do a good enough job the first time.”

Chapter End Notes

Hey folks! Here's the plot point if reading this chapter wouldn't be good for your mental health. Virgil had been dropped on the floor and wasn't moving. Deceit was yelling about someone leaving the door to the Subconscious open and no one knowing who did it. A tarantula, specifically a male Mexican red-rump tarantula, went over the Virgil and Virgil pet it, finding peace in being able to have an animal. Once he heard someone approaching, he stretched his arm out and the tarantula hid under the TV stand.
Hey folks! There are discussions of domestic violence and sexual assault in this chapter, but there isn't anything graphic represented. Virgil also has some internalized victim-blaming going on.

In this chapter, Virgil decides to get something off his chest.

Roman looked over at Virgil asleep on his shoulder. He smiled; Virgil’s face was relaxed and he had still trusted Roman enough to fall asleep while cuddling, despite his clear discomfort at the beginning of the evening. Roman watched as Virgil’s chest slowly rose and fell. The feeling of holding Virgil against his chest with his arm was wonderful; like two puzzle pieces that fit perfectly together. He wanted to just hold his adorable little emo until the end of time, protecting and cherishing him, making him feel safe and warm and loved. But, he knew Virgil wasn’t ready for that. So he gave as many safe touches as Virgil would accept. Watching him become more willing to accept help and fighting the compliments he was given less and less was so rewarding. He had loved seeing Virgil grow and heal over the past year, although there was clearly more healing to be done.

Roman felt his throat get tight at the memory of earlier that evening. Virgil had tried to proposition him, which although flattering, was rather surprising. Hearing Virgil’s rationale for wanting to have sex with Roman only served to remind him of the pain his unrequited love had been put through. And then to hear Virgil say that he was good at holding still broke his heart into a million tiny pieces. Virgil had only been offering to give Roman release in his body, never phrasing it in a way that hinted that Virgil would hope for any pleasure. In fact, Virgil had stated that he expected slightly less pain, as though pain were an inevitable consequence of sex. He had laughed and said that Roman would only be somewhat gentle, as though the prince could stand to treat his raven with anything but the utmost tenderness and love. He’d never wish to cause the smaller Side pain, and certainly not while making love.

The way he was shaking… Roman knew Virgil was still frightened of sex. Not that he could blame his little stormcloud, good gods he had more than enough reason to be frightened of the prospect.

Roman hated that something so wonderful as making love was so tarnished in Virgil's eyes. Oh, how Roman wanted to show Virgil how enjoyable and amazing making love could be. But Roman would never touch someone until they’re ready and certain they wanted to lay with him, and Virgil wasn’t ready.

Feeling he was about to become angry or start crying, Roman focused back on his love’s face. He could feel his stress and negativity melt away whenever he gazed upon that lovely countenance. He allowed himself several minutes of simply gazing upon his sleeping crow’s features before he shifted him as gently as possible. Roman picked Virgil up and laid him on the bed, bringing up a thick quilt to cover him. Roman himself changed into silk pyjamas and crawled underneath the covers. Dimming the lights, he turned on his back and put his right hand under his pillow. The mornings when he’d wake up with Virgil on his chest were some of his favorites, especially if
Virgil had fallen asleep again. Roman turned his head and fell asleep to the sight of his dark angel, safe and sound.

///// Virgil woke up feeling somewhat numb. He knew that what had happened had been a trick of Deceit’s, and he still hated himself for allowing Deceit to do that to him. How could I be so fucking stupid? I should have known, I shouldn’t have trusted him. Why do I always get myself into these situations? He resolved to stay numb, until he looked over at Roman’s sleeping form. Virgil started silently crying as he remembered what Deceit had done.

He was right. No one would ever want me.

Roman had his right arm underneath his pillow, which they had established meant Virgil could cuddle if he felt like it. At the moment, however, he didn’t want anyone touching him. He’d had enough of Deceit doing that. Virgil curled up more and did his best to muffle his sobs in the thick quilt.

“Virgil?” Roman’s sleepy voice mumbled.

Virgil whimpered at having woken Roman up. Roman leaned up on his arm at Virgil’s whimper.

“Love, what’s wrong?”

Virgil curled into the quilt more. He knew, he knew, that Roman wasn’t Deceit, but Roman was also someone he wanted to be with and the thought of a relationship right now was bad.

“Do you want me to summon Logan or Patton?”

Virgil shook his head as more tears escaped. They wouldn’t be any better. He wanted them, too. Something he couldn’t have. Something he shouldn’t have. Look what happened last time.

“Would you like Remy and Saul here?”

Virgil considered that. Remy and Saul would be okay. They won’t do the things Deceit did. Virgil nodded his head through his sobs.

“Alright, hang in there little raven.”

Roman turned to the foot of the bed and raised his hand. A very confused-looking Saul and Remy popped up, until they saw Virgil.

“Oh coffee bean. Baby, what’s wrong?”

Virgil could only cry and whimper in response.

“Can we come over sweetie?”

Virgil nodded quickly. Saul and Remy crawled onto the bed on either side of Virgil. Remy laid down and lifted his arm, which Virgil dove under. He gripped the white t-shirt Remy liked to wear in a death grip and cried into it. He felt Saul come up behind him and wrap his arms around him and Remy as much as he could. Remy was running his fingers through Virgil’s hair.

“It’s okay darling, you’re safe.” Saul murmured into the back of Virgil’s head. Roman, Saul, and Remy let Virgil cry himself out as they did their best to comfort him. Roman could only watch helplessly as his love was consoled by the two Neutral Sides. Virgil’s body language when he
woke up had shown that he was scared of Roman, so Roman kept a safe distance. His heart was shattering, but he refused to frighten his fallen angel needlessly.

He only relaxed once Virgil had calmed down.

“There you go sugar. Feeling better?”

“Yeah.” Virgil croaked. Roman winced at the sound.

“My love, may I conjure some tea for you?”

Virgil nuzzled Remy’s chest. Roman wished it was his. “Maybe just a cough drop or something? I’m sorry, I don’t think I can handle tea right now. I’m sorry, I just-”

“No need to apologize nor spiral my sweet little emo. Here you are.” Roman leaned over and handed the cough drop to Remy. Virgil sucked on it until it was dissolved.

“Want to talk about it baby?” Remy asked quietly.

Virgil hid his face in Remy's jacket. Roman was certain Virgil wasn’t going to speak and nearly jumped when he did.

“D-Deceit pretended one time to s-s-save me. He p-pretended th-that Roman w-w-was captured w-when he was t-trying to rescue me. We had to stay locked in his r-room - that’s what he said - to be safe. He p-pretended to l-love me. I didn’t, b-but I felt bad and he was being nice to me and I kept messing up and upsetting him-”

“Breathe sugar.”

Virgil sucked in a breath and panted. “I kept messing up and making him upset. He-he’d t-touch and hold me, but not like that, you know? Not like that. I d-didn’t want it, but he said that him touching or h-holding me wasn’t sexual or anything like that, so it didn’t matter. A-and eventually, he d-did... th-things.” Virgil reburied his face to sob. Roman and Saul let out twin growls while the Neutral Sides tightened their arms around the smallest Side. “I didn’t want it! I d-didn’t really h-have a ch-choice. B-but D-Deceit s-said that he h-had to, and I’d already h-heard him, um, doing th-that s-s-stuff in the bathroom because he w-was l-loud, so it was only fair and it was j-just easier t-t-to d-do what he said than f-fight it. I k-kept making h-him m-mad, so I w-wasn’t good at a r-relationship but I could do that stuff. A-and th-then he b-brought me back d-d-downstairs to that r-r-room and t-told me i-it w-was all f-fake and th-that I w-was s-stupid f-for thinking a-anyone c-could love me and then they all t-took turns… hurting me.”

“Oh my love...” Roman breathed.

“You did so good telling us darling.” Saul rumbled.

“Yeah, w-well I felt like it. Felt like I should tell you. Just… wanted to tell someone. Feels better now.”

Saul squeezed his arms. “I’m so happy you did. I’m… fuck, that bastard… You know that’s not how relationships are supposed to work, right doll?”

Virgil shrugged. “I mean, I fucked up, so I’m not surprised he-”

“No.” Roman cut Virgil off. Virgil flinched and Roman caught twin warning looks from the Neutral Sides.
“Deceit is a manipulative cur. That farcical relationship he fabricated was abusive, and you didn’t deserve that. You did nothing to deserve that. And a real, healthy relationship wouldn’t look anything like that.”

Virgil relaxed and settled on Remy’s chest. “I don’t know…”

“What would you think if I told you a similar thing? Would I have deserved that?”

Virgil jerked his head up. “What? No!”

“Then why is it different for you?”

“I-I…” Virgil stammered and trailed off.

“Please do not think so little of yourself love. You didn’t deserve it either.”

Virgil laid back down on Remy’s chest, and Remy resumed running his fingers through the brown hair. “O-okay. I’m kinda tired.”

“Rest sugar.” Remy whispered. He slowed his fingers and brought his other hand up to massage the back of Virgil’s neck. Virgil’s breaths evened out, but Roman could tell that Virgil wasn’t asleep yet. It took an hour before Virgil’s breathing indicated he was asleep, and Remy and Saul followed soon after. Only once Roman knew all three were asleep did he allow his eyes to close.

Chapter End Notes

Okay so, like, telling people stuff is really hard, but then sometimes you feel like you can’t stop yourself from telling someone. I’m definitely writing myself into Virgil here. Most of the time, you gotta keep your cards close to your chest. But there are those moments where you just want to tell someone. And then it sort of falls out of your mouth all at once.

Edit: the previous chapter was both a nightmare and a memory. They had Malice shapeshift into Roman, so it wasn't actually Roman.
Chapter 64

Chapter Notes

Whew! We blew right by 150,000 words, didn't we? My goodness!! Can you believe we're this far in?! It's amazing!! Thank you all for reading, giving kudos, bookmarking, and commenting!!! I couldn't have done this without you. And another shout out to the amazing beta Jasper01!!!! You make this fic so much better and are so kind!!! Thank you!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Several days later, and Virgil had barely gotten any sleep since Remy had coaxed him into it. Since they were in the mindscape, Remy could only do so much to help a Side sleep. The Light Sides had noticed Virgil becoming groggier and groggier. Virgil’s typically short answers became shorter and his quiet disposition became quieter.

It was a slow afternoon in the mindpalace. Thomas had posted a video the previous day and was taking a mental health day. Logan was reading H.P. Lovecraft when Virgil shuffled in, hood up and hands in his pockets. He seemed surprised to see Logan sitting on the loveseat.

Logan nodded at Virgil. “Hello Virgil. How are you?”

Virgil shrugged and grunted. “I was just gonna listen to music, but I don’t wanna bother you...”

“You’re not a bother at all. Come, sit next to me. Close proximity to others releases a multitude of helpful neurotransmitters.”

Virgil stood frozen in his spot for a moment before haltingly moving towards Logan and sitting down next to him. Logan extended his arm across the back of the couch, not looking up from his book. He could hear Virgil playing some early-2000’s song on his phone through his headphones. After 20 minutes, Virgil slowly relaxed so his head was resting on Logan’s arm. The angle made it so Virgil’s head canted back uncomfortably.

“Perhaps you’d like to lean on my shoulder?” Logan offered. “That angle cannot feel good for your neck,” he chuckled.

Virgil considered his options for a few moments before slowly sliding over so he was leaning slightly backwards against Logan. Virgil hadn’t seen any indicators that the Light Sides minded touching him, so he was slowly accepting more of their offers for hugs or whatever else. He’d rarely ask for physical contact, only if he was confused and scared after a flashback or nightmare. Over the past year, Virgil’s crush on each of the Light Sides had made itself more known. He would find himself becoming more easily flustered or embarrassed around the Light Sides. Saul and Remy teased him about it, which he hissed at them for.

Back to his current predicament, Logan was very much the embodiment of the sexy professor without the creepy power dynamics of having control over your academic success. He was a raging fire beneath a cool, collected exterior. His eyes held so much knowledge, and watching him learn something new or figure something out was like watching a laser light show and hearing a symphonic orchestra. The fact that he had a lean body certainly didn’t help his infatuation.
Virgil felt himself relaxing against the teacher. He closed his eyes and let music and body heat wash over him.

“Virgil, would you mind if I rested my arm on your shoulder? I’m afraid the anterior of my bicep is beginning to protest,” Logan asked apologetically.

Virgil shrugged. “Go for it.”

Logan laid his arm across Virgil’s shoulders and let his hand drape down on Virgil’s upper arm. Virgil would never admit it, but these close touches made his skin tingle wherever there was contact. He felt his nerve endings light up in response to being so close to such an attractive person. He’d never be able to do anything about it, but he allowed himself to bask in the pleasant fire it caused.

Virgil started dozing off, listening to his music with one ear and hearing the turn of a page with the other. After an hour, he briefly fell asleep, only to be jerked awake by a sudden refrain from Aladdin. He heard Logan sigh next to him.

“My apologies Virgil. It would seem that Roman is rather excited for dinner tonight.”

Virgil stretched. “What’s for dinner?”

“STEAKS!!” Roman shouted from 3 feet away. Virgil jumped up, landed on the back of the loveseat, and hissed.

Roman held his hands up. “My apologies Virgil! I am simply excited! We’re having STEAKS!!”

Virgil cringed at the volume of the prince’s voice. “Yeah, I heard,” he growled. Roman didn’t seem to notice, dancing away while continuing to sing. Virgil took a few deep breaths and perched comfortably where he was.

“Heya kiddo! Hi Lolo!” Patton’s entrance was slightly less bombastic than the royal’s.

“Hey Pat,” Virgil sent him a half-smile.

“I hope you’re excited! I’m making steaks tonight!”

“Yes, I believe we were informed,” Logan said dryly.

Patton giggled. “Roman’s been calling me a hero ever since he found out. I guess I’m Dadman!” Patton declared as he posed with both arms flexed.

Virgil’s mouth ran dry at the sight. Patton may have more pudge than the rest of them, but he somehow made it hot. There was definitely muscle underneath the layer of fat and it was clear the moral Side was strong. Combine that with Patton’s eternal light and kindness, and Virgil’s thoughts started heading in a direction that made him blush, so he cleared his throat.

“Sounds great Pat. What time should I be down for dinner?”

“Oh, I’d say about 7!”

“Gotcha. I’ll see ya then.”

Patton waved. “Bye kiddo!”

Once Virgil was in the safety of his room he collapsed face-first onto his bed and groaned into the
mattress. He was hopelessly in love with his 3 roommates who would never want him back, but Virgil couldn’t stop crushing on them. The pressure of his body against the mattress wasn’t helping him, ahem, relax. Virgil had tried taking care of the issue before, but whenever he tried or if he just got too aroused he’d always be sent into a particularly awful flashback. Almost his entire life, he’d had that reaction turned against him. Now he just associated the sensation with gruesome violation.

And with that thought, the fire in his gut vanished. Virgil was relieved, but he felt tears prick his eyes at the same time.

*Why can’t I have this? Why does this have to be weird about me too?!!*

Virgil felt disgusted as his skin reminded him how gross he was. Refusing to give in to the urge to self-harm had become easier as time had gone on. Taking care of himself had really helped him become more comfortable, so now he only took showers. Virgil went to the bathroom and undressed casually, turning on the shower and stepping under the spray. Once he felt clean again, he dried off and did his hair and makeup. He used the shimmery lotion that Roman kept giving him, amazed at how much better his skin looked when it wasn’t dry.

Virgil chanced a look in the mirror at his nude body. He was still covered in scars, some older than others, and some he’d made himself. They only served as a reminder of what was done to him. When he looked at the long, clean line on his abdomen, he relived the first time Rage experimented with a bullwhip. The jagged slices over his right pec made him recall Jealousy and Greed seeing who could make him scream louder.

The cuts on his arms made him remember his attempts to mark his own body, instead scarring it.

Virgil turned from the mirror in tears and got dressed. He flopped on his bed and pulled up Tumblr. He came across some fanart of him and smiled. *Thomas’ fans are such awesome artists. I wish I could draw as well as them.* He noticed that the artist had added double helix piercings to his ears. *Those look cool. Kinda pretty.*

Virgil chewed his lip.

*The Dark Sides hurt me and made me worse. I want to make myself better.*

Making up his mind, he sank into the Neutral Side.

“Hey coffee bean! What’s up?”

/////

Virgil popped into the Light Side’s kitchen, narrowly avoiding a prancing Roman.

“Jesus Christ dude! That CANNOT be safe!”

Roman twirled and did a faux-curtsey.

“Forgive me, my raven! I am merely excited.”

“Dinner’s ready kiddos!”

Roman darted to his chair almost cartoonishly fast, while Virgil gently sat in his. Virgil was careful to keep the right side of his body away from Princey while he was… *Princeying.*
“Did you get piercings?” Logan asked.

*Damn, the dude’s observant.* “Yeah, Remy did them for me.”

Logan nodded. “They look nice.”

“Oh! Uh, thanks.”

Logan gave a sound of acknowledgment before Patton and Roman practically fell over each other to look.

“Oh, oooOOOOO pretty!!!”

“Indeed! They suit you quite well my dark angel.”

Virgil blushed fiercely and winced as his piercings throbbed. He had to admit, Remy had done a pretty good job with them. The placement was awesome, and the jewelry itself were two black hoops with a purple bead on each.

“Th-thanks. I like them. Remy did a really good job.” He left out the part where Remy was impressed by Virgil’s lack of pain response before he got sad.

Virgil loved how the piercings looked. It was something he’d done to his body that looked good. And holes in cartilage didn’t go away, so these were permanent marks. It felt… nice to decorate his body with jewelry. Combined with the lotion, multivitamins, chapstick, and walking around his room with fewer clothes he hated his body less and less.

Virgil eagerly dug into the steak, and Roman was chastised to have better manners at the table after devouring his second steak in ten minutes. Virgil stuck around for Mandatory Family Movie Night and took the ibuprofen Logan wordlessly offered him. He carefully made some saline solution with a few drops of tea tree oil and cleaned his new piercings, then retired to his room. As he was getting ready for bed, he couldn’t stop looking at his new piercings in the mirror. He smiled. *I can’t wait to tell Dr. Picani about them!*

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked it! I’ve seen Virgil with double helix piercings in a lot of fanart, and it looks so awesome that I immediately started headcannoning Virgil with these piercings. Part of reclaiming my body was taking care of it like Virgil has and making marks that aren’t born out of suffering. Decorating my body with art and jewelry so show my appreciation for it is so transformative, and I think Virgil deserved some decorations!
Heya folks! The only warnings that might be in here are therapy and chatting about trauma effects during therapy (and useless gays), so have fun!

And since I have extra space up here, my Tumblr is lilfellasblog!!

Virgil settled into the familiar couch. His ear was in a fair amount of pain, but he could feel the ibuprofen starting to kick in.

“Heya hiya ho there!”

Virgil smiled. “What’s up doc?”

Dr. Picani laughed and sat in his chair. “I’m doing great! And yourself?”

“I’m good. I got new piercings.”

“Oooo! What kind of piercings?”

Virgil turned his head. Dr. Picani gasped.

“Those are really cool! Double helix, right?”

Virgil’s eyebrows twitched. “Yeah, how’d you know?”

“Oh, I have my ways! Who pierced them for you?”

“Remy.”

“That’s great! What made you decide to get piercings?”

Virgil looked down and shrugged. “I wanted to do something permanent to my body that was good instead of ugly.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “I think you did a great job of that Virgil. It sounds like this is a great way for you to reclaim your body. Are you thinking of getting any other tattoos or piercings?”

Virgil shook his head. “Not right now. I’d been wanting these piercings for a while and I don’t want to go nuts with a bunch of changes to my body.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “I think that’s a good way of looking at it. How do you feel your relationship with your body is right now?”

Virgil jumped a little at the question. He thought about asking for a comfort item, but decided he couldn’t make himself do it that day. He had gotten better at it, but today he was struggling. “I… I’m not sure? I think it’s gotten a little better. I can wear a short-sleeved t-shirt when I’m in a room by myself. I don’t know, it’s kind of hard to think about.”
“That’s okay! Let’s see if we can break it down. What kinds of bodily sensations make you feel good?”

Virgil looked down and shifted. “I-I don’t know. I haven’t, um…” Virgil trailed off, not wanting to talk about his failed attempts to get himself or Roman off.

Dr. Picani watched Virgil until he realized what the issue was. “Ah! I’m not just talking about sexual touches, although those can definitely count! I’m talking about anything that you perceive that makes you feel good. Tastes, textures, temperatures, etc. For example, do you prefer cotton or silk clothing?”

Virgil felt like an idiot. Of course sensations don’t just have to mean sex. No wonder I’ve been having trouble.

“I like cotton. I feel like I’m going to slide out of silk whenever I wear it.”

“That’s good! What about cotton do you like?”

Virgil thought for a minute. “It’s soft. Pretty comfortable. And it’s not gonna stand out like other fabrics will.”

“Gotcha! Now for the next part, think about how cotton sheets feel on your skin.”

Virgil closed his eyes and imagined the soft cotton sheets of his bed. He smiled a little. “Yeah.”

Dr. Picani slowed his speech down and softened his voice. “Okay, now really meditate on that. Feel where the cotton is touching. How does it feel on your upper arm? Your forearms? Your hands? What are your hands doing?”

Dr. Picani led Virgil through a meditation feeling cotton, water, and lotion on his skin. He gently brought Virgil out of meditation.

“How do you feel?” Dr. Picani asked, keeping his voice soft.

Virgil took stock of his body. “Like I’m missing a layer of skin.” He grimaced. “It feels weird.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “That’s fairly common. Becoming more aware of and in tune with your body can be a real process. But, it’s a crucial step to recovering and reclaiming your body. Would you like some exercises to work on?”

“Yeah, if it’ll help me feel better.”

“They should. And you don’t need to push yourself past the point of comfort. If you want to, we can chat about the exercises in the future if they’re not working very well for you. Usually, we focus on 6 sensations: touch, sight, smell, taste, sound, and movement. Kind of like what you did in your meditation. Focus on each sensation, one or two at a time, and see what you like and don’t like about it. Like we talked about for dealing with responses to stress, notice how your body responds to pleasant sensations. If you’d like, you can journal about them as well.”

Virgil nodded, already thinking about some things he’d like to try. “I think I can do that. It sounds really similar to when we were dealing with me freaking out less at different things?”

“It is! I believe in you. Was there anything else that you wanted to talk about in regards to bodily sensations?”
Virgil knew he was referring to Virgil’s assumption that touches had to be sexual and his experience with that.

*Should I bring it up? Wouldn’t that be awkward? It’s not like Dr. Picani can help in that department.*

Virgil shook his head. “No, I’m good.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Alright. How does a guided meditation exercise sound?”

Virgil smiled back. “Sounds good doc.”

###

Virgil sank back into his room and headed for the bathroom. He stripped out of his clothes and started the bathtub. As steam filled the room, he decided to try out tapping into his sight.

*Okay, let’s see… It doesn’t make me feel bad, but it doesn’t make me feel anything. Maybe I know I’m about to get into warm water? That’s nice I guess?*

Once the bathtub had enough water in it, he dropped a bergamot bath bomb in and added bubbles. He still had a hard time in the bath without bubbles hiding his body.

*Okay, go slowly I think.*

Virgil sank one leg into the water. He paid attention to how the rising water felt on his leg, then how it felt as he brought the other leg over and sank into the bath. He ignored what he felt as he submerged his hips, but paid attention again once the water got to his waist. He laid back and let the water rise up to his neck, but found that he felt choked when it got that high. He shifted so the water level was at mid-chest. He did a progressive muscle relaxation exercise as the warm water soothed him. The smell of the bergamot oil was delicious and made him a little hungry. He closed his eyes and relaxed, feeling the warm water and smelling the bergamot.

All too soon, excited knocking came at his door.

“Virgil! We are ready for supper, and Patton’s making chicken cordon bleu!”

Virgil jumped and stared at the door.

“Virgil? Are you alright?”

Virgil shook himself. “Yeah, I’m good Princey. Just taking a bath. I’ll be down soon.”

“Wonderful! I look forward to gazing upon your lovely face! The stars and the moon could never hope to shine as beautifully as your eyes!”

Virgil rolled his eyes as he heard Roman move away from the door. *Princey needs to find his chill.* He resolutely ignored the feelings the royal’s words sparked in him, because if he ignored them they didn’t exist, and he didn’t have to deal with the crushing disappointment and humiliation when he later realized what a moron he’d been.

Virgil dried himself off and repeated the process, noting how the soft cotton felt. The dominant sensation quickly became cold however, so he quickly applied his lotion. Virgil was neutral about the feeling of the lotion itself, but once it sank into his skin and his skin felt moisturized he decided he liked that. The smell of oud, roses, and sandalwood was nice, and he enjoyed the slight shimmer.
Virgil tugged his clothes back on and fixed his hair and makeup before heading downstairs. He heard Roman serenading Patton in the kitchen accompanied by an occasional giggle. Virgil decided he liked that sound. He also liked the smell coming from the kitchen goddamn that smells so good.

Logan raised an eyebrow at Virgil and gave a small smile, clearly enjoying the antics of the two right-brain personas. Virgil smiled back and settled into his chair, Patton having already gotten everything out. Virgil ignored the blush that having those intelligent, dark eyes locked on him caused.

Patton set a plate in front of Virgil with a smile. “Here ya go kiddo! I think you’ll like it!”

Virgil smiled. “I’m sure I will.”

Patton squealed and sat down. Vigril cut into his chicken and watched as cheese oozed out. Yup, I like the look of that! He let it cool down while he ate the pasta carbonara. Virgil felt every texture and focused in on every flavor. He continued this for the rest of the meal.

Virgil helped Patton clean up after dinner and went to his room to make sure Thomas got enough done for the day. He flopped on his bed, put in his headphones, turned on music, and opened Tumblr. He fell asleep to a lit phone screen.

Chapter End Notes

It took me for-fucking-ever to talk with my therapist about sexual issues I was having. I also was trying to get in tune with my body the way Virgil was, and it took a therapist clarifying for me that “feeling sensations to reconnect with your body” can be non-sexual touches because Virgil and I were both programmed that non-sexual or non-painful touches were a strange exception, not a rule. Me, projecting onto Virgil? Never!
Hey folks! First things first, this chapter does begin with a graphic depiction of sexual assault, which ends at the line of tildes. After that first line of tildes, there is a description and discussion of a character throwing up. Also, heed the new tags; there's a new archive tag as well as general tags that explain the new archive tag. In addition, I'll put an explanation/ rationale for the first scene down in the ending A/N's.

At the end of the chapter, there are consensual sexy shenanigans! That's below the second line of tildes. Here's what the chapter structure looks like:

TW

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PG

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PG

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(°_°)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Apathy had just finished inside of Virgil when the chained Side heard a commotion from somewhere behind him. He was scared; he’d only been with the Dark Sides a year and a half, but he hadn’t heard so much noise before. It sounded like there was a fight going on.

Apathy pulled out roughly, which made Virgil release a pained moan.

“This is not what Thomas would want! Surrender and hand over Anxiety!”

Virgil felt hope flicker in his chest. ‘Creativity! The other sounds must be Logic and Morality!’

Virgil lay still, trying to conserve his strength; he’d be lucky if he could stand at all, much less run once the Light Sides freed him. It was hard to tell what was going on from behind him, but Logic was suddenly at his side. Virgil flinched away and Logic pulled a face at Virgil.

“Gross.” Logic said as he wrinkled his nose. He closed his eyes and conjured gloves. “Ew. Can you, um, like take a couple of baths when we get you to the Light Side before you come downstairs?”

Virgil felt tears of shame escape him as he agreed. Logan picked the lock to the shackles around Virgil’s wrist. As he was taking the shackles off, Virgil didn’t have time to warn Logic before Rage hit him in the head with a big piece of wood, knocking him unconscious.

Greed walked into Virgil’s line of sight. “There! We got them.” Jealousy was leading Creativity to the Room.

Creativity caught sight of Virgil and grimaced. “We’re going to be killed for that?! This is your fault Anxiety! Thomas won’t have his Light Sides anymore!!”
Creativity kept shouting as he was led into the Room along with Morality and Logic. Rage reattached the shackle to Virgil’s wrists and grinned down at him.

“Listen for the sounds of the Lights dying and know that it is your fault.”

Rage went into the Room and minutes later Virgil could hear Morality screaming a terrible, animalistic sound while Logic was sobbing. Morality’s screams cut off first, followed by Logic’s cries. Virgil threw up on the mattress.

‘This is my fault. Oh my god Thomas! Thomas, oh my god, I’m so sorry!! I didn’t mean to!!’

The Dark Sides trailed out of the Room. Deceit crouched down and tutted. “You’ve made a mess. Although I think we should reward you. We couldn’t have done it without you!”

Virgil whimpered. “But first, we need to finish up.” Virgil silently wept as each of the Dark Sides took a turn. Once Apathy had finished again, Virgil was unshackled.

“I think we’ll give you a two day break from your duties. You’ve earned it!”

Virgil sobbed. He hadn’t meant to make the Light Sides get hurt! If they hadn’t been trying to rescue him they wouldn’t have been hurt in the first place! He lay on the mattress as the Dark Sides walked away, chatting and laughing amongst themselves.

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Virgil shot up, his eyes full of spots from the bright phone screen. He jumped out of bed and made it to his bathroom, only to throw up on the floor before he could reach the toilet. Virgil stumbled to the toilet to finish throwing up. Just as he had finished dry-heaving, three precise knocks came at his bathroom door.

“Virgil? Are you alright? Are you ill?”

Virgil spat into the toilet bowl and flushed. “Yeah, I’m okay, just had a nightmare.”

“Oh gracious… may I come in?”

Virgil looked at the mess on the floor and winced. “Ahhh, it’s probably not the best idea right now…”

“Virgil, I am not upset by the sight or smell of vomit, I merely wish to help and comfort you in any way I am able to.”

Virgil leaned his forehead against the seat of the toilet. He sighed. “Okay, just… watch your step.”

“Thank you Virgil.”

Logan opened the door and Virgil refused to look at him. Logan’s usually even stride was staggered as he avoided the puddle of vomit on the floor. He kneeled next to Virgil.

“May I touch you?”

Virgil nodded. Logan gently began rubbing Virgil’s upper back. “Do you think you’re done vomiting?”

Virgil nodded again. Logan snapped, and the puke on the floor disappeared. Logan silently rubbed Virgil’s back as Virgil felt the stomach cramps die down. Virgil stayed there for a few moments
longer, relishing the silent, tranquil presence of another person comforting him. He started feeling a flashback creeping up, his brain telling him that the person rubbing his back wasn’t Logan, so he turned to look at the intellectual. Virgil remembered his nightmare and soon tears were welling up in his eyes. Logan’s hand paused.

“Virgil? Is something the matter? Do you want me to stop touching you?”

Virgil cried and flung himself at Logan, wrapping his arms around the nerd and crying into his shoulder. Logan hugged Virgil back and resumed rubbing the distraught Side’s back.

“Shhhh Virgil, it’s okay, you’re safe now.”

Virgil just cried harder and hugged Logan tighter, and Logan hugged back. After 10 minutes, Virgil began calming down. He pulled back and kept his hands on Logan’s shoulders, staring in wonder at Logan’s face. Behind the smart glasses were analytical, intelligent eyes, able to dissect nearly anything, understand it, and put it back together piece by piece.

“I’m so happy you’re alive.” Virgil whispered.

Logan’s face twitched as he attempted to understand what was going on. It didn’t take him long to put the pieces together.

“You had a nightmare that I died?”

Virgil’s face crumpled as he whimpered and looked down. Logan brought his hands up to Virgil’s shoulders and squeezed. “It is alright, I am alive. I’m safe. Do you wish to talk about your nightmare?”

Virgil shook his head. “Alright. Would you like me to stay with you tonight?”

Virgil nodded and rested his forehead on Logan’s shoulder. Logan petted the back Virgil’s head for a minute before beginning to stand. Virgil followed him to the bed. Logan gave Virgil a Kleenex, and once Virgil was done with it he tossed it in his wastebasket and laid down on the side of the bed nearest the door. Logan walked to the other side and, once receiving a nod from Virgil, laid down. He lifted his arm in invitation, which Virgil hesitantly took. Virgil slowly rested his head on Logan’s firm chest. Once he had relaxed fully, Logan brought his arm down around the anxious Side.

“Sleep well Virgil.” Logan murmured.

Virgil snuggled into Logan’s chest. He laid awake until Logan’s breathing indicated he was asleep. Virgil felt the familiar hot tingle across his skin from being around someone he was attracted to. Logan’s arm around him was a soothing weight, but it also made him flush. Virgil pulled the top blanket up and bunched it up until it was satisfying amount of blanket to hold. Holding the blanket and Logan’s arm around him, Virgil fell asleep.

///// 

Logan woke up in a place that was not his bed. He grabbed his glasses off the nightstand to inspect the weight on his chest and smiled. Virgil was clutching a section of blanket and sleeping soundly. Logan couldn’t see Virgil’s face from this angle, but he did see slightly messy hair and shoulders that were gently rising and falling. He gently put his other arm around Virgil, embracing and cherishing the smaller Side. As… painful as it was for Virgil to not reciprocate romantic love for him, Logan was happy to simply provide some comfort to their youngest friend. Until he realized that with morning came a phenomenon that he knew Virgil would not be comfortable with.
Oh dear.

Logan fought with himself. He wanted to stay and hold Virgil, and if he got up to go to the bathroom Virgil might wake, and he needed all the rest he could get. On the other hand, if he stayed in bed, Virgil would almost certainly discover Logan’s… *predicament*.

*Perhaps I can make it go away on its own.*

Logan tried thinking of naked Aunt Patty (really, naked women in general), Thomas’ schedule, anything. He was becoming frustrated at his stubborn erection.

*I will not contribute to Virgil’s trauma! He barely feels safe around us and I do not wish to remind him of his abusers!*

That train of thought seemed to work to make Logan flag pretty quickly. Just in time, as Patton knocked gently on Virgil’s door, causing him to stir. Virgil hugged the bundle of blanket tighter as he groggily opened his eyes up at Logan.

*Interesting. He seems to find comfort in holding objects to his chest.*

“Kiddo? Breakfast is ready.” Patton called softly.

Logan answered for them. “We’ll be there in a few minutes.”

“Okay! Hi Lolo!”

“Good morning Patton.”

Patton giggled as he skipped away.

Logan looked down at Virgil. His half-lidded eyes were bleary with sleep and he had a vague look of confusion. Virgil sighed and stretched. Logan most certainly didn’t watch him.

Once Virgil had finished stretching he climbed out of bed and turned back to look at Logan.

“Hey, uh, thanks. For, um, y’know, last night. It… it helped.”

Logan nodded. “It is my pleasure. I am glad I could help calm you.”

Virgil nodded his head and ducked it shyly. “I’m just gonna… go look less gross for breakfast.”

“Very well. I will see you there.”

Virgil gave his two-finger salute and escaped into the bathroom. Logan breathed a sigh of relief. Watching Virgil stretch and groan had not helped matters. He quickly left Virgil’s room and walked down the hallway, intending to take care of his problem in his room. That was the plan anyway.

Unfortunately for his plans, he ran into Roman.

Roman saw Logan in the hallway and smiled. “Greetings my nerd!”

Logan nodded to him. “Salutations Roman.”

Roman tilted his head and frowned. “Where are you going in such a hu- oh.” Roman smiled lasciviously and stalked closer to Logan. “I can help you with that if you’d like.” he rumbled.
Logan’s operating systems were shutting down. His lower half was very much for the idea, while his upper half stated that he needed breakfast. His upper half wasn’t putting up much of a fight though. Roman had heat and desire emanating from him, and it was infecting Logan.

“I… that sounds…” Logan was having difficulty making a decision. His head was clouding with lust and Roman’s presence wasn’t helping to clear anything.

Roman stood where he was, two feet from Logan, as he waited for Logan’s answer. He felt a thrill at having such an effect on the usually-stoic genius.

Logan cleared his throat. “After breakfast. Once we’ve eaten, I would be amenable.”

Roman smiled and stepped closer, his chest barely brushing Logan’s. “That sounds wonderful my dear.” He grabbed one of Logan’s hands and brought it up to his mouth, kissing the back of it gently. He leaned forward until his lips just brushed Logan’s ear.

“I look forward to making you scream my name.” he whispered. Logan felt sparks from the contact and lightning go from the base of his skull down his spine.

Logan let out a high-pitched moan as Roman pulled back with a sinful smirk, then walked around him to the kitchen. Logan gathered himself after a moment and went to ready himself for breakfast in his bathroom.

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After breakfast, Logan went up to Roman’s room. He knocked, and entered once Roman acknowledged him. Roman was staring at him from the middle of the room, his eyes dark. Logan felt a hidden inferno within him rise up and take over his senses. He strode up to Roman, grabbed his upper arms, and kissed him roughly, which Roman reciprocated just as enthusiastically. They each kept trying to take the lead, neither willing to submit, both feeling like they were overheating. They were making out heavily already; kissing hot, rough, and intense, intermingled with nips. Logan started pushing Roman backwards to the bed, both of them stumbling. Logan bit Roman’s lower lip before pushing him onto the bed. Roman fell backwards and Logan was on top of him in the next second, twisting one hand in his hair and holding himself up with the other while he kissed the prince again. Logan tugged on his hair, and Roman let out a high-pitched keen. Logan smirked; Roman loved having his hair pulled.

Roman was using both hands to possessively run over every inch of Logan’s body. Logan felt his nerves light up wherever Roman’s hand traveled. The hot, almost violent kissing was sending shockwaves of electricity down his spine. After a few minutes of that, Logan pulled away and looked down at his prince. Roman looked wrecked; his lips were red and swollen, his hair was a mess, and his eyes were wild with lust.

“Pillows.” Logan ordered. Roman grabbed Logan and they moved up to the pillows together. Logan was certain of his victory, until he felt a smirk against his lips and he suddenly switched positions with Roman. Dizzy from the from the change in position, Logan looked up at Roman, who had light coming from behind him, making the royal look like a god. Roman was smiling down at Logan, a predatory glint in his eye. Logan whined and bucked up, the heat on his skin overwhelming his senses. They were both painfully hard at this point and desperate to touch bare skin; they enjoyed playing to see who would take the lead and who would cave first.

Logan grabbed the front of Roman’s shirt and began undoing it, returning the kisses and bites Roman gave him. Once the buttons were undone, Roman leaned back to throw his top off to the side before going back in and kissing Logan passionately. They were both moaning into the kiss at
this point. Without breaking their contact, Roman started tugging and pulling on Logan’s tie to loosen it, finally getting it off and throwing it to the side. He got Logan’s top off next and it joined the growing pile of clothes. Logan pulled Roman’s hair again, trying to get back in control, but Roman just growled and started biting and sucking on Logan’s neck.

Logan relented. “Please, Roman,” he whined, bucking his hips.

Roman had pity on his desperate nerd. He brought his lips back up for a passionate and less violent kiss. “I want to fuck you until you can’t remember your name.” Roman growled, waiting for Logan’s answer.

“Yes, please! Just get on with it!” Logan urged, growing more frantic by the second with Roman’s dominating behavior.

Roman summoned a bottle of lube as he worked both of their pants off. Once they were both naked, he leaned back. “I want to tie you up. Can I?”

Logan nodded. Roman grinned darkly. “Good. On your stomach.”

Logan quickly complied. Roman conjured several lengths of red silk and tied Logan’s wrists to the headboard. Once he made sure that the silk wasn’t too tight, he gave Logan a gentler kiss.

“How are you feeling my love?”

“Excellent, green. Now will you please hurry up?!”

Roman chuckled. “Demanding.”

Roman kept his word. By the end, Logan was a boneless, wordless, satisfied mess held in Roman’s arms.

Chapter End Notes

Congratulations on making it to the end of this chapter! I tried to imply it in here, but the Light Sides have had many conversations and have already set up great boundaries around playtime. We'll see what that conversation can look like once Virgil is ready for a relationship, but for now those convos happened off-screen.

So the explanation for the flashback where the Dark Sides pretended to kill the Light Sides (it was a flashback, but no one actually died; I'm too soft): That was one of several memories I have of fake rescue attempts. The first time was when I was maybe 5 or so? and some kid had recently tried to run. We were all put into the same room together, and the rest of the situation went down much like in this scene, where they foiled the "rescue" and took the "rescuers" into the next room to get shot. Although, the one thing that differs is that they actually shot a couple of the older kids to prove a point.

I'm not sure if I want to show the other faked "rescue" attempts because that time they actually used blanks and blood packs and whatnot (I should have realized that it was fake because the special effects weren't very good, but kid me was really stupid). Is that something you all want to see in this fic? I'll put it in here if you'd like, I just don't
want to seem repetitive.
Once he and Roman had bathed and Logan consumed the water and granola bars Roman insisted upon, Logan went back to his room, ready to focus. Logan intended to review the schedule for the next two weeks, but couldn’t help but think back to the previous night and morning. He kept reflecting on how distraught Virgil had been, thinking the Light Sides had died, and how he cuddled the mass of blankets close to him. Logan had noted that they seemed to provide Virgil comfort, especially in times of distress.

Logan observed red eyes and a pale, drawn face on Virgil whenever he’d spontaneously appear in the same room as Logan and some of the others outside of mealtimes or movie/ game nights. He’d always have his hands in his pockets and be far less talkative than usual on these occasions. He would usually be happy to be given a task, or to simply sit and listen to whoever was talking. Logan also observed that although Virgil consented to physical contact a similar amount while he was in distress versus being relatively calm, when he consented to receive physical contact while distressed the impact of comfort he received was much more noticeable.

In addition, once Virgil had relaxed from these episodes enough to have his hands outside of his pockets, Logan would observe Virgil tightly clenching the material of his hoodie.

Logan had done extensive research on trauma responses and therapies, and had come across the concept of a comfort object early on. He’d wanted to wait until he was able to reasonably conclude that Virgil would appreciate a comfort object before making him one, in case Virgil would be offended by the idea. However, especially after that morning, it was clear to Logan that Virgil certainly seemed to employ the use of comfort objects, however unconsciously. Now the only issue was figuring out what shape the object should take.

Logan glanced at his clock and sighed as he realized he’d been musing over Virgil for 45 minutes. He’d be able to get little done for the schedule in the short amount of time before he’d be called down to eat, so he switched to a different project.

/////  Patton brightened when Logan walked into the kitchen for lunch with his tablet.

“Hi Lolo! Watcha working on?”

Logan raised sharp eyes to Patton’s sweet ones. “I am doing research for a gift for Virgil. Do you know of any forms that he finds comforting?”

Patton tilted his head. “I dunno Lo, I think you’re the only one of us who enjoys paperwork.”
Logan sighed, “Allow me to clarify. I am attempting to conjure a soft comfort object for Virgil. Do you know of any shapes, characters, etcetera that Virgil may find soothing?”

Patton hummed as he brought his fist underneath his chin. “Well, my spooky kiddo sure seems to like spooky things! Maybe something like that would work? Oh! And he likes *The Nightmare Before Christmas*!”

Logan smiled at Patton’s enthusiasm. “Thank you Patton, I’m sure I will find this information helpful.”

Patton beamed. “Of course! I’m happy to help you and our sweet and sour shadowling anytime! And I’m so happy that you’re doing this for Virgie! I think he’ll like it!”

Logan smiled as Patton leapt over and planted a kiss on Logan’s lips. Logan stumbled backwards a little from the force of the impact, but was chuckling while Patton giggled. They kissed for a few minutes until they were interrupted.

“Gross.”

Logan and Patton parted.

“Hi Virgil!” Patton waved.

“Salutations.”

“Hi. Please don’t fuck in the kitchen. Food is in the kitchen.”

Patton giggled, “So are snacks!”

It was Logan’s turn to tilt his head. “Yes, I believe snacks would fall under the umbrella term of-oh, you mean individuals you find sexually attractive.”

“Did someone say “Prince”?”

“Oh MY GOD.”

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Roman noticed how Virgil had escaped to his room as soon as he’d finished lunch. Roman helped Patton clean up, then retired to his theatre.

He knew he’d never be complete without his unrequited love returning his affections, but he also knew it was no use. Virgil had made it rather clear that a relationship was out of the question. While there had been times in the past that made Roman question if Virgil returned their feelings towards him, Virgil had expressed enough disgust and discomfort around their PDA’s that Roman was certain he’d never hold Virgil as a lover. Roman waved his hand, and a single spotlight shone on him.

Roman fell to his knees, then switched acting choices and shifted to sit with his knees bent slightly in front of him.

“When beauty grows too great to bear
How shall I ease me of its ache,
For beauty more than bitterness
Makes the heart break.”
Roman, happy with his creative decision, fell backwards and stared up at the ceiling, the spotlight in his periphery. He lay there as he let the pain of lost love wash over him.

“Now while I watch the dreaming sea
With isles like flowers against his breast,
Only one voice in all the world
Could give me rest.”

“Uh, hey Princey, you dead?”

Roman threw an arm over his eyes dramatically. “Although my mortal body continues on, the life of my heart is long since passed.”

Roman heard Virgil snort from the wings. “Jesus Christ, what happened this time?”

Roman whined, “My heart is broken beyond repair I’m afraid.”

Roman was confused by the tense silence until Virgil broke it. “Did you guys break up or something?”

Roman sighed, “No, nothing like that.”

Another silence.

“Did Thomas miss out on a cute guy?”

“No, thankfully.”

Roman heard a sigh, then footsteps coming closer to him. Virgil laid down next to Roman on the stage. Roman could smell lavender, orange, and oud coming off of him. The scent was intoxicating, and he wished to simply bask in its presence.

“This is really uncomfortable dude. How can you lay here for so long like this?”

“Art.”

Roman heard Virgil huff out a laugh. Although he may never be able to be with his dark love, he could at least make him happy.

“Look, Princey… I’m not very good with comforting people. Not really my job. But you’re crushing on someone, right?”

“I’m hopelessly in love.”

Roman could hear Virgil roll his eyes. “Right, my bad. Well, rejection hurts, so the first part is to let yourself feel, which I think you’re doing a pretty good job of. And it’s not like you’re gonna feel like this forever, I mean you’ll feel better at some point, and you’re in a relationship with Logan and Patton. Plus, Remy, Saul, and Thomas care about you, and, you know, other people care too.”

Virgil shifted nervously. “Who’re you in love with anyway?”

Roman sighed. “I suppose I should not go into great detail. My heart may be shattered, but my heart shall go on. Near, far, wherever you are~”

“As good of a singer as you are, I know you won’t stop and dinner’s gonna be ready soon.”

Roman sighed. “I suppose you are correct. If only I could find the will to carry myself to
Virgil pushed himself up into a sitting position. “Look, if it makes you feel any better,” Virgil’s voice caught in his throat, making him clear it, “Remy and Saul would probably be open to dating you. You’re a… cool guy. And not ugly or anything.”

Roman lifted his arm and looked at Virgil, who was red-faced and looking anywhere but Roman. *Virgil thinks I’m in love with Remy or Saul? And did he just compliment me?!” “That’s very kind of you to say Virgil, but they’re—”

“We should go to dinner!” Virgil blurted.

Roman stared at Virgil’s face. *Could he…?*

Virgil got to his feet and headed towards the wings. Roman noticed that he was wearing his long-sleeved t-shirt, which looked very nice on him. When he and Logan had treated Virgil for his horrific injuries, he had noticed how emaciated Virgil was. When Virgil first began wearing his long-sleeved t-shirt around the mindpalace, Roman could still see bony shoulders and too-thin arms. Now, he seemed to be at a healthier weight. After a moment, Roman hauled himself to his feet and caught up with Virgil.

Before they exited Roman’s realm, Roman decided he had to tell Virgil. “Virgil.”

Virgil turned and looked at him warily.

Roman cleared his throat. “I…” *What if he doesn’t feel the same way? Maybe he just meant the compliments as a friend. I WON’T make him uncomfortable. “Thank you. I… do feel better.”* He offered Virgil a tentative smile.

Virgil shot him a half-smile. “Glad I could help.”

As they settled in for dinner, Roman watched Virgil. He didn’t seem to be behaving differently, which was good.

*I must figure out if Virgil has any attraction to us. I want to make him happy.*

Dinner passed uneventfully, everyone inhaling their maple syrup-glazed salmon. When Virgil stated that he was going up to his room, Logan adjusted his glasses.

“Virgil, would you mind staying behind a moment?”

Virgil froze and looked at Logan with wide eyes. “Uh, sure.”

Logan looked over Virgil critically. His body had gone from relatively relaxed to tense as soon as Logan had asked him to stay behind. Therefore, something about Logan’s request must have made him anxious.

“Do not be alarmed Virgil, I am not upset with you,” Logan offered, taking a shot in the dark. Virgil seemed to relax minutely, so he guessed he had figured out the cause, or at least a portion of it. “I have been doing a great deal of research, and have found that comfort objects can be quite beneficial to certain individuals. With some careful searching on YouTube, I came across an animated spider that goes by the name of Lucas.” Logan summoned the Lucas the Spider plushie and held it towards Virgil. “I am hoping this may provide you with some comfort.”

Virgil slowly took the spider plush and stared at it. He looked at Logan with wide eyes. “Th-thank
“Of course. It is my pleasure, I assure you.”

Virgil smiled at Logan as his eyes got shiny. He hugged the spider to his chest and let his chin fall forward. Logan saw the tears building in Virgil’s eyes.

Logan frowned and tilted his head. “Is something the matter Virgil?”

Virgil shook his head as he let out a watery laugh. “No, L, I… I really like it.” He turned his head towards Logan. “Thank you.”

Logan allowed a full smile onto his face. “You are more than welcome Virgil.”

“OH MY GOODNESS THIS IS ADORABLE!!”

Virgil flinched at Patton’s squeal but smiled.

“Logan, I must say, that is quite a rom-meaningful gesture,” Roman said as he waggled his eyebrows. Logan blushed as he adjusted his glasses.

“Yes, well, I am happy to help Virgil in any way I can.”

Virgil shot a glance over at Roman, who was watching him curiously. What the hell? I’m gonna have to figure this out later. He just said goodnight to the Light Sides and sank out to his room. Once there, he appraised the plush. Logan had made it a foot and a half long and a foot wide. The huge, cartoonish eyes made it adorable. The hair was ridiculously soft and the plush had enough body to be satisfying to hold against his chest while still being soft. Virgil curled up on his bed and squeezed the stuffed spider against his chest as he allowed a few tears to escape. He knew it was stupid to get emotional over something as simple as a stuffed spider, but he couldn’t stop the tears. It was such a thoughtful thing, and Logan didn’t even know about the comfort items in Dr. Picani’s office. Virgil let himself cry into the plush toy for a few more minutes before he got ready for bed.

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Chapter End Notes

GiveVirgilAPlushie2k19 has been a success.
Virgil’s session with Dr. Picani started with a guided meditation exercise, as they had been doing for a while. Dr. Picani would lead Virgil through a progressive relaxation exercise and then gently guide him into the specific meditation they had decided on. Today, Dr. Picani told Virgil to visualize his heart and dive into it. Virgil walked around the visualized “landscape” of his heart before the doctor had him ask for a loving protector. When he saw a man with stag horns made of pure golden light, he could barely hold himself together enough to not burst into tears. Virgil was feeling relaxed but emotional after the guided meditation exercise. Once he came out of it and Dr. Picani checked back in with him, they decided to continue their session.

“So Virgil, what would you like to talk about today?”

Virgil fidgeted. “Well, I’ve been getting more in tune with my body. It still feels kinda weird sometimes.”

“I’m glad to hear that you’ve been feeling more in tune with yourself! And don’t worry about it still feeling a little foreign; getting in touch with your body can take some time. Is there something you’d like to focus on in that regard?”

Virgil thought for a moment. “No, I don’t think so. It’s just different now that I’ve been focusing on… normal touches instead of trying to get back in tune with my body with, um, other touches.”

“Oh my god SHUT UP RIGHT NOW. That was just a physical response!

Mhm. Of course it was. And yet when you try to jerk yourself off you turn into a weeping mess on the floor. You must miss them quite a bit!

Virgil shook his head as his mind continued to scream obscenities at him. “I, uh-how do you deal with unrequited love?!” Virgil blurted and immediately hated himself. Didn’t mean to say that. Welp, cat’s out of the bag.

Dr. Picani smiled sympathetically. “I take it you’ve fallen for someone who doesn’t feel the same way about you?”
Virgil scoffed, “Yeah, there’s no way.”

Dr. Picani frowned and tilted his head. “No way what?”

“Sorry, no way they’d return my… crush or whatever,” Virgil finished in a mumble.

“Oh? And why’s that?”

Virgil grunted in frustration. “Because… look at me!” he shouted.

“I am looking at you.”

“No, just… ugh!” Virgil threw his hands up.

“Tell me what’s wrong.”

Virgil ground his teeth. “I’m not attractive. I’m not… good to be around.”

Dr. Picani hummed. “Do you think the Light Sides are attractive?”

Virgil jumped. “How… how did you know?”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Just a gut feeling. The way you light up when you talk about them.”

Virgil groaned and buried his head in his hands. “Am I that obvious?”

Dr. Picani just laughed. “Don’t worry too much! I’m trained to see these things! So I take it that’s a yes?”

“Yeah…”

“You all share a face, don’t you?”

Virgil straightened up. “Yeah, but we all have small differences.”

“Is it those differences that you think make you unattractive?”

“I-” Virgil stopped. He tried to get his thoughts in order. “No, it’s not those per se. It’s just… I’m still skinny, and my body looks kinda weird. Like, the proportions are off. And I’m just covered in scars…” Virgil’s voice cracked at the end.

Dr. Picani pressed his lips together in sympathy. “Do you think the Light Sides find you attractive?”

Virgil sighed. “I don’t know. I used to think that there was no way they could find me attractive, that they thought I was hideous, but they don’t seem to mind me when I’m around, and they don’t mind, like, touching me. Not like that! Just, like normal people. Friends.”

“It sounds like they don’t find you ugly. Have they ever complimented your appearance?”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah, Princey does a lot, but that’s Princey, he’s dramatic and romantic and shit. Patton’s… Patton, he likes lifting people up. And Logan is probably just doing it because he read a research paper or something that said it would help me.”

Dr. Picani put his pen to his lips and hummed. “Speaking of Logan, I’m hearing a few instances of inference observation confusion.”
Virgil bit back a chuckle. “Jumping to conclusions.”

Dr. Picani smiled widely. “Exactly! Where in your statement do you think you did that?”

“The entire thing.”

“That’s what I heard! Let’s break it down. Is it possible that the Light Sides find you attractive?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I guess so… How would I know if they find me attractive? How do I know they’re not just saying things?”

Dr. Picani gestured with his pen. “Ah! Now that’s an interesting question! Usually the only way for anyone to know is if they tell us. What kinds of things have the Light Sides said that indicated they found you attractive?”

Virgil looked down and frowned. “It’s hard to think of specific things. Um, one time when I wore a v-neck t-shirt they said I looked good. And they liked the piercings. Prinsey likes to be poetic and over the top, and Patton will say stuff like, “You look good today!” Logan usually just says that I look nice with my hair doing something different or something about my makeup. It’s really matter-of-fact.”

Dr. Picani was writing in his notebook. “Okay, so Roman likes to be poetic, Patton’s just enthusiastic, and Logan’s specific and upfront. Do you see them complimenting each other?”

Virgil was surprised by the question. “Yeah, I mean they’re in a relationship, and they’re pretty affectionate.”

“Okay! How does Roman compliment his boyfriends?”

Virgil smiled as he remembered Roman’s antics. “He usually uses a lot of really flowery language, loudly.”

“From what you’ve told me, it sure sounds like him! How about Patton? How does he compliment the other two?”

“In a very Patton way. Just very excited and happy. His happiness is infectious.” Virgil blushed as he thought of Patton.

“Awwww that’s adorable! It sounds like he really lights up the room! And Logan?”

“Logan just comes out with it. I dunno, he just says it like it’s fact.”

“Gotcha. Roman likes to be poetic, Patton’s just enthusiastic, and Logan’s specific and upfront. That sure does sound familiar!”

Virgil felt numb with shock. He stared at a spot on the floor. “Yeah…” he said absently.

Dr. Picani knew when he had pushed enough. “Alright, I think we’ve dissected that pretty well. Why don’t we move on to something else? You said you don’t think you’re good to be around?”

Virgil shook himself from his stupor. “Yeah, I mean I have a lot to deal with. The Light Sides, Neutral Sides, and Thomas all have to deal with my flashbacks and panic attacks.”

“It can be hard to see someone you love suffering. Do they seem to avoid you?”

Virgil breathed out his nose. “No, but it’s not exactly a selling point.”
Dr. Picani switched tactics. “So it’s upsetting for them to see you suffering?”

Virgil picked at his sleeves. “Yeah. It hurts them when I’m in pain, and I don’t want to hurt them.”

“I can tell that you really care about them. It sounds like they care about you too?”

Virgil hunched in on himself. “Yeah, I guess.”

“Alright. And you don’t want to hurt them. Since they care about you, which do you think will hurt more; them having to occasionally help you through a trauma response, or them not seeing you very much?”

“I-I guess them not seeing me very much? But, what do I have to offer them?”

Dr. Picani shrugged. “What do you usually do when you hang out?”

“Well, with Logan we usually just exist in the same general area and do our thing quietly. The other two aren’t as quiet,” Virgil chuckled.

Dr. Picani chuckled with Virgil. “It sounds like you give Logan a chance to relax while being around another person. How about Roman?”

“I… I guess we talk about makeup, hang out in his realm, or watch Disney movies. Sometimes I can get him to watch something besides Disney.”

“That all sounds like fun! Think about Roman’s face. How did he look?”

Virgil scrolled through his memories from the past year. “He seemed happy, except when I was freaking out.”

“And what happened once you got out of the flashback or panic attack?”

Virgil shifted, the memories becoming stronger. “He’d let me leave if I needed to be alone, or we’d hang out if I wanted someone around.”

“How did Roman seem after one of your trauma responses when you kept hanging out?”

Virgil looked down, his cheeks heating up and his eyes stinging. “He seemed sad.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “Was he sad the entire time?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, once we started doing something else he seemed fine.”

“That’s good! What do you do with Patton?”

“I help him in the kitchen or with chores. Sometimes we bake or cook together. We chat, he does most of the talking.”

“How does Patton seem when you hang out?”

Virgil shrugged. “He’s happy. But he’s always happy.”

“Really? I thought he struggled with negative emotions as well.”

Virgil stopped short. He let that sink in for a moment. “You’re right.”

While Virgil’s eyes were unfocused, Dr. Picani allowed himself a small, triumphant smile. “So,
right now the worst odds you have of the Light Sides not returning your crush is 50/50. That means that it’s the same odds of them being in love with you versus not. Does that seem fair?”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah. I mean, that’s higher than I thought, but what’s new, right?” Virgil chuckled. “I don’t want to ruin what we have.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “It’s up to you Virgil. Only you can decide if you want to be with them. And it’s okay if you need time to figure it out. Remember to give yourself credit; you make them happy. Focus on those times you make them happy. Your brain is automatically over-focusing on when they’re sad because you’re hurting.” Dr. Picani sighed. “I think that’s about the time we have for today. Want to talk about how Brave fits into the Pixar theory?”

Virgil smiled, a little floaty but feeling encouraged. “Sure.”

Chapter End Notes

Whoop whoop! Picani chapter FTW! I'll let you in on a few techniques he used, but the rest you'll have to find for yourself ;):

Picani knew that he needed to push Virgil to a bit of anger/frustration for him to stop filtering his words so much and just say it. When Virgil was staring blankly into middle distance, with some folks you can push just a tiny bit further in the direction they need to go, but with Virgil, Picani knew that if he pushed while Virgil was in that state his defenses would slam up and destroy all the work they had done that session.

And fun fact! The guided meditation that I described was straight (heh) from my personal experience! I refused to cry in front of a therapist for 5 1/2 years because emotional vulnerability was not a thing for me. I still don't know why my mind insists on a golden dude with deer horns on his head, but oh well lol.
Chapter 69

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! Just a couple of warnings for this chapter. There are discussions and references to consensual sexy times, but nothing takes place on screen. A character reflects on Virgil's past with the Dark Sides, but there isn't anything graphic there. There's also a passing mention of a spider. I hope y'all like the chapter!!

Virgil sank directly into his bathroom and started the shower. *Dr. Picani is right, the only way to know is by asking them.* He turned the shower on as hot as it would go and used his older, more astringent body wash instead of the ones Logan and Roman had gifted him. *Gotta get clean enough for them. They deserve it.* Virgil scrubbed himself until his skin was pink, then got out of the shower and dried himself off. He rubbed lotion in as much as he could; he didn’t want to be greasy, but he wanted his skin soft.

Virgil looked in the mirror and winced. *Only so much lipstick you can put on a pig.* He picked up a pair of tweezers and plucked his eyebrows a bit, just enough to get the runaways. He then brushed his teeth, flossed, brushed his teeth again, and used mouthwash. He used an exfoliating and moisturizing lip scrub, then threw on some strawberry chapstick and his clothes. At the last second, he opted for only a v-neck long-sleeved t-shirt, forgoing the hoodie. Virgil styled his hair and threw on some makeup, then turned to the mirror.

*Okay Virgil, you can do this.* Virgil ran through several scenarios in his head, each one of them ending in an inevitable panic attack. The thought of having three pairs of eyes on him as he was trying to explain and offer himself was terrifying. Offering himself to Roman hadn’t gone well; he had been nervous enough as it was. Now the idea of offering to let all three fuck him… Virgil almost began crying from fear. It would hurt, he knew it would. There’s no way that three people wouldn’t cause chafing. *Maybe I could convince them to use my mouth instead*…

Virgil didn’t realize he was hyperventilating until he hit the tiled floor of his bathroom. Virgil curled up into a ball and attempted to regulate his breathing. After focusing on the sensation of his clothes he was able to do his breathing exercises. Virgil shakily stood and glanced at the clock on his bathroom wall. He grimaced. *Shit, I lost an hour?! Fuck me.* Virgil looked in the mirror and went about fixing his makeup.

*Okay, maybe a group fuck isn’t the way to go after all.* Virgil thought dryly. *Which Side should I try? Roman already said no, but maybe if I let someone else fuck me he’ll be okay with fucking me himself. I might be able to convince Logan…*

Virgil studied his appearance in the mirror. *Nope, eyes are too red, Logan will see that. So that leaves Patton… Honestly, not a bad choice. He’ll be nice, so maybe it won’t hurt as much. I’ve just gotta make sure I don’t start being a crybaby.*

Virgil took a deep breath as he stared down his own reflection. *Okay, let’s do this.* Virgil pushed himself away from the sink and walked towards his door. He smiled at Shelly and went out into the hallway. Patton’s door was the next door in the hallway, so it wasn’t a long walk. Before he could lose his nerve, he raised his hand and knocked purposefully on the door. Patton opened the
door and smiled brightly.

“Heya Virge! What’s up buttercup?”

Virgil couldn’t stop the half-smile from creeping onto his face. “Hey Pat. I was, uh, wondering if I could stay here tonight?” *Cop out. You coward.*

*Shut up, I’m trying to be smooth.*

*And how’s that worked for you in the past?*

“Sure! I’d love to! Come on in!”

“Thanks.”

Virgil shuffled in, missing the pockets of his hoodie. He heard Patton close the door behind him and bounce over to his side.

“It’s still early! Wanna do something? We could watch a movie, or we could play a board game, or a card game, or we could watch memories, or-”

Virgil chuckled as he held up a hand. “I’m good Pat. I was actually thinking we could do something else.” *Okay, don’t fuck this up this time. It’s Patton, he’s probably not going to make it too painful.*

*What if he’s into that?*

*Then you’ll just have to suck it up. Stop being such a baby.*

“What were ya thinking kiddo?” Patton asked, excitement shining through his features.

Virgil smiled back, focusing on the ease he felt around the moral Side and the happiness radiating off him.

“I was uh,” Virgil ducked his head and huffed out a nervous laugh, allowing himself to smile as he met Patton’s eyes again, “I was thinking we could have sex? I want to have a good experience, y’know…”

“Sure! Just give me a few minutes to clean out and we should be good to go! How do you want me?” Patton asked, still smiling warmly with a hint of mischief.

Meanwhile, Virgil’s lone brain cell short-circuited and face planted. His mind spun as he stared at Patton in shock. *Me being the one to fuck someone? Me being the one to fuck Patton?! What. What the fuck. I- what’s going on? I’d never hurt one of them! I’d never hurt Patton!! I can’t hurt him, I can’t!!*

“Virgil? Earth to Virgil?”

Virgil snapped out of the paralyzing shock his mind was in and looked at Patton. Patton had a look of amusement on his face. Virgil blushed and chuckled nervously.

“Sorry Pat, I, uh…” Virgil trailed off, not sure how to explain his thought process to Patton.

“Weren’t expecting me to offer to bottom, huh?” Patton asked, still smiling warmly with a hint of mischief.
Virgil chuckled. “Yeah, I didn’t really think of that. I didn’t think it was an option for me to… do that.”

“How come?” Patton asked innocently.

Virgil gave a sad half-smile. “I can’t hurt you Pat.”

Patton just tilted his head, compassion shining in his eyes. “It doesn’t have to hurt.”

Virgil though he saw the flicker of something go through the moral Side’s eyes, but it was gone before he could decipher it. Patton straightened his back. “Do you still wanna hang out? My offers from before still stand!”

Virgil smiled. May as well make it up to him. “Sure. I’d be down to watch Winnie the Pooh.”

Patton squealed and bounced on the balls of his feet. “Ooo so exciting! I’ll get it started up now! Go ahead and make yourself comfy!”

Virgil smiled and laid back against the mountain of pillows and stuffed animals that made up the top of Patton’s bed. Patton put the VHS in the VCR and tuned the channels until the intro ads started playing. Virgil watched as Patton damn near floated over to the bed. Patton crawled in on the other side and scooted over. He lifted his arm up.

“What do you want?” he offered. Virgil smiled and moved over to Patton, leaning his head back against his soft shoulder. Patton brought his arm down around Virgil’s shoulders and squeezed lightly. Virgil relished the feeling of the larger, strong arm around him and the thick, sturdy thigh resting against his own. Patton’s scent of vanilla and home washed over Virgil as comforting warmth seeped into his body, relaxing him. He felt the good kind of fire racing over his skin at Patton’s close proximity.

Patton conjured a bowl of orange cheddar popcorn and balanced it on the two legs that were touching between them. He turned and nuzzled Virgil’s hair.

“I love you Virgil.”

Virgil felt his chest clench with elation and love. “I love you too Pat.”

Patton giggled against the side of Virgil’s hair and turned to face the TV as the opening song played. Virgil felt relaxed and content and safe under Patton’s arm. He drifted off halfway through the movie.

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Patton waved his hand to turn the TV off once he was sure Virgil was asleep. He smiled down at the younger Side.

He’s so cute!!!

Virgil’s lips were barely open and his face was completely relaxed, his chest slowly rising and falling. Patton savored the feeling of Virgil asleep against him, holding him. He watched Virgil for an unknown amount of time, never tiring of seeing the smaller Side safe, relaxed, and sleeping soundly. He loved holding Virgil. Being able to touch him was a joy he’d never take for granted. Not only did he want his kiddo safe and sound, he couldn’t stop being in love with him. He’d never touch Virgil without permission, so whenever Virgil agreed to being touched or, Patton’s favorite, cuddled, Patton soaked it up.
Patton’s mind was drawn back to when Virgil had offered to sleep with Patton. Patton could tell that Virgil was far from ready, even with as much amazing, hard-earned progress as he’d made. He also just knew that Virgil was expecting to be the one to be penetrated, and that likely only Patton would receive pleasure. His heart had shattered, but he’d kept his face expertly schooled so the focus could stay on Virgil and making sure he was okay. He hadn’t missed the redness in Virgil’s eyes. Patton had offered to bottom, knowing it would challenge Virgil’s mindset and give Patton the opportunity to just plant the seed that might help change some of Virgil’s views on sex. Even if Virgil never had sex with Patton, Patton wanted to be sure that Virgil was making a fully informed decision based on what sex actually was, and not what his appalling experiences led him to expect.

Patton tightened his arm slightly as he thought about how the Dark Sides had warped Virgil’s views on sex. He was furious. What they did to Virgil wasn’t sex, it was rape. How dare they hurt my little shadowling so horribly!! Patton closed his eyes and did a few breathing exercises. It wouldn’t do to get angry now; Virgil needed Patton to put him to bed and stay with him. The focus needs to be on Virgil right now. I can wait until Virgil’s taken care of.

Patton slowly turned so he could put an arm underneath Virgil’s knees. Patton lifted Virgil just enough to slide him down the bed. Never letting go over Virgil’s shoulders, Patton leaned them both backwards until his head was on a pillow and Virgil’s was on his upper chest. He summoned Virgil’s Lucas the Spider plushie from his room (oh my God, Logan made this so cute!!) and gently placed it between Virgil’s hands and against his chest. He summoned a quilt from the base of the bed and covered himself and Virgil with it.

Patton had to use almost all of his self-restraint not to squeal at how adorable Virgil was, curled up on his chest, asleep, holding the Lucas the Spider plushie. Patton watched Virgil sleep on his chest until his eyes wouldn’t stay open any longer.

Chapter End Notes

Patton knew 100% that Virgil wasn't ready, so he wanted to shock Virgil out of the headspace he was in. Once he saw Virgil spiralling, he knew he had to keep everything really low pressure. And hey, Virgil got Patton and Lucas the Spider cuddles!!

Also, my beta Jasper01 gave me a ton of inspiration for the scene between Virgil and Patton!
Patton woke up as Virgil began shifting. Patton peered down at his spooky little cinnamon roll and smiled. Virgil didn’t seem to be fully awake yet; his eyes were still closed and he was making adorable little snuffling noises. Patton shifted his arms so they were more securely around Virgil. Patton used the opportunity to admire the somber persona. He sighed contently, thinking about Virgil’s chuckles, his deep voice, his little smirks and half-smiles. *He has no idea how sexy he is.*

Virgil kept moving around as the sounds changed from snuffles to little sounds from his throat. Patton frowned as Virgil began tensing up and the sounds became whimpers. Patton rubbed Virgil’s upper arm and began talking softly.

“Virgil, sweetie, it’s time to wake up. Come on baby, it’s okay. You’re safe, please wake up. Open your eyes honey.”

Patton kept murmuring and rubbing Virgil’s arm. Virgil suddenly startled awake and Patton immediately loosened his hold on Virgil. Virgil’s head whipped up toward Patton and stared at him with wide eyes and fast breaths. Patton felt his chest ache, but kept his face soft and smiled. “Hey kiddo. It’s okay, you’re safe. It’s just you and I here.”

Virgil averted his eyes and sucked in a breath, holding it before releasing it in a rush. He gasped again, but wasn’t able to hold it in.

“Want me to count?” Patton asked gently.

Virgil flinched and looked back up at Patton with a whimper and wide, unfocused eyes. Patton’s heart broke at the look of terror on Virgil’s face, but he held himself together. *Oh baby, what are you seeing?* Virgil swallowed as his eyes refocused a bit and slowly nodded. Patton began softly counting and attempting to do the breathing exercise at the same time. After a few rounds, it seemed to have the desired effect. Virgil was still shaking, but he had calmed down from a panic attack. Patton kept his arms loose.

“You feeling any better sweetie?”


“Do you want to talk about it?” Patton asked gently. Virgil shook his head.

“We still have a bit of time before breakfast. Do you want to cuddle or do you want alone time?” Patton asked, hoping for the former. Virgil looked at the spider plushie still in his hands and smiled.

“I take it you got this from my room?” Virgil asked, amusement coloring his voice.
“Yep! It’s so cute and you’re so cute and you’re so cute together!!” Patton finished in a hushed squeal. Virgil snorted as he attempted to silence a chuckle into his plushie.

Patton giggled. He loved holding Virgil, but he had to be sure…

“Wanna cuddle until breakfast?”

Virgil nodded with a smile still on his face and adjusted himself so more of his body was on Patton. Virgil hadn’t stopped trembling, but it was definitely less than before. Patton cautiously tightened his arms around Virgil and rubbed his upper arm. After 20 minutes of silent cuddling, it was time to go downstairs for breakfast. Patton nuzzled Virgil’s head.

“I think it’s about time we go downstairs for breakfast. Do you feel up for some food?”

Virgil cuddled further into Patton’s chest. “Yeah, probably should.”

It wasn’t the answer Patton was looking for, but it was close enough. “Okay. I love you Virgil.”

Virgil hid his smile in his spider plush, although Patton could still tell. “Love you too Pat.”

Patton bit back a squeal. They slowly disentangled themselves from each other and went downstairs. Logan had lined up boxes of cereal and Roman was digging through the cupboard.

Virgil cleared his throat. “Whatcha looking for Princey?”

Roman looked at him with a slightly accusatory but playful glint in his eye. “Oh, just something besides cereal. Logan insisted we “eat down” our pantry.”

“That’s a great idea Logan!” Patton chirped. Logan raised his mug but didn’t respond verbally. Coffee must not have kicked in yet.

Everyone settled into breakfast, with Roman combining Reese’s Puffs and Oreo cereal. Virgil looked at the monstrosity with raised eyebrows.

“Jesus Christ dude, your dentist must be making bank off you.”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “Indeed. Roman, be sure to use mouthwash after breakfast.”

Roman met Logan’s gaze coolly. “I’d be eating something different if someone didn’t keep eating all of the Poptarts.”

Virgil glared good-naturedly at Roman. “@ me you coward.”

Roman and Virgil traded jabs light-heartedly throughout breakfast, with Logan complimenting Virgil on his word choice and Patton watching them both closely.

Eventually, they stopped play fighting.

Roman looked Virgil dead in the eye. “Forgive my lack of counter argument my love. I find your beauty distracting.”

Virgil choked on his cereal. The prince was staring at him with half-lidded eyes. Fire was coming off the royal and Virgil felt the heat blanket every inch of his skin. Virgil gaped at Roman, unable to form a coherent sentence.

Patton cleared his throat. “Now Roman, don’t make Virgil uncomfortable.” Roman jumped with
wide eyes.

“Ah… Virgil, I apologize. I may have gotten ahead of myself a bit,” Roman said as he swept a hand through his hair.

Virgil felt the fire get replaced by sharp ice. He looked down. “It’s fine Princey.” He shot Roman what he hoped was a convincing half-smile. Roman returned the smile equally convincingly. The rest of breakfast passed quietly, and Virgil sunk out as soon as he finished eating. He snapped his room soundproof and locked his door before he allowed himself to cry. He pressed a hand against his mouth and wrapped his other arm around his stomach as he sobbed. His throat hurt as tears streamed down his face.

Roman was just trying to win the argument. Patton knew Roman was lying. God, he was so obvious! No one would look at me like that! Holy shit, no wonder Roman looked so uncomfortable! He was being as obvious as he could be, but my fucking worthless brain was stupid enough to think Roman was actually flirting with me, and then I was acting like a lovesick teenager. Ha! As if! He could never be attracted to me.

Awww, what happened to 50/50 Anxiety?

Fuck 50/50!

He turned on some Adam Lambert music. Virgil sat with his back against his bed and let the familiar chords wash over him as Sleepwalker came on. Virgil let himself cry; whenever he was reminded how unloveable he was after getting his hopes up, he knew he was (more) useless (than usual) for the rest of the day. As Adam’s voice built, Virgil tuned into the lyrics, hoping to distract himself.

“I walk around and I feel so lost and lonely. You’re everything that I want, But you don’t want me.”

Well that backfired. Virgil allowed his emotions to come out. Gotta feel these emotions so they can go away.

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Roman wandered around his theatre aimlessly. He knew he needed to let out emotion, but his mind stubbornly refused to provide a poem or monologue for him to act out. Roman allowed his mind to drift, hoping that something would come to him. He grew increasingly frustrated as he continued to fail to produce any creative ideas.

Come on, think about Virgil! What are you feeling?

Roman felt a train of thought catching on. He followed it until his mind supplied him with images.

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As the doorframe splintered and the door slammed open, Roman could just barely see Virgil surrounded by Dark Sides. He was being held down and Roman could see the bare skin of his back. Deceit was on top of him, on his hips, and Roman thought for a horrifying moment that he was too late, that Deceit was already raping Virgil. As he unknowingly let out a scream, he spotted a familiar splash of purple and plaid patchwork thrown carelessly to the side of the room.
Roman gripped his head as he tried to force the images out of his mind’s eye. Unfortunately, that only made way for other images from that horrible night.

*Roman and Patton had rushed over to where Logan was holding a sobbing, limp Virgil in his arms. Roman was already furious, but tried to calm down so he could speak to Virgil. As he got closer, however, he saw that the button on Virgil’s jeans was undone, which sparked a new rage in him. Luckily, Patton was able to talk to Virgil while Roman tried to get his anger under control.*

It was such a small detail, but remembering that undone jeans button broke him. He fell to his knees with a wail and bawled into his hands. He couldn’t seem to stop or calm down. He had no idea how long he was kneeling on the unforgiving wooden stage when he sensed someone enter his realm.

“Roman! Oh my god, what happened?”

Roman removed his hands only to throw his arms around Patton and sob into his shoulder. Patton held onto Roman tightly and rubbed his back, trying to soothe his distraught prince.

“Roman, baby, shhhhhhh. Tell me what happened,” he said gently.

Roman sobbed a few more times before he forced out, “Virgil… when the D-Dark Sides tried to force him and we b-broke into his r-room!” A few more sobs escaped as Patton squeezed Roman. “His jeans were unbuttoned Patton!” He resumed sobbing louder than before.

“Oh baby… oh baby, I know. I saw too.” Patton’s voice cracked at the end.

“Those fucking bastards touched him! Oh God!” Roman dissolved into uncontrollable wailing. Patton held Roman as they both cried into each other’s shoulders. After an hour, they’d cried themselves out. Both felt like they could probably stand to cry more, but neither could seem to make their bodies cooperate.

Patton pulled back and studied his sweetheart. Roman’s face was red and wet. His eyes were swollen and so bloodshot that Patton winced. He leaned forward and kissed his knight’s forehead as he started using his thumbs to wipe away some of the tears. Roman brought a hand up and placed it on one of Patton’s. Patton stopped moving his hands and looked at his boyfriend questioningly. Roman just smiled shakily and pulled out two handkerchiefs. Patton huffed a laugh and started by cleaning Roman’s face, then his own. Roman banished the used handkerchiefs and Patton sagged against Roman, completely emotionally exhausted. Roman delicately picked Patton up bridal-style. Once they were both standing, Roman pressed a short, tender kiss to Patton’s lips. He sank out to his room with Patton in his arms.

Chapter End Notes

Recovery isn’t linear. Sometimes you'll take a few steps forward only to tango a few steps back.

I figured with Patton, emotional exhaustion would manifest itself as physical exhaustion, which luckily Roman picked up on when Patton leaned against him. Both our dramatic kiddo and our emotionally intelligent kiddo need hugs. :( 
As for you shippers out there... I think you'll be happy very soon! ;)

A few weeks later Virgil found himself back in Dr. Picani’s office. They reviewed becoming more in tune with one’s body before Dr. Picani led Virgil through another guided meditation exercise with Virgil dived into his “heart”. Virgil noticed the same golden figure show up from the last time and was confused, but grateful he was there. Once that was over, Dr. Picani asked if Virgil wanted to talk about anything else.

Virgil shifted uncomfortably. *I should tell him… I don’t know what else I should talk about besides what actually happened…* 

He cleared his throat. “Yeah, there’s something else I wanted to talk about.”

Dr. Picani smiled and readied his pen in his notebook. “Okay! What’s up doc?”

Virgil snorted at that, but quickly sobered. “I… I don’t want to become like them.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “Your abusers?”

Virgil just nodded his head and shrunk his shoulders in shamefully.

Dr. Picani sighed in sympathy. “There’s no need to be ashamed Virgil. That’s a very common experience for sexual abuse survivors to have. Let’s break it down.”

Virgil gave Dr. Picani a small smile. “Can I have a comfort item?”

Dr. Picani smiled back. “Sure!” he chirped as he slid the basket over to Virgil. Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish and hugged it close to his chest. After a minute of Virgil not saying anything, Dr. Picani decided to prompt Virgil.

“Is there anything in particular that you see as a parallel between yourself and your attackers?”

Virgil squeezed the fish. “I… I don’t…” Virgil buried his head in the fish and did his best to stifle his cries. After another minute, Dr. Picani spoke up again.

“Do you want to stop? We don’t have to talk about this if you don’t want to,” he offered gently.

“N-no, I want to, I just-” Virgil sniffled loudly. “I’m good. I’m sorry.”
“No need to apologize! This is a hard topic for a lot of folks.”

Virgil nodded. After a few deep breaths, he brought his head back up and smiled shakily at the doctor. “I… I think I’m good now.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Alright. What would you like to talk about?”

Virgil closed his eyes as they burned. “I… I don’t want to cross any of their boundaries.”

“What boundaries would you be crossing?”

Virgil shuddered. “Touch.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Okay. I can definitely see why you wouldn’t want to cross that boundary. What makes you think you will?”

“I don’t want to ask them to touch me or let me touch them, and make them feel like they can’t say no.”

“Alright. Why do you think they might not feel like they can say no?”

Virgil flinched as he was thrown into a flashback. Deceit asking and not waiting for an answer, Virgil choking and Deceit not getting off him, Deceit so lost in his own pleasure that he didn’t care about Virgil…

“…irgil? Virgil? Let me know when you can hear me. It’s okay Virgil, you’re safe now. You’re safe here.”

Virgil could smell peppermint very strongly. He opened his eyes and saw Dr. Picani watching him in concern. Virgil noted that Dr. Picani had moved the essential oil diffuser near him.

_That must be where the peppermint is coming from._

“Virgil? Can you hear me?” Dr. Picani asked gently.

Virgil turned his attention to Dr. Picani. He nodded after a moment. Dr. Picani sent him a small smile.

“Alright. Why don’t we do a grounding exercise?” He waited for Virgil to nod before continuing. Once they had done two grounding exercises, Dr. Picani straightened his back.

“Did you just have a flashback Virgil?” he asked. Virgil had experienced several flashbacks in front of Dr. Picani before, but the doctor wanted to make sure that’s what had happened.

“Yeah,” Virgil whispered.

“I’m so sorry you went through that Virgil. Was it triggered by what we were talking about?”

Virgil surprised both himself and Dr. Picani. “It was Deceit, he-” Virgil’s voice choked off. He covered his face with his hands and began to weep.

Despite being a seasoned professional, Dr. Picani couldn’t stop his heart from twinging at Virgil’s tears. The utter pain he heard from the relatively gentle sobs was enough to move him. Dr. Picani knew the cries were the previously stifled crying and pain from that experience coming out, and he simply sat quietly, bearing witness to the wounded Side’s torment.
Virgil composed himself after ten minutes. He grabbed a few Kleenex tissues, blew his nose, and cleaned his face up. Virgil looked sheepishly up at the doctor.

“Sorry doc,” he said hoarsely, his face still drawn and full of grief.

“No need to apologize Virgil. I think that needed to happen.”

Virgil looked down and hugged the stuffed animal. “Yeah…”

Dr. Picani waited a few moments before speaking again. “Would you like to talk about it?”

Virgil sighed and nodded. “Yeah… I think I want to…” Virgil remembered something. “I-I already told Remy, Saul, and Roman. I had a nightmare and they helped me, and it kinda came out of me like a xenomorph. I also kinda wanted to tell them.” Virgil looked shyly up at Dr. Picani. The doctor didn’t miss the pride shining in the younger Side’s eyes.

“That must have been difficult! That’s very impressive that you did that! Now just because you told some folks something, doesn’t mean you need to tell me as well. You only have to tell me if you want to.”

Virgil inhaled deeply. “I think I want to.” He then detailed everything he had gone through when Deceit pretended to rescue him and be in a relationship with him. As he kept talking, he slowly and unconsciously curled further and further into himself, hugging the stuffed animal tighter and tighter until he was a shaking ball on the couch. Dr. Picani stayed silent, nodding and furrowing his brow when appropriate. When Virgil was done, Dr. Picani let the silence hang for a moment before speaking.

“That was incredibly brave of you Virgil, for both surviving that and telling me. I am so sorry you went through that. How are you feeling right now?”

Virgil shrugged. “Not great. Kinda nauseous and floaty. And… raw,” Virgil grunted as he hid his head. *Come on Virgil, just fucking say it you pathetic, weak coward.* “Vulnerable.” *Why does saying that I’m vulnerable make me feel more vulnerable? This is bullshit.*

“I can tell that was hard for you to say as well. You did really well Virgil.” Dr. Picani smiled encouragingly.


Dr. Picani felt a twinge of fondness. “What do you think triggered that flashback?”

Virgil chewed his lip. “What we were talking about before.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “About the Light Sides not feeling like they’re able to say no to something you want?”

Virgil whimpered and curled up.

Dr. Picani knew they were working on a very sensitive issue for Virgil. “You weren’t able to say no to Deceit. And even when you did, he didn’t respect it.”

Virgil buried his face in his knees and sobbed. Dr. Picani knew that it was good to explore the wound, but he had to be sure…

“Would you like to stop?”
Virgil sniffled and shook his head as he looked over the top of his knees. “H-he… He d-d-didn’t w-wait for a-an answer. And I-” Virgil cut himself off, unable to continue.

Dr. Picani was a little uncertain as to what to do. He could wait for Virgil to start speaking, or he could push him a little more. Unfortunately, if he pushed him too far, Virgil might get hurt. Dr. Picani decided to follow his instincts.

“What were you going to say next?”

Virgil didn’t move. Dr. Picani was worried he’d pushed too hard until he heard Virgil whisper. “I’m like them.”

Dr. Picani had figured Virgil might be struggling with that particular fear. *It’s not uncommon for victims/survivors to see similarities between themselves and their assailants that may or may not be there.*

“How are you like them?” Dr. Picani asked.

Virgil nuzzled the stuffed animal before answering. “I get angry.”

Dr. Picani wasn’t entirely surprised. *He associates anger with unimaginable horror.* “Anger is a very common emotion. Is there anything in particular about the anger you experience that you find similar to them?”

Virgil furrowed his brow and thought for a few moments. “I sometimes yell at the ceiling in my room after I’ve soundproofed it.”

Dr. Picani raised his eyebrows. “That’s a pretty healthy way of dealing with anger. Some people actually use it in primal scream therapy.”

Virgil managed a small smile. “That sounds so badass.”

Dr. Picani chuckled, “It definitely can be! It hasn’t been shown to do other things it claims to do, like completely resolve neurosis and childhood trauma, but it’s an incredibly useful tool to achieve catharsis, which it sounds like you’re using it for naturally. Nice!”

Virgil mumbled something unintelligible. Dr. Picani just smiled.

“Is there anything else about your anger that reminds you of your assailants? It can be something you express or something you feel the urge to do but don’t.”

Virgil sighed. “I just… I get angry. About so many things. About the Dark Sides, about how the Light Sides and Thomas used to treat me like I was carnival glass, about how the Dark Sides are still affecting me.”

“Do you ever hurt someone or threaten someone when you’re angry?”

Virgil visibly flinched. “No! I’d never do that!”

Dr. Picani decided to take just one more risk. “Everyone gets angry. It’s what you choose to do with your feelings that makes the difference. You don’t hurt anybody. You manage your anger in healthy ways. You’re doing a lot better than a lot of people with anger.”

Virgil cast his eyes downwards and let that sink in. Dr. Picani let him process for a minute before breaking the silence, secretly thrilled with all of the progress of the session.
“Do you have any other traits that remind you of the Dark Sides?”

Virgil shook his head. “Not really.”

“Alright. Why don’t we wind down this session? You went through and worked through a lot today!”

Virgil let out a breath. “Yeah, that sounds good.”

Virgil sank into his room and let the tears he’d been holding back since his realization fall. *I’m not like them. I’m not like the other Dark Sides.*

Virgil felt a relief, like a 20 ton elephant had been lifted from his chest. *I’m not like them, I’m not like them. I didn’t even know I thought I was like them, but it makes sense and I’m not like them!!!* Virgil let himself cry until he felt more grounded from the high of release. He went into his bathroom and cleaned himself up, happy to see that his face and eyes weren’t too red. Virgil was certain it was all in his head, but when he looked in the mirror he *looked* different. His skin looked clearer, like the invisible filth that had been covering it had been purged. Virgil sobbed a few more tears, feeling like he could *breathe* more deeply, as though there had been smog coating his lungs. He laughed freely, feeling so light he could float.

Checking the time, he saw that it was almost time for dinner. Virgil finished cleaning himself up and reapplying makeup, then grabbed a v-neck t-shirt, intending to wear it under his hoodie. However, when he put the v-neck t-shirt on, he felt… *okay.* Virgil chuckled merrily as a few more tears made their way down his face. He wiped them up with a Kleenex and picked up Shelly, intending to have her be an accessory on his shoulder until he remembered Patton’s arachnophobia. *Some other time.* As Virgil was putting her back, he spied a black tourmaline necklace Saul and Remy had gifted him. Virgil decided to put on some extra-sparkly body mousse Roman had insisted upon all over his arms and hands. *They’ll notice, I know they will. May as well look shiny.* Virgil smiled as he headed downstairs for dinner.

Patton had made octopus with a black-bean pear sauce and arugula, pear, and miso vinaigrette. As he had expected, they all noticed, Patton being the first to indicate by squealing with his hands mashed against his face.

“You look so good Virgil!” Patton gushed. Virgil snorted as Roman and Logan turned to look. Roman immediately launched into poem.

“You will come, with your slim, expressive arms,
A poise of the head no sculptor has caught
And nuances spoken with shoulder and neck,
Your face in pass-and-repass of moods
As many as skies in delicate change
Of cloud and blue and flimmering sun.”

Logan chuckled. “As these two have said, you look good Virgil.”

Virgil felt his face burning up. “Thanks guys,” he mumbled shyly.

“Of course! Ooooo is that a new necklace?!”

Virgil snorted at Patton’s enthusiasm. “Yeah, kinda. Saul and Remy gave it to me and I haven’t had
much of a chance to wear it.”

“It suits you quite well my moonbeam!”

Virgil just flushed darker. Patton had mercy on Virgil and clapped his hands, rubbing them together. “Alright everyone! Let’s eat!”

Virgil had to admit, Patton nailed the octopus. It was tender and reminded him of lobster. There was a little kick to it from a bit of jalapeno, but it wasn’t too much. Virgil noticed that the others were trying to be sneaky about their staring, but none of them were successful. I hope it’s because I look good. They said I did.

Once Roman had spouted no fewer than two more poems and Logan had reaffirmed that Virgil looked very nice in his new attire, they went to their rooms and Virgil helped Patton clean up dinner. Patton chatted about how Thomas got to see so many of his friends, Virgil interjecting where needed. Once they had finished, Patton opened his arms for a hug, which Virgil accepted.

“You’re such a good listener!” Patton breathed next to Virgil’s ear. Virgil pretended that didn’t have the effect it did on him. Carefully tilting his hips away slightly as fire raced over his skin, Virgil breathed in Patton’s scent. Patton pulled away but kept his hands on Virgil’s shoulders. “And you’re so cute!”

Virgil’s face burned with fire for a new reason. Patton giggled and squeezed Virgil’s shoulders before he dropped his arms. “I’ve gotta help Thomas get ready for bed. See ya!”

Virgil gave Patton his half-smile and two-finger salute as the fun-loving figment sank out. He walked out of the kitchen, intending to spend the rest of his night listening to music in his room while scrolling through Tumblr, but he found Logan reading a compilation of Shakespeare sonnets on the commons couch.

Logan looked up from his book. “Ah. Salutations Virgil.”

Virgil nodded back. “Hey. What’s up?”

Logan lifted his book slightly. “Just reviewing some of my favorite sonnets. May I inquire as to what your plans for this evening are?”

Virgil shrugged. “I was just gonna listen to music and scroll through Tumblr.”

“Would you like to do solitary activities together?”

Virgil snorted. That was a running joke between them, as that’s how they both preferred to hang out, especially at the end of the day.

“Sure.”

Virgil sat next to Logan and pulled out his phone and headphones. Logan extended his arm across the back of the couch, but Virgil opted not to lean into it. He was tired from his therapy session and didn’t want to fall asleep on the couch/Logan again. Logan assured him that he didn’t mind sleeping on the couch, but Virgil knew the nerd liked his routines.

“Ah, Virgil, I would like to thank you for your help with Roman.”

Virgil turned from where he was pulling up music on his phone. “Huh?”
“Roman informed me you assisted him while he was expressing heartbreak dramatically in his theatre. He said it helped him a great deal. It is often something we have difficulty soothing him over. Thank you.”

“Oh, uh, yeah, no problem.” He paused. “Wait, he told you he was being dramatic?”

“No, but it is a highly probable deduction.”

Virgil snorted as he pulled up his music and Tumblr. Virgil felt the pains in his back that were always there slowly dissipate. After an hour of scrolling through the Sanders Sides fandom and reblogging the occasional shitpost, he felt his eyes grow heavy.

“I think I’m gonna turn in. Night L.”

Logan looked up at him and smiled warmly. “It was nice sitting here with you Virgil. I feel very refreshed. Thank you. Sleep well.”

Virgil knew his smile was sappy and hated that he couldn’t keep it off his face. He departed to his room and grabbed Shelly off his desk. He placed her on his bed, then curled around his Lucas plushie and rested his hand on Shelly. He knew it was weird to like hard objects in bed, but Shelly helped him stay present and grounded.

Virgil reflected on the day. He’d apparently been a good enough conversationalist to make Patton feel heard, he’d helped Logan feel more relaxed, and he’d apparently helped Roman earlier. *I guess I am good for something.*

He fell asleep with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

I saw the notification for the art on Tumblr like 30 minutes after I posted the last chapter and I wanted Darling to get all of the credit they deserve! Plus, it's super appropriate for this chapter!!

The poem Roman quotes is *A Dream Girl* by Carl Sanders. The excerpt in this chapter is happy, but it ends with Carl realizing being in a relationship with the girl is but a dream, which is why Roman chose it. Poor heartbroken boy.

I also had Picani experiencing emotions because therapists are human and get attached to people they know just like anybody else. Boundaries are still upheld, but some folks wiggle their way into your heart.

And finally, if you don't know what carnival glass is, here! https://www.amazon.com/Vintage-Style-Carnival-Glass-Pitcher/dp/B0741FHDXV
Hey folks! We have a longer chapter this go-around! There's only a warning for a non-graphic flashback near the beginning, but other than that it's a pretty smooth ride!

A few weeks later, Virgil walked shakily downstairs. He knew there was no way he’d be able to hide his red eyes or pale face, but he kept his hood up in the vain hope that no one would notice. Virgil shuddered as his brain oh-so-helpfully shoved at him the memories from his nightmare that had spurred him into a flashback, panic attack, passing out, and then another panic attack.

Deceit announcing they had a new idea, an experiment they’d like to run. “It may very well help us gain control of Thomas and get him to where he needs to be. Don’t you want to help Thomas?” Virgil agreeing to wanting to help Thomas, but not like that. Before he could protest from where he was tied down on the table in the Room, Malice had changed him. Virgil felt shock so overwhelming it was numbing, even though his thoughts were racing. ‘Everything is wrong everything is wrong this isn’t right this isn’t right EVERYTHING IS WRONG!!!’

Virgil plopped himself into his kitchen chair and laid his head on his arms.

“You okay baby?”

Virgil groaned. “I’m good Pat, I’m just tired.”

“Awww I’m sorry to hear that kiddo! Here you go honey.” Virgil looked up as Patton placed the nectar of the gods before him. Virgil sat up so he wouldn’t spill coffee everywhere.

“Would you like to talk about what kept you awake last night?” Logan asked.

Virgil sighed. “Naw, it was just a nightmare, no big deal.”

“Kiddo, if it kept you awake and upset it is a big deal. It must have been a pretty awful nightmare!”

Virgil shivered. “Yeah, it was. Flashback.” Wait why the FUCK did I say that, what the fuck?! Why did that fall out of my mouth?! I am such a useless human being, I can’t even control what I say. Goddammit.

“Oh sweetie…”

Virgil tried to wave him off. “It’s fine, I’m alive and shit. I’ll try to take a nap later.”

Logan nodded seriously. “Very well. Do let us know if you need anything Virgil. We do not mind
if you need or would like assistance, no matter the time.”

“What he said!”

Virgil shot a tired half-smile at the two Sides. “Thanks. I’ll remember that.”

Roman came into the kitchen late, having the largest workload during script writing. His entrance was rather subdued for the prince, meaning he didn’t shout to announce his presence and merely greeted everyone. Patton wordlessly microwaved a cup of black tea, added some milk, and slid the mug over to Roman.

Patton made a warming breakfast of waffles, bacon, scrambled eggs, and breakfast potatoes. Just as they were wrapping up breakfast, they felt the pull of Thomas summoning them. They all rose up in their spots and looked expectantly at Thomas; they hadn’t expected to get summoned.

Thomas looked tired but energized. “Hey guys! I thought I’d tell you all about what we talked about last night!” he said excitedly.

Virgil and Logan both cast a wry glance over to Roman, who was beginning to bounce on the balls of his feet. Thomas ushered them over to the couch, where he had papers and his laptop set up on the coffee table. Virgil felt his skin crawl as he was surrounded and being touched by people when he wanted a minimum of 6 feet between him and everyone else at the moment. He stuffed his discomfort down as he tried to hold off a flashback and panic attack while making sure Thomas didn’t make any decisions he’d regret later. Everyone had been giving their input. The session dragged on for 45 minutes, and Virgil was starting to feel antsy and seriously uncomfortable. He was almost at the end of his rope when Thomas spoke very loudly, very suddenly.

“Oh! And Valerie’s pregnant!”

Virgil heard the Light Sides expressing their excitement, but the sounds were all distant and muffled, like he was hearing everything under water. Every single one of his muscles stopped obeying his commands. He was both in Thomas’ room and tied to a table in the Dark Side. He leaned backwards against his will as his muscles gave out, with Roman noticing something was wrong first.

“How! And Valerie’s pregnant!”

Virgil could see Roman leaning over him and had to try to read his lips to understand what he was saying. Roman leaned closer by a centimeter, which caused Virgil’s fear to skyrocket. He let out a whimper as tears fell unbidden from his eyes. Roman left his line of sight, which only caused the Dark Sides to be more prevalent. He kept whimpering and letting tears stream down his face as he sensed movement around him. Eventually, Logan came into his vision and laid a cool washcloth on his forehead while Patton brought a blanket to drape over him. Patton left Virgil’s field of vision while Logan remained. He was moving his mouth rhythmically, and Virgil was confused until he figured out it was counting. He followed Logan’s instructions, and after close to twenty rounds of breathing exercises he felt the lead lift from his body.

Virgil shifted slowly, taking stock of his body and making sure he had full control back. Once he was satisfied that his body had stopped its mutiny, he sat up and winced as his back popped.

“Kiddo?”

Virgil turned to Patton and tried to smile, but it came out more as a grimace.

“You okay sweetie?”
Virgil shrugged and looked down. “M fine. Sorry ‘bout that. It just… happens sometimes.”

“You had a panic attack, correct?”

Virgil nodded at Logan’s question. He saw the bottom of Logan’s tie shift.

“I noticed your muscles were lax and you were not curling into a defensive position as you normally would. Were you unable to move?”

Thomas intervened. “Logan, buddy, I don’t know if right now-”

“It’s fine Thomas,” Virgil cut him off. “Yeah, I couldn’t move. I hate it when that happens.”

“This has happened before?”

Virgil curled his shoulders in. “Yeah… Not so much recently, but it used to… um, happen more often. Before,” he mumbled.

Logan paused. “I’m very sorry Virgil. I believe I may know what happened.”

Virgil looked up at that. “What? What is it?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe it is called tonic immobility as part of the defense cascade. The mind and body believe it is such great danger that they freeze. Acetylcholine is the primary chemical responsible for this.”

Virgil nodded. “Okay, I-I guess that makes sense.”

Thomas and Logan raised their right hand to scratch at the back of their heads. “Do you want to get some rest buddy? That looked pretty awful.”

Virgil looked down as his face burned with shame. “Yeah, I’ll just hang out in my room. I’m sorry about that Thomas.”

“Virgil no! You don’t have anything to apologize for! Just take care of yourself, okay?”

Virgil smiled and gave Thomas a two-finger salute as he sank out. Once in his room, he flopped on the bed and groaned into the pillow to release some of his frustration. Unfortunately, being face-down on the bed triggered another flashback for the sleep-deprived and stressed Virgil. He used all of his strength to flip himself over, grab Shelly, and start his breathing exercises. Virgil closed his eyes, and willed his brain to work properly.

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Several months later, Virgil left lunch satisfied. Thomas was taking a personal day off and staying in, which meant that Virgil’s workload was significantly reduced. He decided to visit Saul and Remy. He sank into their side of the mindpalace very slowly, hopefully giving them enough time to cover up if needed. Luckily, both Remy and Saul were sitting on the couch in pyjamas. They perked up when they saw him.

“Coffee bean!”

“Hello darling.”

Virgil quirked a half-smile. “Hey guys. Wanna hang out today?”
“Absolutely! SyFy channel’s running a marathon of campy b-roll creature features.”

“Awesome.”

Virgil plopped onto the couch in between Saul and Remy when they moved apart. They bet who was going to die in which order, with Virgil being the most accurate (“Seriously, why the FUCK would you leave your hiding spot to run out in the open?” “I think that’s called Darwinism sweetie.”). After three movies and several bowls of caramel kettle corn later, they decided to take a break to brush their teeth. Once they came back together, Remy was giving Virgil an assessing look.

Virgil felt panic creep up his throat. “What?” he asked warily.

Remy frowned. “Nothing babes, I was just thinking I could give you a makeover! Don’t get me wrong, I’m lov-ing your new wardrobe, but why don’t we add a few items?”

Virgil squinted at Remy. “I guess, but I don’t know if I need more clothes.”

Remy smirked. “I think it’ll make it harder for the Light Sides to pretend not to be attracted to you.”

Virgil’s cheeks burned. “Shut up,” he muttered.

Saul laughed. “Don’t embarrass him babe! Oh, and Virgil?” Virgil looked up. “Remy’s not wrong. I see how they look at you.”

Virgil felt himself growing hotter by the second. “We’re just friends Saul!”

“And I hate coffee. Come on sweetie, let’s get you looking hot!”

Virgil took a step backwards and looked down. “I… I really don’t think they’re attracted to me.”

Remy softened his voice. “Coffee bean, you do know you’ve told us what you talk to Picani about, right? Minimum 50% chance that they’re attracted to your cute little face. Why don’t you think they’re attracted to you?”

Virgil sighed. “I just don’t get that vibe from them.”

Remy took a step forward, happy to see that Virgil didn’t move away. “Is it possible that you’re filtering that out for some reason?”

Virgil shifted. “I don’t know, maybe…”

Good enough. “Well, why don’t we conduct an experiment? I make you look even sexier than you already are, and we’ll gauge their reactions.”

That’s… not a terrible idea. “Okay, fine. But I’m not going out there in something I’m not comfortable in. And if you two come along, they’ll know something’s up.”

Remy sighed dramatically. “Fiiiiiiiiine. But you have to tell us how it went!”

“Deal.” Virgil paused. “And… I think I’m ready to try the choker again.”

Remy squealed. He had tried to get Virgil to wear a choker, but Virgil’d had a panic attack and had to take it off. Virgil had been secretly practicing in his room in the following weeks with a progressively tighter and tighter necklace, and he was eventually able to have it be about choker-
tightness. He hoped the thicker material of the actual choker instead of the thin chain on the necklace he’d been using wouldn’t throw him off too much.

Remy ushered Virgil and Saul into Remy’s room. His function allowed him to conjure just about anything, so they got to work. Remy started by painting Virgil’s nails a matte black and putting a hydrating face mask on. “You gotta glow babe.”

Virgil was feeling unease swirling in his stomach, though he couldn’t identify why. As Remy was pulling clothing items out of his closet and throwing them at Saul to try to catch, Virgil realized what it was.

“Hey Rem?”

The tone of Virgil’s voice made Remy turn around. “Yeah sugar?”

Virgil inhaled deeply through his nose, steeling his nerves. “I want to look good for me.”

Remy froze, then smiled as his eyes filled with tears. Virgil panicked.

“Shit Rem, I’m sorry, I didn’t-”

“Shhh coffee bean, I’m just,” Remy sniffled. “I’m just so proud of you baby. You’ve come so far.” Remy took a few steps forward until he was in front of Virgil. “Hug?”

Virgil smiled and met Remy for the hug. The hug was a little tighter and went on a little longer than was their usual, but neither Side was complaining. When they parted, Remy still had tears in his eyes. A quick glance to Saul confirmed his eyes were also shiny. Remy squeezed Virgil’s shoulders.

“Let’s get you looking good babe.”

Remy moved in a blur, having Virgil try on different pants and shirts in the bathroom. Virgil felt neutral about all of them, and Remy wasn’t feeling much different. He went back into his closet to get a bit of a wild card. He turned to Saul and threw the articles of clothing at him.

“Have him try these on next!”

Saul raised an eyebrow at Remy, who met his gaze evenly. Saul shrugged and walked over to the bathroom door. Virgil took the clothes from Saul. They heard Virgil undress, then pause. Just as Remy was about to check in on his dark-roast bean, they heard clothes moving again. Remy stopped looking through his closet. This was the first time he was excited to see how Virgil liked the clothes!

Remy’s excitement peaked when the bathroom door opened. Both Saul and Remy gasped; Virgil looked amazing. He was wearing strappy black combat boots in place of his usual black tennis shoes with purple laces. His pants were black skinny jeans that had been distressed, but not fully torn, in an intentional triangle shape in the middle of the thigh, giving that section of pants a grey look and his legs a gorgeous shape. His shirt was what stole the show, however. It was a black t-shirt with a high collar, about the height of a mandarin collar, and the ends of the sleeves were permanently cuffed up. There was a triangular cut out section of the shirt that started at a point in the middle of his chest and expanded to completely show off his left shoulder. Virgil was blushing with his shoulders slightly hunched, but he was smiling.

“I kinda like this one Rem.”
Remy squealed. “You look so good babe!!!”

Virgil ducked his head and snorted. Remy just giggled.

“Come on sweetie, let’s get your face beat!”

Remy gave Virgil a light smokey eye with cool brown tones and just a hint of lilac, keeping the black eyeshadow underneath his eyes. He styled Virgil’s hair so it had just a bit more volume and texture. He conjured a few rings, some silver and some black. Finally, it was time to try the choker. Remy held the ½ inch strip of solid black velvet in front of Virgil.

“I made it easily adjustable. Are you sure? You already look fabulous!”

Virgil stared at the unassuming strip of fabric. *I’m NOT going to let my ass get kicked by fucking velvet.* “Yeah, let’s do it.”

Remy gave Virgil the choker. “Okay sugar. There’s no shame if you can’t hun.”

Virgil exchanged smiles with Remy, and put the choker on. He checked to see which setting fit his neck snugly, then went one setting out. Once set, he ran his fingers across the fabric. *Okay, no panic attack, we’re doing good. I think… I think it’s okay.* Virgil took a deep breath and looked up at the Neutral Sides, smiling. Both Remy and Saul beamed.

“You look so good babe! Knock ‘em dead!”

Virgil snorted, then jumped as his phone chimed. He picked up his phone and his shoulders stiffened.

“Patton’s texting me for dinner.”

Saul clapped Virgil’s shoulder. “You’ll do great. You’ve got this.”

Virgil smiled up at Saul and brought his shoulders back. “I’ll let you know how it goes. See ya later.”

Remy and Saul waved as Virgil sank out. He rose up just outside of the kitchen, dismayed to already hear voices inside. He’d been hoping to only see one Side at a time. *Oh well. Let’s see what they think.* Virgil looked down at himself. He had to admit, he did look pretty good in these clothes and this makeup. Steeling his nerves for seemingly the millionth time that evening, he walked into the kitchen.

Roman saw him first. He stopped mid-sentence as his jaw dropped open, looking Virgil up and down slowly.

Patton was sitting at the table while Logan stirred something in the pot. When Roman stopped talking suddenly, Patton turned to look and got a similar facial expression to Roman, except he also turned bright red and swayed slightly in his chair.

Logan turned with a frown to see why his boyfriends had stopped talking when he saw Virgil. He attempted to keep an even expression, but his eyes widened and a blush painted itself across his cheekbones.

“Well?” Virgil asked shakily, feeling near tears.

Roman was only able to manage an open-mouthed squeak. Patton moved his mouth as if
attempting to form words, but thankfully Logan was able to speak for all of them.

“I believe what only I am capable of saying is that you look very nice Virgil,” Logan said with a strain to his voice.

“INDEED!” Roman boomed. “You look stunning! Ravishing! Alluring! Gorgeous! Captivating! Bewitching!”

“You look amazing kiddo! I love… well, everything!”

Virgil blushed and ducked his head. “Thanks guys.”

“Hey Lolo, can you finish dinner? I think I’m gonna sit here for a bit.”

Virgil decided to take his seat next to Roman. Virgil saw Patton shifting uncomfortably. He frowned.

“You okay Pat?”

Patton smiled a little too widely. “Yep! Just peachy kiddo. Little tired is all!”

Virgil raised a brow, not quite believing Patton but willing to drop it for now. He saw Roman trying to be subtle as he looked at Virgil.

“Take a picture Princey, it’ll last longer,” he teased.

Roman scoffed. “I was not… I mean, I’m just looking at your makeup, it’s quite skillful!”

“Remy put the eyeshadow on.” Virgil was feeling himself. “And you sure that’s all you’re looking at?” he asked as he turned so slightly more of his left side was facing Roman.

“I- uh…”

Logan’s voice rescued Roman from the situation as he began to serve the bread, brisket, and collard greens. “You seem to have encountered some difficulty Patton. Would you like my assistance in resolving the matter later this evening?”

Virgil tuned out; clearly, this conversation wasn’t about him. He focused on eating his brisket. He didn’t realize how much energy trying on clothes took!

“That would be great Logan! I could really use some hard Logic applied to the situation!”

Logan chuckled lowly. “I believe my tongue piercing is healed, but would you mind assessing it for me later this evening?”

Patton squeaked. “Y-yup!”

Dinner ended, and just as Virgil was about to head back to his room, Roman called him.

“Virgil?”

Virgil turned back to him with a raised eyebrow.

“I just wanted to say that you do look very lovely in that outfit.”

Virgil shot him a half-smile. “Thanks Pr- Roman.”
Roman smiled back. “Anytime Virgil.”

Chapter End Notes

Virgil got a makeover! And flustered the other Sides! And yes, Logan stuck to his promise to Patton later that evening. Roman laid awake all night, smiling and staring at his ceiling, sighing happily.

And look at Virgil, setting boundaries and wanting to look hot for *himself* instead of someone else!
Virgil went to his room and picked up Shelly. He needed the hard plastic to help ground him while he thought about that evening.

_Maybe they were just surprised? I haven’t really worn anything like that before. They were probably just surprised._

Virgil mulled over the Lights’ reactions. He knew he was brushing off their behavior, and if it were someone else he’d say that they liked them for sure. He sighed. _Time to ask Remy and Saul._

Virgil sank down into the Neutral Side of the mindscape.

_“SPILL THE TEA.”_  
Virgil jumped about a foot off the ground. He glared at Remy, who had an excited smile and wide eyes and didn’t look even remotely apologetic.

“One of these days you’re going to give me a heart attack and then I won’t be able to tell you anything, and then what will you do?”

“Eh, we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it. Tell me what happened! What did they say, what did they do, did you get ravished? Come on sis!”

Remy conjured a cup of rosemary-raspberry tea for Virgil and Saul and an iced latte for himself. Virgil sighed in defeat and sat down on the couch.

“Well, Roman was really surprised at first, so he didn’t say anything right away. Patton was the same way. Logan was the first one to say something, and he just said that I looked very nice. Then Roman turned into a thesaurus and Patton said he loved it. I think Patton was light-headed or something because he had Logan finish dinner. They kept looking at my clothes for the rest of supper. I don’t think they were expecting it.” He chuckled. “Then, after supper Roman complimented me again and now here we are.”

“Ooooo baby I think they like you!!!”

“What? No.”

“I have to agree with Remy on this one darling. It all sounds pretty clear. Were they blushing?”

“Yeah…” Virgil mumbled.

“And you said they had a hard time speaking?”
Remy snickered at Saul’s question. “Hard.”

“Gross. But yeah, Patton and Roman didn’t say anything at first. They were just staring. I thought they hated it or were gonna laugh at me, but they didn’t.”

“Ooooo they got it bad!! It’s good they recognize how hot you are! If they didn’t I’d have to fight them!”

Virgil snorted. “I don’t know, maybe they were just surprised?”

Saul hummed. “Then they wouldn’t have blushed.”

“And you said Patton couldn’t stand up? I don’t think his head was light babe.”

Virgil frowned. “What do you- oh gross!! What the fuck Remy?!”

“I’m just saying, it makes sense.”

Virgil fidgeted. “Even if they do find me hot, it doesn’t mean they’d like being in a relationship with me. There’s more to being in a relationship than that.”

“That’s true, but I’m so proud that you’re recognizing they see you for the snacc you are!”

Virgil turned bright red. “I… I don’t…”

Saul had mercy on him. “Let’s not give our kid an aneurysm babe.”

Virgil flushed hotter and grumbled. Remy held back his coos, but Saul frowned.

“Why don’t you think you have anything else to offer in a relationship?”

Virgil curled in on himself. “I don’t want to talk about it,” he whispered.

“Alright sugar, we won’t. I’m really happy for you! It sounds like phase one of Operation Get the Useless Gays Together is working!

“OH MY GOD REMY.”

“Show me where the lie is.”

Virgil huffed. He spent the night with the two Neutral Sides, eating an absurd amount of junk food until he felt nauseous, watching *Worst Cooks In America*, and laughing at Remy’s complaints.

////////

Although Virgil didn’t wear the entire outfit again, wanting to save it for a special occasion, he did incorporate some of the items into his regular outfit. He would notice that the Lights, particularly Roman, would be distracted if he wore the t-shirt with the cutout underneath his hoodie, with his skin just slightly showing and hinting at even more bare skin. He liked looking good for himself, regardless of whether or not the Light Sides found him attractive. He felt a weird sort of fulfillment in knowing he looked… hot. Most days, he felt a little uncomfortable when he tried to think of himself as sexy, even though he knew that’s how the shirt and choker made him look.

He wore his distressed jeans to breakfast, loving how the placement of the frayed medium-gray fabric in the middle of the thighs against the black fabric made his legs look. As soon as he walked into the kitchen to help Patton with breakfast, Patton turned and smiled.
“Morning Virge! Oooo, you’re wearing those jeans! They look great on you!”
Virgil smiled. *At least I can look good for them.* “Thanks Pat.”

“Of course! Wanna make the eggs? You’re so good at them!”

“Sure.”

Virgil got out his ingredients and worked in silence with Patton. *You two have nothing to talk about.*

When they heard Logan and Roman coming downstairs, Patton immediately brightened.

“Awww my two boyfriends!!”

Virgil hid the spark of pain that flared in his chest.

“Sup plebs?”

“Good morning.”

Virgil forced a smile at the two Light Sides coming into the kitchen. Once everyone was served, they all sat down, with the Lights engaged in conversation. Virgil felt worse and worse as breakfast dragged on.

*I’m so annoying, I’m terrible to be around, they’re all talking and I’m so miserable I can’t contribute, no wonder they’ll never love me-*

“Earth to Emo, come in Emo!”

Virgil jumped at Roman’s exclamation. He turned to Roman, trying to keep his tears at bay.

“Did you hear *anything* I just said?”

Virgil winced. “No, sorry. I zoned out for a bit.”

Roman scoffed. “ Typical. Anyway, I was asking if *Black Parade* is the emo anthem.”

Virgil flinched. “I-I guess so.” Virgil chanced a glance towards Patton and Logan, only to find they were both frowning at him.

Roman seemed to notice Virgil’s discomfort. “Do you not like *Black Parade*?”

Virgil shrugged. “Not really, no.”

“But you’re emo! What is *wrong* with you?!”

“Kind of a lot, honestly.”

If Virgil had been in a better headspace, he’d have picked up on the playful nature of Roman’s banter. As it was, Virgil heard only contempt. He bit his lip and waited for the next retort. Roman went on and on about ideas for Thomas’ monthly playlist, but Virgil could barely force himself to listen over the misery he was feeling. As soon as he was done with breakfast, he left the kitchen and went up to his room.

He closed the door and slid down against it until he was sitting on the ground. He pressed a hand to
his mouth as he cried.

_They’ll never love you, you’re too broken. They don’t like spending time around you, they barely tolerate it. They certainly don’t get anything out of it. Why would they? You’re a parasite that’s just so happened to latch onto their happiness, slowly sucking them dry. You-
_

“Virgil honey? Can I come in sweetie?”

Virgil flinched. _Oh shit! I didn’t soundproof my room!
_

He cleared his throat. “Yeah Pat.” Virgil cursed himself for the roughness in his voice. He stood up and moved away from the door so Patton could come in. As expected, Patton took one look at Virgil and opened his arms for a hug. Virgil took a step back, wrapped his arms around himself, and shook his head. Patton dropped his arms back down.

“What’s going on kiddo? You seemed upset about something this morning.”

Virgil bit his lip and hung his head. He heard Patton sigh.

“Did Roman upset you baby?”

Virgil felt irritation growing. “Yes and no. I’m fucked up Pat, I’m always upset about something. I’m Anxiety, remember? A Dark Side.”

“You’re not always upset. I’ve seen you happy. What’s really going on?”

Virgil couldn’t stop the tears from falling. His head was down and his vision was blurred, so he didn’t notice the other two figures in the doorway.

“I can’t make you happy,” he whispered.

“You think you don’t make us happy? Virge, you make us so happy! We love you so much!”

“I don’t know why! I can’t always carry my end of the conversation, I’m fucked up beyond all recognition, I’m just miserable to be around. You guys don’t get anything out of it.”

“Falsehood!”

Virgil jumped at the unexpected voice and cringed when he saw all three Light Sides standing in his room.

“I very much enjoy spending time with you Virgil. I find a sense of peace and tranquility wash over me when we partake in solitary activities together,” Logan finished with a quirk of his lips. Virgil snorted.

“Indeed my brave knight! You’ve helped me with my heartbreak and given me escape when we travel the Imagination or watch movies or any other number of activities!”

“And I just love you so much!! You’re such a great listener, and I think you hold conversations just fine!”

Virgil felt more tears fall. “I don’t know…”

“Virgil.” Virgil flinched at the sternness in Logan’s tone. “We are entirely capable of deciding for ourselves if we enjoy the company of an individual. You need not fret over whether or not we are making an informed decision on the matter. When we spend time with you, we enjoy it. You are
not deceiving us. Is there something in particular that upset you this morning?”

Virgil felt his anxiety skyrocket. *Oh god it’s so stupid, they’re gonna realize how stupid I am. Better late than never I guess.* “Look, it’s stupid, it’s not a big deal, it’s just—”

“It sounds like something you need to talk about baby,” Patton gently interrupted.

Virgil’s shoulders slumped. “It *is* kind of stupid though.”

“One, I’m certain that’s not the case. Two, we’ll be the judge of that.”

Virgil sighed in defeat. “Do you guys remember the Instagram story where I got Thomas to sing *Black Parade*?”

“Indeed! Quite a lovely song for Thomas to sing a cappella.”

“Yeah. Um, actually, question. How long was it between that video and the next time I showed up on the Light Side?”

“Two weeks, 5 days, 13 hours, 36 minutes, 40 seconds,” Logan answered. Virgil felt his lips twitch at Logan’s precision, until the horror set in.

“Oh…” Virgil started swaying on his feet.

“Virgil? Are you alright?” Logan asked.

Virgil shook his head, which only made him dizzier. “Sorry, I… I just didn’t think it was that long.”

“What do you mean?” Roman asked.

“I… Okay, I should probably start from the beginning, huh? I, uh, wanted to try to get on your guys’ good sides, so I figured inspiring Thomas to sing would help.” Virgil felt hot, fat tears welling up in his eyes. “It, uh… well, it didn’t, and the Dark Sides saw what I did and figured out pretty quickly what I was trying to do,” Virgil’s voice began to crack, “and I figured I couldn’t get any help, and they punished me for it,” Virgil finished, nearly crying.

“Oh sweetie,” Patton breathed.

“Virgil, I… I’m so sorry,” Roman said desperately.

Logan swallowed. “Virgil, you asked how long it was between that Instagram story and when you showed up in the Light Side next? Were they…” Logan trailed off, unable to finish his question.

Virgil dropped his head as new tears fell. “Yeah.”

He heard three gasps come from the Light Sides. Virgil’s shoulders curled further and further inwards the longer the silence carried on. Finally, Patton spoke with a quaking voice.

“I think we need a family movie day. We’re gonna show you how much we love hanging out with you no matter what! Onesies are mandatory!”

Roman, Logan, and Patton snapped into their respective Simba, unicorn, and cat onesies. Patton tilted his head at Virgil.

“If you really don’t want to wear a onesie Virgil, you don’t have to…”
Virgil was quick to interrupt Patton before he got sad. “No, I just don’t have one and I’m awful at conjuring things.”

“Awwww kiddo! I can’t believe you don’t have a onesie yet! Do you like bats?”

“Uh, yeah, they’re chill.”

“Great!”

And with that, Patton conjured a bat onesie onto Virgil. When Virgil looked down to assess it, he had to admit it looked pretty good. It was mostly black with a light gray oval for the stomach. When he lifted his arms up, cartoonish purple bat wings that were attached from his sides to the bottoms of his arms stretched out. He saw in his mirror that the hood had large, friendly bat eyes and ears on top. He smiled at Patton.

“Thanks Pat. This is awesome.”

Patton beamed. “That’s great kiddo! Let’s go downstairs and watch The Nightmare Before Christmas.”

Everyone agreed, and soon they were squished together on the couch with bowls of popcorn and mugs of hot chocolate. He let warmth and love wash over him despite still not having let out all of the anguish from his memory. During the fourth movie the dueling feelings of love and pain became too much, and despite his best efforts to hide it, Patton quickly caught on that Virgil was crying.

“Virgil! Oh baby, what’s wrong?” Patton asked as Roman paused the movie.

Virgil shook his head, unable to explain why tears were coming.

“It’s okay honey. Can we hug you?”

Virgil nodded, and he was quickly wrapped up in a tangle of limbs. He cried against Patton’s shoulder as hands rubbed his back and arms. Soothing voices floated into Virgil’s ears as he first cried out the pain from the memory after Black Parade, then the overwhelming love he was feeling. It took Virgil longer than he cared to compose himself. He pulled back slightly, and before he could speak Patton beat him to the punch.

“I think you needed that,” Patton said as he smiled with shiny eyes.

Virgil ducked his head and smiled shyly. “Yeah.”

Patton rubbed Virgil’s arms a few more times before he let go. Roman offered Virgil a handkerchief, and they got back to watching movies, this time with arms around Virgil’s shoulders. They spent the rest of the day together, showing Virgil the many ways he made them happy. By the end of the day, Virgil was so overwhelmed and vulnerable he slept with Patton in his room. Patton made sure his grip on Virgil never loosened as they fell asleep still in their soft onesies.

Chapter End Notes

Hang in there folks! We are rapidly approaching something that will make all you shippers very happy!
Edit: here's the video Virgil was talking about! https://youtu.be/dWtGgYQ9G3c
Hi folks! First things first, there is a description of Virgil relapsing on his self-harm by using cutting. It's contained in the paragraph that starts with, "His mind made up,". If you can't read that, feel free to skip it!

Remember what I've been saying for the past few ending A/N's, that we're getting close to something I think y'all will really like? Well... ;)

Virgil nearly flew out of his chair when Roman burst into the kitchen.

“**GOOD MORNING FELLOW ROYALTY AND YOU NERDS!** I have a quest for us to go on in the Imagination!!”

“Oooooo what is it?!” Patton asked excitedly.

*Thank god for Patton being able to handle that level of energy this early in the morning, Virgil thought wryly.*

“A picnic!”

Patton squealed and bounced up and down on the balls of his feet. Logan summoned his tablet.

“So long as it fits within a two hour window around lunchtime, I don’t see why not.”

“**YYYYEEEEEEEEESSSS!!!**” Roman shouted as he thrust a fist into the air.

“Yaaaaayyyyy!! This is going to be so much fun!!!”

Virgil smiled. *I hope I don’t ruin it.* “Sounds great guys. Is this… like a date or something? I don’t want to intrude.”

“Nonsense!! You are needed to accompany us on our quest!”

“If you’re sure…”

“When have I not been?”

“…fair enough. At least spending time with us will help get your mind off your crush.”

“…Of course it will!”

A couple of hours later, Patton, Logan, and Virgil had set out for the Imagination, with Roman promising to meet them there. They walked through the portal in Roman’s wardrobe and were transported into a luscious meadow, filled with green grasses and flowers. They spotted a few trees off in the distance, two apple trees and a cherry tree in bloom by the look of it. They found that they got to their spot much faster than the distance had implied. There was a red and white checkered picnic blanket laid out under the trees, making a dent in the calf-high grass surrounding
it, but no Roman or food.

Just as Virgil was about to panic, he heard what sounded like a horse. He turned to his right, nervous that a wild horse might come by because those things bite, but instead was met with a horse and rider coming up over a hill towards them. It was Roman, shirtless, riding a magnificent white Andalusian horse. The horse’s mane and tail were wavy and long, flowing in the air as Roman casually cantered towards them.

Once Roman was close, he slowed his horse into a trot. He stopped the horse just underneath the pink cherry tree and tied him to a convenient branch. Roman grabbed a picnic basket that was secured to the saddle, and smirked as he sauntered over to them.

“Greetings distinguished guests! I hope you’re all hungry! I brought a feast!” he declared, holding up a modest picnic basket. Virgil raised an eyebrow.

“Where’s the rest of it?” he drawled.

Roman puffed out his chest. “It’s all in here. It’s magic!”

Virgil was still skeptical, but he was willing to give Princey a chance.

Roman set the basket down and opened the lid. Plates, glasses, and silverware levitated out of the basket and arranged themselves on the blanket. Next came the food, and holy shit Princey wasn’t lying about the feast. For the meats, there were two whole chickens, a Cornish game hen, and bacon-wrapped turkey legs. They had sliced french bread, mashed potatoes, mac and cheese bake, and half a dozen veggie and fruit salads for sides. Finally, a lava cake, some ice cream, and 3 bottles of wine emerged.

“Woooow Roman this looks so good!!” Patton gushed.

“Indeed. I am impressed by the variety.”

Virgil started sweating. Say something nice, it’s your turn, come on don’t look like an asshole!

“Holy shit this is enough food for like 12 people at least.”

Roman just laughed. “Indeed! So we won’t be hungry! Let’s eat!”

Roman mauld the bacon-wrapped turkey legs, looking every bit like a medieval knight who had just gotten back from a huge battle. Virgil found he really liked the Cornish game hen, whereas Logan and Patton both seemed to favor the chicken. Everyone had a bit of everything, and by the end Virgil and Patton were laying on the blanket groaning.

Logan raised an unsympathetic eyebrow. “I told you two to pace yourselves.”

Virgil just flipped him off. Logan chuckled and turned to look at Roman.

“Why are you doing pushups?”

“I have to maintain these cut pecs if I want to save my dashing prince from the dragon!”

“Actually, the pectoralis muscle groups don’t really do much in the way of performance, regardless of size. Scientists and sport medicine experts have dubbed them part of the “facade bod” as they serve no real purpose.”

Virgil turned his head to look at Roman, hoping to see offended Princey noises in action. Instead,
Roman pushed and jumped up from where he was doing pushups and slowly straightened his posture. He sauntered over to Logan, swaying his hips far more than necessary. He stopped approximately 3 inches from Logan.

“Oh, these don’t do anything hm?” he smirked. “Although you might be right. It can be difficult to see how strong a muscle is just by looking at it.” He reached down, gently grabbed Logan’s hand, and placed it on his chest. “How do they feel? Scientifically, of course.”

“I, uh…”

Virgil watched the exchange with wide eyes. Welp, Logan’s blue-screened.

“If you two fuck on the blanket I’m leaving.”

Both Roman and Logan turned bright red while Roman scoffed out offended Princey noises. Virgil snickered while the two Sides composed themselves and went over to the Andalusian, who Roman proudly stated was named Arthur. Logan chatted about selective breeding and how GMO panic is bullshit, the only problems related to GMO’s are being created by capitalism, racism, and colonialism. Virgil stopped listening and dozed off in the sunlight, still vaguely listening to his surroundings but partially asleep. He woke up when he felt Patton shift next to him. Virgil looked over sleepily.

“Hey kiddo. I’m just going to crack into the next bottle of wine. Want some? It’s strawberry!”

Virgil smiled. “Sure.” He’d already had two glasses of the pinot grigio, but his stomach was a little less full and strawberry sounded good.

Patton and Virgil sipped wine while they watched Roman give Logan horseback riding lessons on Arthur. Eventually, Roman helped Logan off the horse and Logan walked stiffly over to the blanket to pour himself a glass of strawberry wine. Virgil chugged the rest of his glass and walked over to where Roman was tying Arthur to the cherry tree.

“Hey.”

Roman turned and beamed. “Hello my little emo! How fares thee?”

Virgil shrugged. “I’m good. Wanted to check out the horse.”

“Arthur.”

“Right. He’s pretty dope.”

Roman puffed his chest out. “He should be, I created him.”

Virgil rolled his eyes. “Whatever you say Princey. He is beautiful though.”

“As are you, my love.”

Virgil’s head snapped up. Roman was looking down at him with a smirk and was he always that close?! Even standing in the sunshine, Virgil could feel the heat and passion coming off Roman. He was close enough to smell cinnamon and roses, and the close proximity was making Virgil’s skin light on fire and his breath quicken from something besides panic or fear. He felt heat boiling in his lower abdomen.

“Tell me, my dark angel,” Roman said as he gently lifted Virgil’s chin, “do you see anything you’d
Virgil’s mind was simultaneously racing and not helping. *This is your chance! No it isn’t, don’t make it weird! Kiss him! Don’t, you don’t know how to and you’ll be terrible! You’re gonna make it weird, end this! He’s just messing with you anyways! You’re gonna fuck everything up—*

Virgil shouted at his brain. *Make a goddamn decision!*

His brain apparently did make a decision as his head tilted down slightly, his lips parted, and he licked Roman from palm to wrist.

“EEEEUUUUGGGGHHH!!!” Roman shrieked as he leapt away. Virgil heard Patton and Logan howling with laughter behind him. Once Roman finished wiping his hand on his pants, he looked at Virgil with a raised eyebrow.

“Well played.”

Virgil shrugged and smirked, screaming on the inside.

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Virgil knew he wasn’t paying as close attention as he should have. He’d had a horrible nightmare the night before and was still shaken from it. Then, before he could even finish his coffee, let alone breakfast, Thomas had summoned them because he was anxious about the second date he’d be going on that evening. Needless to say, it had already been an exhausting day for Virgil and it was barely 9 AM. As soon as Thomas’ dilemmas were resolved, Virgil sank down into his room, hoping to catch a little bit of shuteye before lunch.

He fell onto his bed, not bothering to pull back the covers and just curling up on his side. With the help of his Lucas the Spider plushie, he fell asleep.

Unfortunately for his sleep debt, he woke up when he sensed someone enter his room. Out of habit, he kept his body relaxed and feigned sleep.

“Virgil? Are you awake sweetie?”

Virgil relaxed at the sound of Patton’s voice, but before he could say anything Patton spoke again in the same soft voice.

“It’s so nice to see you safe. I wish I could tell you how I feel and everything, but I know that would probably only make you uncomfortable.” Patton’s voice became sad. “And I won’t make you uncomfortable just because I want things that you don’t want. Let’s get a blanket over you. I won’t have my baby catch a cold!”

Virgil heard Patton looking around his room for a spare blanket before he laid something heavy over Virgil. Virgil could tell by the smell that it was the cloak Roman had made him.

“There you go honey. Snug as a bug. Let’s see… I’ll leave some water on your nightstand for you.” Virgil sensed something being conjured and heard a plastic bottle being set on the table next to his bed. A sigh came from behind him.

“I wish you knew how much we loved you kiddo. I know we asked you when we first got together, but I can’t help but wonder if you hadn’t been… being hurt by,” Patton sniffled, “by the Dark Sides, if you would be interested.” Patton’s voice was choked and wet; Virgil knew that meant he was crying, but he couldn’t bring himself to move. “We all love you, so much, and we don’t want
to make you uncomfortable, but I… we wish you were with us. You’ll always be a part of our family, I just wish…” Patton’s voice trailed off into a whisper, “I wish I could call you my boyfriend.”

Virgil was frozen as he heard Patton keep sniffling.

“Shoot, I don’t want to wake you up. You looked so tired this morning! I’ll wake you up after lunch, I don’t want you getting sick.” Patton paused. “I love you Virgil.”

Virgil listened as Patton walked out of his room and quietly closed the door. Virgil sat up slowly and stared at the slab of wood. They love me? They love me?? He didn’t know I was awake, he’s not playing a prank, he’s not just saying that. They love me?!?! He only realized that he was breathing too quickly and shallowly when his vision started to tunnel in. Virgil grabbed around for Shelly, but realized she was still on his desk. Virgil stumbled over to her, turned, and slid down the desk with his back against it as he gripped the plastic tightly. He used the hard toy spider to ground himself while he did his breathing exercises.

After several rounds, he was feeling more in control of his lungs. Virgil stared ahead blankly as he tried to process what Patton had said.

They… they want me to join their relationship?!

He walked over to his bed, set Shelly down on his nightstand, and grabbed Lucas. He buried his face in the plush toy to muffle his cries. He was feeling too many emotions to process, and they manifested through wet eyes, a sore throat, and uncontrollable sobs. Virgil felt like his body was apparently trying to push out all of his feelings through sobs that were closer to coughs with their force.

He eventually ran out of tears, lifting his head up with a smile. They love me. He felt euphoric as a buzzing energy filled his chest and spread to the rest of his body. Is this how Princey always feels? No wonder he’s so… Princey.

Virgil leapt out of bed and ran to his bathroom. He quickly fixed his hair and makeup. He went to head for the door, excited to start the next part of his life, when he heard hushed whispers. He stopped by the door to listen.

“…can’t tell him padre.” That’s Roman. What can’t they tell me?

“I know, but I want to so bad! It feels kinda… I don’t know, mean? Like, I feel like he should know!”

“We can’t tell him yet! Besides, you’ll see, it’ll be worth it. I know it’s not your M.O. Morality, but it’ll be great! And we’ve already been doing it for so long.”

“I guess you’re right. And I always know when my kiddos are asleep!”

“Did you see what I did there?”

“Yup!”

Virgil stopped listening, his heart cracking open and bleeding. Of course it was just a prank. They’d never be interested in me. How long have they been pretending? Pretending to love me? Virgil snapped his room soundproof, went back over to his bed, collapsed onto it, and sobbed. He stayed there for hours, letting out all of the heartbreak and betrayal.
Every time they said they loved me… Every time they said they cared about me… Every time they
said I meant more to them than as a function of Thomas… It was all a lie. A prank. I knew it. I
shouldn’t have been so stupid this entire time. This is my fault. All my fault.

Virgil only moved from his position on the bed to snap his room completely locked when Patton
knocked on his door for lunch leftovers.

Fuck them! Those assholes!! I shouldn’t have been so stupid, but they pretended to like me as a
joke. Or maybe they were just trying to make me feel better and then they turned it into a joke!

Virgil felt his cries peter out as they were replaced by anger. His heartbreak was still there, tearing
him apart from the inside out. But he could feel his anger taking over.

For the next 5 days, Virgil hid in his room, grieving the pain that came from realizing every
interaction he’d had with people he thought loved him was a lie, only leaving around 3 or 4 AM to
get granola bars. He had a splitting headache from his caffeine withdrawal, but he couldn’t risk the
microwave waking up one of the other Sides. The few times he did run into one of the Lights, he
hisst and spat angry words at them, sarcastic remarks about how much they obviously cared
about him. They had looks of hurt and confusion on their faces, but Virgil supposed that it was
only because they didn’t think he knew about their little game.

It didn’t stop him from bawling as soon as he was back in his room.

Virgil also avoided the Neutral Sides. He didn’t want them to know about what had happened.
Besides, they have dominion over the Subconscious. They know how important it is to keep
Thomas’ facets healthy.

On the night of the fifth day, Virgil’s stomach cramps were too awful to ignore any further. He’d
been without food for two days since he’d run into one of the other Sides before he could grab
anything. It was only 10 PM, but he decided to risk it. I can’t wait any longer.

Virgil pressed his ear to his door. After holding it there for several minutes, he decided that he
couldn’t hear any movement. He slowly cracked his door open and looked around; seeing no one,
he made his way downstairs, carefully avoiding the creaky steps. Virgil mentally fist pumped
when he made it to the kitchen and there wasn’t anyone there. He grabbed a handful of granola
bars and stuffed them in his hoodie pockets.

Unable to wait any longer, he grabbed a few bottles of Gatorade and chugged half of one bottle in
one go. He was hit immediately with powerful stomach cramps, and he had to bite his wrist to keep
from letting any screams out. He closed his eyes and breathed through his nose to try to prevent
any puking, although it was an uphill battle.

You dumbass, you KNOW what happens when you eat or drink too fast after not getting anything
for a while! This is all your fault! Your fault your fault your fault!! Come on, you’re-

“Virgil sweetie?”

Virgil jumped as Patton came into the kitchen. Virgil had been so consumed by the pain and trying
not to puke that he hadn’t noticed Patton’s approach. He whirled around and glared. He hadn’t seen
Patton yet, but he held an incredible amount of anger towards him.

“Hello Morality,” he drawled. Patton visibly flinched, and Virgil tried to feel victorious.
“Kiddo… I don’t know what we did but,” Patton stopped to sniffle as his voice broke, “we’re sorry. So sorry baby.”

Virgil felt his hackles rise. “Don’t call me that!! I’m not your baby, and I’m not your son!” he shouted. He tried to feel anything but terrible as Patton’s face blanched and tears flowed out of his eyes. Patton raised shaky hands to his mouth to stifle a couple of sobs. He closed his eyes and tried to inhale. Virgil realized Patton was doing the breathing exercises Virgil had taught him. Well I feel like a piece of shit now. Virgil sank out with his granola bars. When he got into his room, he threw them on his desk, faceplated on his bed, and cried.

I miss them. I miss being part of the family. But I never was part of the family. It’s almost worse knowing it was a lie. The whole time I thought I was loved, it was a lie. No one loves me. And now I’ve hurt Patton.

Virgil lifted himself from the bed and slid down to the floor, still crying. The pain that had built up over the past several days was overwhelming him. He’d gone over every single interaction with the Light Sides and dissected how each one was a farce, just another step in their prank. I can’t… I need to stop the pain! God I can’t anymore! He focused as much as he could, and managed to summon a simple blade.

At least I can do something right.

Virgil walked into his bathroom and got rid of his clothes. He placed the tip of the razor against his skin and paused.

I’ve been clean for almost a year now. Do I really want to break that?

Yes you do. They don’t care, you don’t matter. You only matter as a function of Thomas, and you can’t function properly with all of this grief going through you. Let it out. Cut it out.

His mind made up, Virgil dragged the razor against his upper arm and winced. It was a familiar feeling, but he couldn’t help the regret that welled up inside of him at the fact that he was breaking his sobriety. Virgil made two more cuts before he felt the weight on his chest from the past 5 days begin to lift. Three more cuts made him feel centered and grounded again. Virgil dropped the razor in the sink and watched, mesmerized, as the red slowly slipped down the drain. His arm stung, and that’s when he winced and looked. I should clean that. Don’t want it to get infected.

Virgil wanted to use something astringent to clean the cuts with, and he didn’t know if a moisturizing soap would do the trick. Opening his cabinet, he saw nail polish remover. It’s basically anti-septic right?

Virgil brought the nail polish remover back into the bathroom and poured some on a few folded up squares of toilet paper. He braced himself, then brought the cloth down.

Well that sucks, he thought as he sucked air in through his clenched teeth. He held the toilet paper there for a minute before taking it away. He grabbed a few bandaids and put them on the spots that were bleeding the most.

All of the love was fake. And is fake. They never loved you. How could they? What, you think that they only cared about you more once they saw how disgusting you were? In what reality would that work?

Virgil sobbed as his eyes burned. He curled up in a corner of his bathroom, the cool tiles feeling refreshing against his inflamed face. I need to stop caring about them! I have to! I can’t survive
Virgil jumped as three firm knocks came at his door.

“Virgil, we need to talk. Please come find us as soon as you can. Thank you.”

Virgil winced. *Logan doesn’t use the passive-aggressive middle management voice unless he’s REALLY pissed.*

*What would you expect? You hurt a defenseless little cinnamon roll because you were too stupid to realize that their love could be nothing but fake. You stupid, naive, guileless moron. And now you’ve taken out your own stupidity on Patton. Of course they’re gonna be pissed at you! Duh!*

Virgil whimpered. *Now I’ll never have their love back.*

*You never had it in the first place.*

Virgil couldn’t argue with that. He wept anew at all of the times he felt loved, all of the times their “love” comforted him. Virgil curled up further, and bawled into his knees.

**Chapter End Notes**

Hey, Virgil *did* hear Patton confess. That's what y'all were waiting for, right? For them to confess their feelings for each other? ;)

3>:D

I promise we are actually inches away from what a lot of you are looking for! Stay tuned!!

Did you think I forgot about the cloak? Ha! Have you *seen* my outline doc? SO MANY THINGS. If a question or plot line seems unresolved, that's intentional. Subconscious lore? We'll get it. How did the Dark Sides break out of the walls in chapter 17? You'll see!
After another hour of weeping in his bathroom, Virgil decided to stop feeling sorry for himself and go downstairs. He pulled on his regular crew-neck long-sleeved t-shirt along with his standard hoodie.

*Let’s just get this over with.*

Virgil petted Shelly on his way out for good luck, then stepped out. He heard three voices downstairs. *Oh great, they’re waiting for me.*

Virgil slunk down the stairs, only stomping a little harder than necessary. As he made out each individual voice, he felt his blood growing hotter and hotter. By the time he’d reached the bottom, he was fuming.

“Hey friendo,” Roman’s strained voice carried. Virgil didn’t bother hiding his rage as he shot a venomous glare over at Roman. He had to hold back tears as Roman’s face fell. *Why the fuck do I still care about these assholes?*

Logan adjusted his tie. “Virgil, we need to discuss your recent behavior.”

Virgil barked out an acerbic laugh. “Oh, sure, my behavior. Yeah, go ahead,” he mocked as he plopped into the armchair opposite the Light Sides. *Maybe they won’t notice I’m about to cry.*

“S-sweetie, have you been crying?” Patton asked shakily.

Virgil’s head whipped towards him. “Why would you care?”

Patton gasped as he closed his eyes. “Because I care about you.”

Virgil huffed. “No you don’t. You care about me as a function of Thomas. You’ve just been pretending to love me.” Virgil’s voice cracked at the end of the sentence. He forced himself to keep talking, even though his voice was strangled and brittle. “All those times, I can’t believe it! You were lying! Every time! **How could you? You pretended to care about me, and I get that it’s just a stupid prank and I should have known better than to ever think you’d care about me, but fuck it hurts dammit! I heard you talking in the hallway, I know it’s just some fucking game to you! I know, I know, I’m fucking stupid, but every time I felt… better after you pretended, it was all fake!!**”

Virgil broke. He curled up and sobbed into his knees, repeating “It was all fake, all fake, none of it was real,” in a whimper. The only other sounds were his wet, hitched, hiccuping inhales and cries as he breathed out. The Light Sides said nothing, in shock, as Virgil cried weakly. Finally, Logan spoke.
“Virgil, what exactly did you hear in the hallway?”

Virgil sniffled in some of the snot that had run out of his nose. “Rom- Creativity said that you guys couldn’t tell me something, Morality,” Virgil choked on the title, hating the pain it brought as he remembered the love he’d thought he had, “he said that it was mean not to tell me, and that he always knew if one of us was asleep or faking it. I stopped listening after that.”

“Oh… oh good gracious…” Logan breathed. “What… what spectacularly terrible timing. Virgil, I believe that this entire debacle has been a misunderstanding.”

“And why should I trust you?” Virgil shot back caustically.

Logan adjusted his glasses. “Fair point. I hope I can convince you. To begin, you believe the thing that we aren’t telling you is that we’re pretending to love you, correct?”

Virgil did his best to muffle the sob that bubbled up. “Obviously! What else could it be? Morality thought it was mean!”

Virgil heard Patton whimper at the name and internally winced. Stop it! Don’t feel bad for them!

“Virgil, it could be literally anything else. I believe this is all due to an inference observation confusion.”

“Oh?” Virgil turned to Roman and Patton. “Then what were you talking about hiding from me?!?” he challenged.

Patton smiled wetly. “How much we love you.”

Virgil’s temper flared. “Bullshit!! Fuck you! Stop mocking me!!”

Roman leaned forward, wrapping an arm around Patton’s shoulders. “Virgil, I swear we are not lying to you! We have kept how very much we loved you a secret because we didn’t want to make you uncomfortable!”

Virgil deflated. Oh. Well now I feel like an asshole.

Logan straightened his tie. “Virgil, I cannot blame you for arriving to that conclusion, nor your subsequent actions. I can imagine I’d be more confrontational than you have been had I thought what you thought. I’m impressed at your restraint, really.”

Virgil just stared at them, his throat constricting and his vision blurring. New, different tears poured out of his eyes.

“Oh sweetie… I’m so sorry you thought… Oh my sweet baby…” Patton let out a sob and pressed his face against Roman’s shoulder.

“Virgil, my love… We’d never be so cruel to you. We do love you.”

Virgil just stared at them, tears running down his face. Why does my vision keep getting blurrier?

“Virgil, are you breathing?!” Logan asked alarmed.

Oh. That explains it, Virgil thought as he passed out.

/////
Virgil squinted his eyes against the bright light coming through his eyelids. He groaned and threw an arm over his eyes.

“Are you waking up darling?” Logan asked softly.

Virgil flinched as the unexpected sound hit him. Virgil sheepishly opened his eyes, remembering everything that had happened before he passed out.

“Hey,” he rasped out, and immediately began coughing.

He felt plastic get pressed against his hand. He grabbed the water bottle and drank greedily, only stopping when his stomach cramps wouldn’t let him continue.

Logan gently took the bottle from Virgil. “Shhhhh, take it easy. You’ve been through what I can only imagine was quite a traumatic experience.”

Virgil groaned as he waited out the stomach cramps. He realized he had been carried by one of the Sides and deposited on the couch. Once he wasn’t in danger of vomiting on the logical Side, he re-opened his eyes. All three Light Sides were looking down at him.

“Um, so…” Virgil trailed off. Good job brain. Real eloquent.

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe we could likely stand to improve on our communication.”

Virgil snorted.

“Kiddo, did… did you really think we were faking loving you?” Patton asked.

Virgil looked down in shame. “I’m sorry. It was just after I heard what you said in the hallway. I thought you were pranking me and were gonna do a big reveal, and that all the times you acted like you cared was just a joke or funny to you. And then I was a complete asshole…”

Logan interjected. “While your actions were rather hostile, considering you thought us loving you was a prank we were pulling on you, I can hardly fault you. While you did jump to a conclusion, you still endeavored not to harm us too badly. Like I said earlier, I would have been far more antagonistic.”

Virgil opened his mouth to make a joke, but all that came out was a sob. Patton rushed forward but paused.

“Can I hug you kiddo?”

Virgil just nodded and was soon enveloped in a warm hug. Virgil leaned into the scent of vanilla and home and sobbed. Patton had an arm securely around Virgil’s back and his other hand delicately cradling Virgil’s head. Patton rocked them back and forth gently, unable to think of anything to say.

“Room for two more?” Roman asked.

Virgil didn’t move from where he was being held by Patton. He just nodded and held an arm out. He was quickly surrounded by warm bodies. Virgil cried out the agony from the last five days. He’d spent five days intermittently crying and passing out as he remembered and tore apart every single memory from when he was rescued, and to know that those memories were real… Virgil knew he’d never get enough contact. He pressed harder into Patton, willing him to hug tighter. Thankfully, it worked, and the other two Light Sides picked up on it. The firm hold they had on
him was the only thing keeping him from completely breaking apart. He was scared that if they let go, he’d shatter. Just turn into dust and cease to exist. He heard blood rushing in his ears as his already-painful throat constricted around his catharsis and his sobs.

“You love me?” Virgil whispered, not quite believing it.

“Yes Virgil,” Logan whispered.

“So much baby,” Patton said into his hair.

“More than I could ever hope to express,” Roman vowed.

Virgil’s cautious desire to believe them made him keep repeating, “You love me?”, each time more heartbreaking than the last to the Light Sides. They never stopped repeating it back to him, willing him to believe it.

After an hour and a half of comforting Virgil, the Sides gently pulled apart.

Patton wiped his face with one of Roman’s handkerchiefs. “I think we should go to bed kiddos. We need to sleep.”

Various sounds of agreement sounded around the couch, and everyone wordlessly got up and headed towards the stairs. Patton had a hand on Virgil’s shoulder, Logan had one on Virgil’s back, and Roman had him by the hand.

When they got to Virgil’s room, Virgil held back his tears as he moved towards his door. Unfortunately, Logan was not expecting the detour, which caused him to run intoVirgil. It was only due to Virgil’s reflexes that they both didn’t end up on the ground.

“My apologies Virgil, I did not expect you to stop and turn.”

“Why not? This is my room.”

Virgil was confused by the silence until Patton broke it.

“Sweetie, we thought you’d like to stay with us for the night in Roman’s room?”

Virgil froze, eyes wide.

“Oh.”

“You do not have to if you would not like to,” Roman began.

“But we believe it would be beneficial given your trauma and isolation over the past several days,” Logan finished.

Virgil looked down as his lower lip trembled and a hot ball of acid jumped from his stomach to the back of his throat.

“I-if you guys are actually cool with it and not just trying to make me feel better because I know I’ve been an asshole lately and-”

“We would not have offered if we didn’t mean it,” Logan said firmly.

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. Logan put the smallest amount of pressure on Virgil’s back, and they went into Roman’s room. Virgil paused by the foot of the bed. Logan brought his hand up to
Virgil’s shoulder.

“You do not have to if you do not want to darling. We’d never want you to be uncomfortable.”

Virgil shot Logan a smile. “I’m good, I’m just shit at summoning clothes.”

“Never fear emo daydream! I can summon pyjamas if you’d like! Why I can-”

“T-shirt and sweatpants are good,” Virgil interrupted before Roman tried to put him in satin overalls or some shit.

Roman sighed dramatically. “Fiiiiine.” He snapped his fingers, and Virgil was in the requested clothes a moment later, the cotton against his skin almost unrealistically soft.

He quirked his lips. “Thanks Princey.”

Everyone shuffled into bed. Virgil and Roman climbed in first, with Virgil laying his head on Roman’s shoulder and Roman wrapping his arms around Virgil. Logan got in behind Virgil and spooned him, while Patton got on the other side of Roman and tangled the fingers of one hand with Virgil’s. Virgil snuggled in against Roman’s chest, surrounded by his famiLY, and fell asleep.

///// 

Virgil sighed as he woke up on Roman’s chest the next day. He tried to stay in his content bubble of warmth and comfort, but his brain had other ideas, reminding him how awkward and horrible he’d been the previous week.

He felt Roman’s arms tighten around him as he groaned.

“Are you alright my love?” Roman asked.

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, just embarrassed about me being a dick this past week.”

“Virgil.” Virgil winced at Logan’s stern tone. “You believed we were being unimaginably cruel to you. Quite frankly, you had every right to treat us with contempt.”

Virgil sighed. “Still though…”

Patton squeezed Virgil’s hand that he was still holding. “Baby, we’ve forgiven you. Please forgive yourself.”

Virgil smiled at Patton. “I appreciate it. I’ll get over it.”

Patton smiled back.

After a few more minutes of resting quietly, the four Sides got up to go downstairs for breakfast.

“How do veggie omelets with blueberry pancakes and breakfast sausage sound?” Patton chirped.

Virgil quirked his lips. “Sounds great Pat.”

Patton and Roman got to work on breakfast while Logan got the coffeepot running. Virgil sat awkwardly at the table as Logan sat back down and began working on the crossword puzzle. Once Roman had sliced up all of the vegetables and beat the eggs, Patton got Roman started on the omelets. Patton had mixed up the pancake batter and already had the sausages heating up. As Roman worked the omelets, he brought up Thomas’ new idea for the Sanders Sides theory, which
engaged all four Sides. Virgil breathed in the delicious smells coming from the stovetop, and they were chatting amiably when Virgil’s brain screeched to a halt.

“Patton!”

The moral Side jumped. “Yeah kiddo? Are you okay?”

Virgil cleared his throat and did a round of breathing exercises. He glanced sheepishly at Patton. “Sorry. But you said you know when someone’s asleep versus when someone’s awake?”

Patton looked surprised. “Yeah, how did-”

“Hallway. Did you know I was awake when you talked to me?”

Patton paled. “N-no, I thought you were asleep! You looked like it!”

“I got practice faking it with… yeah. Anyways- wait, you thought I was asleep?!?”

“Yeah! Sweetie, what did you hear?”

Virgil swallowed, unable to answer. He just stared at Patton with wide eyes and growing panic. Fortunately, Patton was the center of emotional intelligence.

“Baby, did you hear me say… how I felt about you?”

Virgil chewed his lip and looked down, then nodded. He heard Patton take a deep breath.

“Okay. You know it’s okay if you don’t feel the same way about us, right? We would never want you to feel uncomfortable.”

“I know you- we?!” Virgil felt like his head was actually spinning. Vertigo, his mind helpfully supplied. Virgil felt like all of the air had gotten punched out of his lungs. Patton meant it, it wasn’t a joke. Oh my god, we?! What does this mean what does this mean what does this mean what does this mean?!!

Logan adjusted his tie. “Yes, we,” he said, slightly strained.

“I… third? That!” Roman declared.

Virgil looked from one face to the other, trying to keep his breathing under control.

“You meant it, you meant it…” Virgil whispered to himself, barely realizing he was speaking.

“I did baby,” Patton said, voice shaky with fear.

“So, just so I’m not… you know, seeing things I’m not supposed to…” Virgil trailed off, willing the others to understand through his panic.

Logan straightened his back. “I did say we needed to work on our communication,” he said dryly. “Virgil, are you wondering if we would be interested in a romantic and/ or sexual relationship with you?”

Virgil flinched at the second adjective, but did his best to stay strong. This is your chance, find out where they stand! You’ll know for sure whether or not they want you. That’s what Dr. Picani said! “Y-yeah. Sorry if that’s weird, I just, with your signals, I just wanna make sure and I don’t…”
Logan adjusted his tie and took a slow breath. “The answer is yes. That is something we would be interested in if and only if you would like that as well.”

Virgil kept his head down, but saw Roman and Patton nod vigorously out of the corner of his eyes.

“Oh.”

“I… I, yes, indeed. Is that something you,” Logan had to pause to take a breath, “you’d be interested in?”

Virgil looked up and examined the faces around the table. Patton’s face was a complex mixture of emotions as usual, but the main emotions Virgil could pick out were sadness, hope, and trepidation. Roman was just staring open-mouthed at Virgil, waiting for his answer with bated breath. Logan’s face was neutral, but his eyes were a dark storm, filled with fear.

Virgil looked back down at the kitchen table and took a deep breath. He decided to do a round of breathing exercises.

Is this something I really want, or do I just want a relationship? Do I want the reality of an actual relationship, or the fantasy of one? They seem to like me. I like them. Would we all be better if I was in a relationship with them? Am I ready for a relationship? Do I want to be in a relationship with them? Can I handle it?

“Virgil?” Roman asked, voice thinner than Virgil had ever heard it.

Virgil looked up and smiled.

“Yeah.”

Chapter End Notes

I wasn't lying when I said that it'd be happening soon. I know what y'all want ;)

Get ready for the next chapters!! I think y'all will like 'em ;)

Also, how much did this chapter's beginning A/N scare y'all? 3>:_D
Chapter 76

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! No warnings for this chapter, so here's a shameless plug! Come chat with me over at Lilfellasblog on Tumblr!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Patton reacted as expected and tackle-hugged Virgil as best he could with Virgil still seated at the kitchen table. Virgil laughed as Patton squeezed him.

“I'M SO HAPPY!!” Patton cried. Virgil snaked a hand out of Patton’s embrace to rub his back, not exactly sure what to do with a laughing and crying Patton but too happy himself to care. Virgil chanced a look up at Roman, who had tears streaming down his face. Logan’s face was dry, but his eyes were definitely shiny.

Eventually, Patton pulled away smiling, his cheeks almost completely covered with tears. Patton brought up his hands up and wiped away a few of Virgil’s own tears he hadn’t realized he’d shed. Virgil closed his eyes at the contact and leaned into the touch.

“OH SHIT!” Roman yelled, breaking the spell.

Virgil jumped and looked at him. Roman had his back to the other Sides, and was furiously scraping at the various pans with a spatula. Patton let out an adorable, “Eep!” before running over to help Roman salvage breakfast. While they were working on getting extra-crispy sausages, pancakes, and omelets out of their respective pans, Logan came over and rested a hand on Virgil’s shoulder. Logan let a tear roll down his face as they exchanged smiles.

“I’m… so happy Virgil,” Logan said in a strangled voice. “I am excited to be in a relationship with you.”

Virgil felt more tears join the rivers on his face as he jumped out of his chair and hugged Logan. Logan stumbled back a few paces, but caught himself and laughed as he hugged Virgil back. Virgil buried his face in Logan’s shoulder and inhaled. Logan smelled like lemon, lilac, and basil. Virgil could die happy wrapped in Logan’s arms. They’d hugged before, but now it felt... different. A good different, Virgil decided. When they parted, Logan gave Virgil a Kleenex to wipe his face with. Just as Virgil had finished wiping his face, Roman and Patton brought plates stacked with various breakfast items.

“Sorry about that guys,” Patton said sheepishly. “We got a little distracted there for a minute.”

Virgil smirked. “Does this mean we have to have burnt food on our anniversaries?”

Patton giggled while Logan and Roman laughed.

“Only if you wish so my love,” Roman chuckled.

Virgil dug into his food. “Still tastes great guys.”

Patton blushed while Roman puffed out his chest and attempted to talk through a mouthful of
veggie omelets.

Virgil managed a few bites of his pancakes before his thoughts caught up to him.

*I don’t even know how to be in a relationship. What do they expect from me? How soon do I have to kiss them? First date right? Oh god I don’t want to! Oh god oh god oh god what about sex?!!*

Virgil picked at the rest of his food while he attempted to maintain control over his breathing. He forced down a few more bites, but had to really fight himself.

“Is something wrong Virge? Too burnt?” Roman said jokingly. Virgil looked up and smiled at him and saw the nervousness in Roman’s face.

“No, food’s good, I’m just… anxious.” He chuckled at his own joke. “I’ve, uh, never really done something like this before, so I’m, uh… I just don’t wanna screw it up or anything.”

*Not really my fear but close enough.*

“You won’t mess anything up!” Patton declared. Virgil quirked his lips.

“While not as ceaselessly optimistic as Patton, I do believe that it is unlikely that you will cause a major rift in the relationship. We’ve already lived with each other and quite like you,” Logan finished with a small smile. Virgil smiled back.

Virgil tried to smile. “Thanks L.”

“Of course. Do try to eat some more healthy food. I have a feeling Patton will be feeding us junk food shortly.”

“Awww Lo you know me so well!”

Patton and Logan shared a tender smile while Virgil snorted into his food and kept eating. He was still anxious but was forcing it down. Roman raved on and on about the dates and adventures he wanted to take Virgil on, regardless of whether or not he had food in his mouth. He only stopped when he inhaled egg from his third omelet and Logan chastised him.

Once breakfast was completed and Virgil had skillfully moved his food around to make it look like he’d eaten more than he actually had, there was a bit of an awkward silence until Roman took the reins.

“I propose we have a movie date to celebrate this wondrous occasion!” he boomed.

Patton bounced on the balls of his feet in excitement while Logan nodded in approval. Virgil swallowed his nerves and forced a smile on his face.

“That sounds good Princey.”

Roman’s smile was a lighthouse, and Virgil was entranced. Roman put on *The Avengers*, which shocked everyone.

“I call dibs on sitting next to Virgil! I didn’t get to hug him yet! I like being next to you my love. Can we cuddle?” Roman said in a rushed breath.

Virgil chuckled. “Sure Princey.”

Roman let out an excited squeal and sat next to Virgil, still a few inches apart with his arm raised in
invitation. Virgil scooted over and rested his head back against Roman’s shoulder. Roman put his arm down and used his other hand to grab one of Virgil’s. Patton claimed the seat next to Virgil and leaned against him, tangled his fingers in Virgil’s hair and lightly rubbing his scalp. Virgil rumbled deep in his chest at the soothing massage.

“Awwww, you’re so cute when you purr!” Patton cooed.

“I do not purr!” Virgil grumbled.

“Yes dear.” Logan smirked.

Virgil sent him a half-hearted hiss. Logan and Roman chuckled while Patton giggled against Virgil’s shoulder. Logan situated himself on the other side of Roman and put an arm over his shoulders, nearly touching Virgil and Patton but not quite. With another caress from Patton and a light squeeze from Roman’s arm, Virgil closed his eyes and rumbled again. He could feel anxiety simmering in his abdomen, but he forcefully focused on the nice sensations and closeness of the other Sides. Their proximity was making him feel warm and calm, especially with the heat coming off the ever-burning Roman. Virgil relished the feeling of the warm, powerful chest he was leaning against, the equally strong arm around him, the solid presence of Patton next to him, and the serene energy from Logan. Virgil basked in contentment until he felt drops of water hit his head.

Virgil opened his eyes and looked up to see Roman crying.

“Shit, Ro are you okay?!” Virgil asked, slightly panicked. Oh god I fucked it up already I don’t know what I did but I fucked up I fucked up I fucked it all up oh god I ruined it I-

Roman smiled and brushed the back of his fingers against Virgil’s cheek. “Fear not little storm. I am simply so full of joy and happiness.”

Oh. Well that’s okay.

“Oh! Um, that’s… good. Better than being sad, right?” Virgil stuttered out.

The corners of Roman’s eyes crinkled. “Indeed it is,” he said as he nuzzled Virgil’s hair. Roman stayed there for a moment before pulling back. Logan offered Roman a tissue and Roman cleaned himself up just as the movie started playing. Virgil settled back into Roman’s chest. He barely watched the movie, too enraptured by the euphoria. Virgil kept sighing happily, wrapped in love and peace. Each of his sighs was met with a nuzzle or squeeze from one of the other Sides.

I could get used to this. This is... cozy. Is this why people date?

Well, that and other reasons. They probably just want to see what it’s like to fuck you.

But what about a lot of ace people?

Are the Light Sides asexual?

No, but there’s more to a relationship than-

Oh, so you think they don’t want to fuck you?

Well, I mean, probably, but-

They sure are hanging off you right now aren’t they? Just a little adjustment from them, they could pull you into a kiss and push you down on the couch. They’re so close, it’d be so easy.
Virgil’s brain sent him images of the Sides moving so they could kiss him, then go further and further, Virgil unable to put up a protest because it was confusing and happening so fast. He felt the fog of happiness dissipate as fear took its place. They wouldn’t force me, they’d never force me, Virgil chanted to himself. Despite trying to yell over the sound of his brain, Virgil’s dread continued to build. Just as the movie showed Loki in a muzzle, Virgil felt his breathing start to pick up. He can’t talk, he can’t talk, oh god he can’t talk!

“Are you okay sweetie?” Patton asked. He had sensed Virgil becoming more and more tense over the last half hour, but didn’t want to bring it up; the poor boy’s social anxiety was bad enough as it was. He had hoped rubbing Virgil’s scalp with a little more pressure would help, but he couldn’t stay silent as he felt Virgil’s breathing pick up.

When Virgil flinched, Patton knew he had made the right call. He pulled back a little, Roman and Logan now looking over at the other two.

“It’s okay honey, you’re safe. Can you tell me what’s wrong?”

Virgil curled in on himself. “I’m sorry, I messed everything up.”

Patton smiled sadly. My sweet and sour shadowling, always thinking too much about other people. “You didn’t mess anything up baby. Tell me what’s wrong.”

“I just… I’m just freaking out.”

Patton caught the eyes of Roman and Logan, both of whom looked confused and troubled. Patton followed his instinct and moved his hand to scratch the back of Virgil’s neck. With the minute relaxation of muscles, Patton knew he chose correctly.

“It’s okay honey. You just had a big change! It’s pretty normal to feel overwhelmed and nervous about what’s gonna happen next. Do you want to talk about it sweetie?”

Despite his self-hatred, Virgil had to smile a little. Patton knows too damn much. ‘M sorry.” He brought his hands up to rub at the tear tracks on his face, Roman letting his hand go with no resistance.

Patton scritched the back of Virgil’s neck again. “Don’t apologize for things that don’t need an apology. It’s okay. Do you want to cuddle some more or do you want some alone time?”

I’m gonna spend time alone in my room right after I panicked about being in a relationship with them.

Wow, you made it two hours? That’s so impressive.

Shut up.

“I think I need to relax in my room for a bit. Sorry guys.” Virgil chanced a glance up. The three Sides were looking at him with concern. “I know we just started… dating and I’m already freaking out, I’m sorry-”

“Do not apologize Virgil. We know how big of a step and a change this is for you. We are not offended.”

Virgil chewed on his lower lip. I want to believe Logan, but…

“You promise?”
“I swear it!”
“I do.”
“Yup!”

Virgil smiled a small, genuine smile at that. “Thanks guys. I’ll see ya later, yeah?”

Logan smiled back. “We’ll be here.”

Virgil exchanged smiles with them one last time and sank out to his room. Once there, he flopped on his bed.

_You screwed up, you useless piece of shit. You had a chance, and you blew it. Dumbass. You couldn’t even stop from panicking because you were apparently too happy. You’re too miserable to be in a relationship. Why would they want to be in a relationship with someone as fucked up as you? They’re gonna lose patience with you sooner rather than later, but stay with you longer because breaking up is hard. Then they’re gonna dump you and be all the happier for it._

Virgil grabbed his Lucas the Spider plushie and muffled his cries in it.

_When are they gonna want to have sex? When do I kiss them? How do I kiss? Is sex with someone you want to have sex with different? Or will they just be slower sometimes? The Dark Sides would go slower sometimes. Will it be like that? Oh god, how do I know when to do things? When will they expect things? Should I have kissed them already?! Oh shit, did I miss that already?! Fuck fuck fuck fuck._

Virgil focused on doing his breathing exercises. Once his mind felt clearer, he refocused.

_Okay, gotta figure out a solution. I can’t just focus on the problem. What do I do? I don’t know what to do, so I should figure that out. I KNOW the Internet’s not gonna help me here. Who do I talk to? I can’t ask Dr. Picani about this._

Virgil clutched his Lucas plushie to his chest.

_Who can I ask... Saul and Remy! They’ve been together for a while. Maybe I can ask them?_

Virgil took a deep breath and wiped at his face with his sleeve. With one last deep breath, he sank out of his bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

Virgil got so many cuddles!

I definitely pulled from my own experience for this one, although I let Virgil enjoy his date before his anxiety took over longer that I had (I had about 2 and a half minutes and I was panicking in the bathroom). And my strategy has almost always been, "Shut down emotions, identify the problem, gather information, and figure out a solution," although I only had Virgil do the last three. My Logan and I are pals. :) And it shows how Virgil's healed and been able to work on himself! Good job Virgil!

And Roman chose _The Avengers_ because he just wanted everyone to be happy, and he
knew bickering would break out if he chose Disney, which Virgil could interpret badly. He wants to make his little emo's first date with them be a good one.
Chapter 77

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! First and foremost, there is a flashback with a description of sexual assault in here. It's italicized and enclosed by tildes. There's also another vague description of a flashback. Take care of yourselves! <3

Time to see how Remy and Saul react!

Virgil appeared in the Neutral Side of the mindscape, panicking for a moment because oh my god what if I walk in on them again?!?! but thankfully, Saul and Remy could be heard washing dishes in the kitchen. Virgil ambled into the kitchen and was met by two Neutral Sides in bathrobes.

“Hey guys.”

Both Neutral Sides turned around and smiled.

“Hey sugar pie! We weren’t expecting you! How are you?”

Virgil shrugged. “I’m…” He frowned. How am I doing?

“That’s wonderful darling. What has you in such a good mood?”

Virgil smiled a little more, even as his anxiety from earlier returned. “I was actually wondering if I could get some advice?”

“Sure! Come on, talk to Mama and Papa.”

“Who’s who?”

“Doesn’t really matter, we’re both gay.”

“That explains it.”

Remy conjured a dark chocolate mocha for Virgil as they sat down.

“Dish sweetie. What’s got you curious?”

Virgil smiled as he drank from his mocha. Goddammit, I look like a dork! This is serious!! Jesus Christ, am I going to be like this from now on?!

“I, was uh, wondering, y’know, since you and Saul have been together for a while,” Virgil cleared his throat as his anxiety started dominating. “What’s a relationship like?”

Remy’s face melted into a sappy smile. “Awwww, are you thinking about the Light Sides?” His smile turned excited. “Are you going to ask them out?!!”

Virgil snorted and looked down, a goofy smile making its way onto his face again. He huffed out a
laugh. “Actually, we uh, kinda got together this morning.”

“FUCKING FINALLY!!! OMG GURL I’M SO EXCITED FOR YOU!!!” Remy squealed as he bounced out of his chair and hugged Virgil. He pulled back. “BITCH WHY DIDN’T YOU LEAD WITH THAT?!?!”

Virgil laughed. “Sorry Rem, I’m not thinking straight.”

Remy chortled at the pun. “Patton would be so proud!”

Saul came over and squeezed Virgil’s shoulder. “I’m happy for you little one.” He ruffled Virgil’s hair affectionately, earning him his sought-after hiss.

“Dish sister! How did it happen? Who asked who? Have you fucked yet? Oooooo a four-way would be so hot.”

Virgil turned bright red. “REMY.”

“These are fair questions.”

“OH MY GOD. Anyways, Patton kinda confessed to me when he thought I was asleep, and then I heard him and Roman talking outside my door. I heard only part of what they were saying totally out of context and jumped to a conclusion, and thought their affection over the past year was just a prank—”

“You jumped to a conclusion? Shocking.”

“-shut up. Anyways, I was pissed at them and then we actually talked—”

“Actually shocking.”

“-shut up. And then we spent the night together CUDDLING,” Virgil said quickly to cut Remy off, although the caffeine-addicted Side still waggled his eyebrows. “The next morning we ate breakfast and I freaked out because I remembered Patton confessing to me wasn’t part of a prank, and then it happened.”

“A four-way?”

“NO. That’s, uh, actually what I wanted to ask about.” Virgil bit his lip and looked down. “I, I’ve never…” he trailed off.

Remy softened, knowing when to stop tormenting the younger Side. “Aw sweetie, it’s okay. We all start somewhere.”

Virgil huffed mirthlessly. “Then where am I starting?”

Remy didn’t have a response. Luckily, Saul did. “Right where you are little one.”

“What does that even mean?”

Saul smiled. “It means it’s okay wherever you’re at.”

Virgil huffed in annoyance. “Well, how long did it take you and Remy to kiss?”

Remy and Saul smiled at each other with soft eyes. “Three dates. Saul was quite the romantic. I was ready to put out before the first date, but Saul wanted to take things a little slower.”
Virgil smirked. “Shocking.”

“Bitch don’t slut shame me.”

Virgil snickered, then sobered up quickly. “So three dates…” he said more to himself.

Saul squeezed Virgil’s shoulder to get his attention. “For us, Virgil, I don’t know the Lights as well as you do, but I would have beaten the shit out of them already if I thought they’d hurt you.” Virgil snorted, not doubting Saul for a second. “I’m sure they don’t want you doing anything you’re not ready for either.”

Virgil sighed. “I know, but I don’t want to keep them waiting or make them disappointed. And even when it does happen, I don’t even know how!” His speech kept accelerating as he was talking. “They - the Dark Sides - they never made me kiss them! E-except that one time Dec-”

Virgil cut off as he was thrown into a flashback.

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Deceit thrusting into Virgil slowly, forcing Virgil to push his tongue into Deceit’s mouth. Deceit biting him, torturing him.

~~~~~

“Squeeze my hand little one. It’s okay.”

Virgil heard Saul speaking and registered a hand holding his a moment later. Virgil squeezed Saul’s hand and released, with Saul squeezing back a moment later.

“Squeeze darling.”

Virgil squeezed Saul’s hand again, repeating the process. They went through that several times until Saul switched it.

“Alright, when you feel me squeeze, squeeze back. Same with letting go.”

Virgil followed Saul’s instructions until he could drag his eyes up. Saul was looking at him, eyes wide and face lax.

“It’s alright darling, it’s 2020, you’re safe. It’s not happening anymore.”

Virgil launched himself into Saul’s chest and kept repeating, “It’s 2020,” tearfully. Saul held him and kept repeating assurances until Virgil calmed down. Virgil pulled back and hunched over in his chair.

“M sorry. I just triggered myself. I’ve got skills.”

“Don’t apologize sugar. It happens. How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. He could still feel hands trailing over his body, pressing on and flicking his injuries, a thick, forked tongue tickling his bitten, raw one. “Same as I usually do after one of those I guess.”

Saul rubbed Virgil’s back. “You’re safe. It’s not happening anymore.”

Virgil leaned into Saul’s touch a little. “I know.”
Remy shifted. “Do you want to talk about something else coffee bean?”

Virgil shook his head. *I have to know, I have to know.* “I… have more questions.”

“If you’re sure…”

“I am.” Virgil braced himself. *Now or never.* Virgil was so busy steeling his nerves that he didn’t notice Roman rising up in the Neutral Side.

Virgil inhaled deeply, intending to rush his questions out in one breath. “How… how do you have sex? With, like, someone you actually *want* to have sex with? I know how to stay still, but other than that do I do anything? Is it different, like, slower? ‘Cause sometimes the Dark Sides would go slower, is it like that?”

Virgil sucked in a breath to try to fill his empty lungs. When he looked up, he saw the Neutral Sides staring at him in shock and heartbreak. Before they could say anything, he was startled from a voice behind him.

“Angel…”

Virgil whipped around and paled when he saw Roman looking at him with an equally pale face.

“I… shit, Ro, I’m sorry, I didn’t…” Virgil trailed off, unsure what to say.

Roman shook his head. “No my sweet, you did nothing wrong. My love, that’s not…” Roman bit his lip. “May I hug you?”

Virgil nodded, curling into Roman’s chest as he approached and beginning to cry, trying and failing to hold back the tears from his previous flashback. Roman rubbed his back and murmured to him, meeting the Neutral Sides’ helpless looks with his own.

“Shhhhhh, my love, you’re safe.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m so fucked up, I don’t even know what normal *stuff* is like, I’m sorry I can’t be normal or good for you…”

“Hush angel, none of that. You’re *perfect* for us, I promise. You *never* have to apologize for being you. We love you for you and wouldn’t want anything else.” Virgil let out a particularly anguished sob. “Oh my sweet raven…”

Roman held Virgil as he cried out his pain, horror, and revulsion from what Deceit had done and the memories that came as he thought of what Roman had heard. After fifteen minutes, Virgil pulled back, his face splotchy. Roman summoned a handkerchief for Virgil.

As Virgil was cleaning his face, he felt the need to apologize. “I’m sorry. I was just tryin’ to figure stuff out…”

Roman delicately tilted Virgil’s face up with a finger and wiped away a tear that had fallen. “No more unnecessary apologies my dark prince. There’s no rush, I promise.” Roman smiled in a way that he hoped conveyed his truthfulness; he’d never want Virgil to feel pressured to do something he didn’t want. It seemed to work, as Virgil smiled back and curled into his chest. Roman wrapped strong arms around his nightingale and looked up at the Neutral Sides. Virgil lifted his head from Roman’s chest slightly.

“Sorry guys. I didn’t think I’d freak out like that.”
“Don’t apologize sugar. You’ve been through a lot.” Remy sent a warning look to Roman, who nodded back at him. Remy softened his face as Virgil leaned back into Roman’s chest. They stayed like that for a moment before Virgil spoke.

“What’re you doing here?”

Roman shifted so his cheek was resting on the top of Virgil’s head. “Patton went upstairs to give you water and you weren’t there. I came down here to see if you were here.”

Virgil tensed. “I’m sorry, I did spend some time alone, I promise I didn’t lie or anything, I just wanted to ask Saul and Remy some questions.”

“Shhh love, I’m not upset. What do you need right now angel?”

Virgil sighed. “I think just some time by myself with music and Tumblr.”

Roman chuckled. “Alright little crow. I think that’s doable.” Roman looked up and nodded at the Neutral Sides.

Virgil turned a bit so he wasn’t facing the Neutral Sides but so they could hear him.

“I’m sorry ‘bout that guys.”

“Darling, you must stop apologizing for things that are not your fault.”

“He’s right coffee bean. And if you want to talk more or ask any more questions, we’ll be here.”

Virgil nestled further into Roman’s chest. “Thanks guys.”

“Anytime baby.”

With a final smile from Roman, he and Virgil sank out to Virgil’s bedroom. Virgil pulled back and smiled shyly at Roman, who returned the smile.

Roman gently put his hand on the side of Virgil’s face and stroked over his cheekbone, which caused Virgil to nuzzle into Roman’s hand. Roman smiled more fully.

“I meant what I said. You may move at your own pace. We will not be disappointed or become impatient, I promise you.”

Virgil smiled shakily. “Thanks Princey.”

“Of course. Do you need anything?”

Virgil pulled back and shook his head. “No, I think I just need some quiet time.”

“Alright. Let me or someone else know if you change your mind.”

Virgil ducked his head. “Will do. Thanks Ro.”

Roman sank out, leaving Virgil to his thoughts.

Great, I have no more answers than I did before, all because I couldn’t stop from freaking the fuck out. Goddammit Virgil! Do better! The Lights deserve so much better! Figure it out!!

Virgil flopped on his bed in frustration. He ran his hands down his face roughly and pulled up
Tumblr, popping in an earbud to listen to Evanescence. He felt some of the tension slowly melt from his body as he reblogged shitposts and the familiar chords washed over him.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked this chapter! I was pretty happy with how the Remy dialogue came out! And don't worry, we will be seeing the repercussions of Virgil's relapse, it just keeps getting pushed back because other things are taking more words than anticipated.
Hi folks! First and foremost, there is a description of torture and sexual assault in this chapter. It's the italicized block of words bookended by the lines of tildes. In addition, there are a couple new tags that my amazing beta pointed out that I needed!

This chapter does deal with self-harm relapse, specifically what was contained in chapter 74. Just wanted to give y'all all a heads up because I'm so pro I managed to trigger myself writing it, so it seemed necessary to give y'all all a heads up. Stay safe!! <3 The descriptions in here are based on what I experienced as usual, so if you experience something else you're totally valid!! We're far too complex to all have the same experiences!

Finally, I do use a kind of technical medical term in here that I can't find a good synonym for. The term is aspiration, which essentially means inhaling something or getting something into your lungs that's not supposed to be there, like water.

Virgil was idly scrolling through Tumblr when his upper arm began to sting.

*Nope, nope, not right now, I need a break, I can’t deal with this right now,* he thought to himself, even as a strange, buzzing nausea filled his body. Virgil closed his eyes and focused on breathing. Although the nausea stopped increasing, he still felt physically sick. Virgil imagined his blood actually curdling as thoughts came unbidden into his mind.

*You useless fucking Side, can’t even keep from creating even more scars on your body. You’re so pointless. Look at what a failure you are!* Virgil’s recent cuts chose that moment to throb.

*You have THE unhealthiest coping mechanisms, I swear. No wonder no one wants to be around you! You’re just a mess, a fuck up. Seriously, who the FUCK intentionally hurts themselves?! You were doing so well, and then you had to go and fuck it up. You’ll never stop fucking everything up. You piece of shit. What’s so hard about not cutting?! For fuck’s sake.*

Virgil felt hot tears of shame well up in his eyes. He angrily wiped them away, burning his eyelids with the sleeve of his hoodie. His skin itched in a way it hadn’t in a while, like there were scorpions scuttling around underneath his skin.

*You may as well, I mean you already did just yesterday and your clean streak is broken. What’s the harm in calming down your skin and getting the tension out of it? Just add a few more cuts. It’ll hardly be noticeable.*

Virgil shook his head, trying to bodily knock the thoughts from his mind. *No! I’ve already fucked up once, and that’s only because I thought it was all a lie. I don’t have to anymore!*

*Oh? Then why does your skin still feel like shrink wrap over fire ants?*

*Shut up!*
Fantastic comeback Virgil. You’re so clever, just as always.

Virgil sucked in an angry breath as tears fell from his eyes.

Or maybe you don’t want to make any more cuts because you miss other people making them for you.

~~~~~

Malice was twirling a fillet knife between his fingers while staring unblinking at Virgil with wide, excited eyes and a tilted head. Virgil tried, but found he couldn’t look away from the unnerving grin. He was shaking from both cold and fear where he was tied to the table in the Room. Virgil wasn’t sure what was about to happen, but he knew that he didn’t like the hook at the tip of the blade or Malice’s demented smile.

Virgil jumped - as much as he could while being strapped down - when the door slammed open and two sets of footsteps approached.

“Mmmmm, a tarnished canvas, what a shame. We’ll just have to do what we can with what we have,” Greed crooned while rubbing a thumb over a scar he’d helped create. Virgil barely suppressed a shudder.

“That’s a lovely knife you’ve conjured Malice. Remind me to ask you to make me one. Should we cut or fuck first?” Jealousy asked as he roughly pawed at Virgil’s hair.

“You dorks can do what you want, I’m gonna choke him!” Malice announced as he carelessly tossed the knife to Jealousy, who barely caught it in time. Virgil accidentally let out a frightened noise when the knife almost hit him.

“Uh-oh! Looks like someone earned themselves another punishment! What do you say?” Malice sneered.

“Th-thank you s-sir,” Virgil whimpered.

“Good for something at least,” Malice muttered as he tilted Virgil’s head back slightly and thrust into his throat. Virgil tried to focus on not gagging and trying to predict when Malice would pull out to let him breathe, but the presence of a new knife and the two other Dark Sides made it difficult. Malice was thrusting unusually hard for his style, making Virgil’s throat hurt and his gag reflex more difficult to suppress. Virgil was surprised that Greed and Jealousy hadn’t started doing whatever they were going to do yet.

As time went on, Virgil’s vision began to get spotty as he couldn’t get any air. His control on his gag reflex was slipping as his instinctual desperation for oxygen increased. His lungs were burning. Malice tilted Virgil’s head back further, straining his neck. Virgil finally gagged from both the angle and the wide, maniacal smile on the Dark Side’s face.

“Remember, no teeth,” Malice said, smiling widely. His face switched to a faux frown.

“What do you say when one of us addresses you?!?” he shouted.

Virgil tried to speak, but was muffled. He didn’t miss the way Malice’s face turned back into a smirk.

“You have to make it understandable!”
Virgil tried again, choking and gagging.

“Not good enough! You only get to breathe when you say it!”

Virgil, becoming more and more frantic, attempted to enunciate. Malice glared as he pulled out and made eye contact with one of the other Sides standing near Virgil.

Malice began hitting Virgil’s head against the metal table. “I SAID! NO! TEETH!!”

Virgil had barely gotten a wheeze in when a bat hit his diaphragm, knocking the wind out of him. Malice kept shouting at Virgil and hitting his head against the table, reprimanding him and demanding he address him properly. Just as Virgil began to black out, Malice entered him again and began thrusting.

Virgil woke up, only to choke on fluid in his throat, coughing and gasping as his lungs burned from lack of air and aspiration.

“Finally!” Jealousy groaned. “You took so long to wake up we all had to take turns, and I wanted to cut first!”

Virgil tried to process what Jealousy meant through his agony, until Jealousy laid the hooked part of the knife against Virgil’s upper chest. He registered that part of his chest was still unscarred and uninjured, before Jealousy applied pressure and dragged the knife, slowly, across Virgil’s pec. Virgil couldn’t even manage to cry through his hacking and wheezing. Greed took the knife from Jealousy and flipped it, with the blade pointing downward. He sliced quickly, the pain sharper and less dragging than Jealousy’s but criss-crossing the other’s cut.

Greed lifted the now blood-covered knife. “We’ll have to use this one more often. Bravo Malice!”

Virgil gasped, his lungs still burning. He bolted to his bathroom and dry-heaved over the toilet. He stayed there, the room spinning, until he realized nothing was going to come out. Virgil allowed his lightheadedness to guide him to the cool bathroom tiled floor. He lay against it, willing the scorpions under his skin to go away and his full-body nausea to abate. He shivered as silent tears fell, knowing the evidence of that particular incident lay beneath a layer of clothing.

Virgil closed his eyes against his throbbing headache. After two hours of laying on the bathroom floor in misery, he fell asleep.

“Kiddo! Sorry to come in, but I just wanted to make sure you were- VIRGIL!!!”

Virgil jerked awake at the sudden shout. Patton had fallen to his knees next to Virgil, hands extended and hovering. Virgil blinked against the bright light of the bathroom and tried to organize his brain cells to figure out what was going on.

“Can you hear me sweetie?” Patton asked.

Virgil squinted and nodded. He was starting to piece things together when further chaos erupted in his bathroom.

“What appears to be the matter Patton?”
“WHAT HAPPENED?!!”

Virgil jumped at Roman’s holler, eyeing the sword warily. Logan used the tip of his index finger to push the sword down with a raised eyebrow. Roman sent a haughty look towards Logan but sheathed his weapon.

Patton shifted so he was sitting cross-legged. “Can I touch you baby?”

Virgil thought about it and shivered. “Yeah, I’m actually kinda cold.”

In the next second, he was pulled into Patton’s lap in a bear hug. Virgil yelped at the sudden change, but couldn’t deny the warmth that Patton provided. Patton nuzzled Virgil’s hair.

“There you go,” he whispered.

Virgil allowed himself to relax into the hold, until Patton’s arms tightened around him and Virgil hissed a breath in through his teeth. Patton immediately loosened his arms so he was barely touching the anxious Side.

“Are you okay honey? Are you hurt?”

Virgil felt his blood leave his body.

Fuck. I have to tell them at some point. Oh god, they’re gonna hate me, they’re gonna break up with me, they’re gonna leave me-

“Virgil, are you injured?”

Virgil looked up at Logan’s question as tears escaped his eyes. Twin looks of worry crossed Roman and Logan’s faces.

“What’s wrong love?” Roman asked as he sank to his knees before Virgil.

Virgil opened his mouth to speak, but found he couldn’t. He shook his head. He saw Logan adjust his glasses.

“Virgil, I do apologize, but we must know if you’re injured in any way.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, and after a pause nodded. Patton gasped.

“Oh baby! Did I hurt you? I’m so sorry!!” he cried.

“Virgil, I relapsed.”

Virgil couldn’t stop his lips from twitching. *Trust Logan to keep us on topic.* “My right a-arm.”

“May we see please?”

Virgil’s anxiety spiked to unbearable levels as he hid his face in Patton’s neck. Patton began rubbing his back.

“Shhhhh sweetie, if it’s not too bad we won’t if you don’t want us to.”

Virgil sniffled. *Come ON you fucking coward! They need to know what they’ve gotten themselves into so they can get out!!* “I relapsed.”
Patton’s hand paused for a moment, but it was long enough to confirm Virgil’s fears. “I’m sorry,” he whimpered in a strangled voice.

Patton squeezed him and resumed rubbing his back. “No no honey! You don’t have to apologize! We’re sad, but we’re not mad at you! I promise!”

“Indeed. I’m more concerned as to what caused your relapse and why you were on the floor of your bathroom. Was it the… stress of today?”

Virgil whimpered. “N-no, it’s n-not th-th-that. I just…” He breathed deeply to steel his nerves. “It was last night. Before I knew…”

He felt Patton breathe against him. “Oh baby…”

Virgil swallowed in an attempt to loosen his throat. “I’m sorry,” he whispered.

“Do not apologize Virgil,” Logan said adamantly. “You went through unimaginable stress and relapsed. It is not uncommon for relapse to occur. I… do not know what I would have done if I had been in your situation,” he admitted.

Virgil dared to peek out of Patton’s neck. Logan was looking more vulnerable than Virgil could ever remember seeing him. He sent a timid smile toward the… his intellectual, who smiled back.

“Th-thanks,” he choked out. “Y-you’re not.” Virgil cut off as the lump in his throat expanded. He cleared it to continue talking. “You’re not gonna leave me?”

Patton’s embrace tightened. “Of course not! We wouldn’t leave you because of that!” he said vehemently.

Virgil looked at the other two, who looked surprised.

“Good heavens Virgil, I- I am so sorry for whatever I did that gave you that impression,” Roman gushed. Logan just looked stricken.

Virgil let out a breath with the tension he didn’t realize he’d been holding.

Logan adjusted his tie. “Was the anxiety over… that why you collapsed?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, wincing at the copper taste. “No, I, um, had a flashback.”

Patton, as expected, hugged Virgil closer and nuzzled the top of his head. “Oh my baby… You’re safe now, you’re not there anymore.”

Virgil smiled. “I know Pat. I just felt sick afterwards and the cool tiles felt kinda nice, then I fell asleep.”

“Love, you… you didn’t have to suffer alone,” Roman breathed.

Virgil felt a little irritated at that. “I know Princey, I just didn’t feel like bringing one of you guys in to my suffering. I think I spread it around enough.”

“If you keep talking bad about yourself I’m going to physically fight you!” Virgil’s lips quirked at that.

“Kiddo, we’ve already talked about this. We like being able to help you.”
Virgil deflated against Patton’s chest. “I know, I just… It’s hard to remember that when I’m not feeling good.”

Virgil saw Logan adjust his tie out of the corner of his eye. “Are your wounds cleaned and bandaged?”

“Yes.”

“I am glad to hear it. We were just about to have dinner. Would you like to join us?”


“Do not apologize. You’ve been through a great deal of stress recently. Please do come to one of us or summon us if you need us.”

“I will.”

Patton shifted slightly. “Bedtime?”

Virgil chuckled a little at that. “I guess so.”

He yelped as Patton stood easily, carrying Virgil in his arms.

“Pat!! What the hell?!”

Patton just smirked. “You said you were tired, so I’ll carry you.”

“There’s really no getting out of it I’m afraid,” Roman intoned gravely.

Virgil rolled his eyes in pretend annoyance. “Fine.”

Patton giggled and carried him over to the full-size mattress, where he was gently set down.

“Sleep well kiddo. Come find one of us if you need anything,” Patton said softly.

“Will do.”

Patton smiled. “Goodnight kiddo.”

“Night Pat.”

Patton gave him one more sweet smile and closed the door behind him. Once Patton had left, Virgil summoned Shelly from across the room. Clutching Lucas to his chest and resting a hand over Shelly, he slowly drifted off, his arm still stinging.

Chapter End Notes

Did Virgil wait until Patton was out of the room to summon Shelly? He most certainly did.
Chapter 79

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! The only big warning for this chapter is that there's a vague description of a flashback that alludes back to chapter 4.

Virgil stirred as Patton gently knocked on his door for breakfast. He groaned as he stretched and popped his back. He was fairly well-rested; he’d gotten a total of 6 hours of sleep that night! He’d had only one nightmare, and after a panic attack and fighting off a flashback he was able to fall asleep after a couple of hours. He cracked his neck and took a few stabilizing breaths.

Virgil snickered to himself and adopted a British accent. “Day Two of being in what the local residents of the area call a “relationship”. No solid data received besides…” Virgil stopped. He was about to say that cuddles were nice, but he had a reputation to uphold dammit. Virgil brushed his teeth, put on makeup, and pushed his hair around until he resembled a human. He grabbed Shelly off his bed and put her on his desk for good luck, then went downstairs for breakfast.

Logan and Patton were in the kitchen, just waiting for Roman to come down. Patton had set up stations for Greek yogurt parfaits and currently had a mouthful of strawberries. He waved excitedly as Virgil entered the kitchen. Virgil shot him a half smile and two finger salute. Logan smiled softly over at Virgil.

“Good morning my dear. I hope your sleep was pleasant,” Logan said, his voice precise as always but a little deep from sleep.

Virgil, meanwhile, had a catastrophic system failure. He was staring at Logan, mouth agape, trying and failing to string a coherent thought together.

*Did he just… did LOGAN… holy shit what the fuck just happened?!!*

Patton giggled as he finally managed to swallow his mouthful of strawberries. “He does that sometimes. He’s such a good boyfriend!”

Logan blushed under Patton’s affection as Patton came over and kissed him. Virgil smirked. *Revenge.*

“Yeah, he is.”

Logan blushed even harder as his eyes widened.

“I… um, well thank you Virgil that was… ah, yes, very kind of you to say… I, uh…”

Patton giggled and Virgil snorted as Logan.exe crashed.

“GOOD MORNING MY BEAUTIFUL LOVES!!!” Roman bellowed as he sashayed into the kitchen.

It was Virgil’s turn to blush as Roman grabbed a bowl. He started heaping yogurt into it while
Patton put blueberries and bananas at the bottom of his bowl. Roman leaned over and kissed the moral Side, then pulled back and smiled.

“Have you been snacking on strawberries my sweet?”

Patton smiled. “Maaayyybe. What do you think?”

“Hmmm, I’m not sure, let me try again.” Roman and Patton kissed again, this time for longer and far less innocently. As they parted, their faces were both slightly red.

Wait, shit, do I have to kiss them? Should I be kissing them? Kissing in the morning is pretty normal, I should be doing that right? God, I’m just fucking everything up. Day two of being in a relationship and I’m sabotaging everything.

“I was correct. Strawberries. Delicious,” Roman said, his voice an octave lower, keeping his hand on Patton’s lower back and holding him against his body. Patton flushed while Logan smiled and shook his head fondly.

Virgil snorted at their antics while Virgil grabbed honey-flavored Greek yogurt, granola, grapeseed, kiwi, and mango. Will Roman want me to kiss him? What about Logan? He was DEFINITELY flirting earlier. Oh shit, should I have kissed Logan already? What about Patton?!

“How did you sleep darkest knight?” Roman asked.

Virgil shrugged. “Better than usual. I got 6 hours.”

“I’m glad to hear it!”

Breakfast continued with Logan reviewing the day’s schedule with everyone. Virgil was pleasantly full by the end, and everyone excused themselves to their rooms to help Thomas. Virgil managed to escape the kitchen while avoiding kissing anyone, although he hated himself for it. He collapsed on his bed.

God, I can’t even kiss them. What kind of boyfriend am I? A terrible one, at least I know THAT.

Yeah you are.

Oh hi again. Fuck off. Thanks.

Shut the fuck up you useless, used up whore. You’ve done so much more than kissing, what the actual fuck is your problem?! Just let them fuck you already! They might actually stay with you!

No! They don’t want that.

Only because you’re so disgusting, they just haven’t been able to break it to you yet. You did kind of put them on the spot the other morning.

You’re wrong! They want me! Patton didn’t know.

You know more about what to expect from the Dark Sides than from the Light Sides. You were more comfortable being in a relationship with them than in a relationship with the Lights. Maybe you do belong with the Dark Sides. You have to have enjoyed it.

Hey, you remember Logan? Virgil cleared his throat, despite not preparing to say anything out loud. FALSEHOOD!!!
Virgil snapped and blasted Evanescence to help drown out his thoughts as he closed his eyes and focused on Thomas. Despite his best efforts, the thought that had been knocking around in his head since yesterday kept yelling at him from the back of his mind. Virgil kept pushing it back firmly, but there was only so much he could do. As Thomas sat down to eat, Virgil decided to take a break. Virgil looked around his room and his eyes landed on his carpet. Memories of being stabbed began to flood his mind. He grabbed his head with both hands and curled his fingers in, trying to see anything else.

Virgil got up and staggered over to his desk to grab Shelly. Several grounding exercises later, Virgil was feeling more present. Virgil shuddered as disgust covered his skin in a thin film. He set Shelly down on her spot on his desk and headed to his bathroom.

Gotta admit, the heated floors are pretty nice.

If you like him so much, why don’t you go over to his room and blow him?

Oh my god shut UP! Jesus Christ, I was just admiring the heated floors! For fucks sake!

Speaking of which-

No! Okay, I kind of walked into that one, but still shut up.

Awwww, still mad that things were more predictable with the Dark Sides? You know, the more predictable things are, the safer they usually are.

Holy SHIT are you actually trying to say that the friggin’ Dark Sides are safer than the Light Sides?! Because you can fuck ALL the way off!!

It certainly is a possibility, isn’t it?

No! It’s actually not!

Hmmmm, maybe you do belong with the Dark Sides. After all, you sure seem more comfortable with them. You fuck up, you get punished. The Light Sides have forgiven you so far, but how soon until they snap? What happens when they do? You don’t know.

Virgil paused in turning the shower on as he began to shake.

Ha! I’m right, aren’t I? How fucked up do you have to be to be more secure in a relationship with the Dark Sides than with the Lights? At least with the Dark Sides you knew what to expect. With the Light Sides, who knows?

Virgil bit his knuckle to keep from crying out.

How awful am I? How fucked up is this? Should I tell them? I shouldn’t keep it from them, but they’ll leave me if they know, there’s no way they’d stay with me. Who’d want to stay with someone who’s scared of normal relationships?!

Virgil turned on the shower and told himself the only water running down his face was from the showerhead.

He left the shower, feeling more dejected and disgusted at himself than he had in a while.

What the FUCK do I do?! I haven’t spoken to Dr. Picani about this!! I have no IDEA how to start fixing this!!
Virgil put on lotion and tugged on new clothes, choosing his usual jeans and t-shirt but opting for just cotton socks at the moment. He paused, then grabbed a cleansing wipe and wiped down Shelly. *Don’t want her to get my filth.*

He rubbed his arms as his previous thoughts returned to him. *How do I fix this?!*

Virgil closed his eyes and did several rounds of breathing exercises. He opened his eyes and they landed on his laptop.

*Google, don’t fail me now.*

Virgil sat down on his bed and opened his laptop. He hesitated over the keyboard until he figured out what to write.

*How to feel comfortable in a normal relationship after being abused*

To his surprise, there were a lot of articles showing up. Virgil began browsing, and noticed that setting boundaries was an important step in feeling comfortable.

*That… actually makes a lot of sense. Then I don’t have to be scared. And if they know, maybe they won’t accidentally cross a boundary or something.*

Virgil felt a lot of the fear lifting from his chest. *Huh. I guess that was the big thing.*

*“Set your own boundaries first. Figure out what you need.”*

He stared at the screen. *Be prepared, got it.* Virgil grabbed his journal off his desk and smiled to himself. *Logan would be so proud.*

Virgil opened the notebook but found he couldn’t write. He was just too emotionally drained.

*Alright, we’ll do this later. What do I want to do right now?*

*Couch.*

Virgil grabbed his phone and headphones, and paused as he reached for his shoes.

*I want to wear my boots.*

Virgil pulled on his boots, feeling unreasonably happy at being able to choose clothes that he liked. He admired the strappy combat boots for a moment longer before pulling on his hoodie and heading downstairs. He flopped on the couch and kept a distant eye on Thomas as he listened to music and scrolled through Tumblr. Wearing his boots and hoodie, hanging out on the couch, Virgil snorted to himself. *I feel like I’m in an Adam Lambert music video.*

Virgil closed Tumblr and refocused on Thomas as he sensed Thomas going to pick up McDonald’s.

/////Patton was humming to himself as he skipped downstairs to start making lunch for everyone.

*Virgil got a lot of sleep last night!! I hope he’s feeling better!! I still can’t believe we’re finally in a relationship together!!*

Patton forced his thoughts to the lunch and dinner menu as he felt himself becoming emotional.
He’d already cried so many happy tears yesterday and today, and he didn’t want Virgil to think he was crying because he was unhappy!

Patton paused on the stairs as he saw his songbird on the couch, eyes closed and listening to music. He smiled at the sight. *He looks so peaceful. He’s so handsome. And he’s my boyfriend!! I’m so lucky!!! Ooooo he’s wearing his boots today!!*

Patton let his feet fall louder on the steps so Virgil would notice him; he didn’t want to startle his sweet boyfriend! Thankfully, Virgil looked up at Patton and smiled.

“Hey Pat,” Virgil greeted. Patton had to suppress a delighted shiver; his voice was so deep!

“Heya kiddo! I was just about to make lunch! I like your boots!” Patton looked closer and his eyes widened. “Ooooo are those bats on the bottoms of your boots?! That’s so cool!”

Virgil chuckled, and Patton knew he was blushing at least a little at the happy sound.

“Yeah Pat, Remy did pretty good on these.”

“I’d say so! I was just about to start lunch! How does panukakua sound?”

“Sounds awesome. Do you need any help?”

“Sure! Do you wanna make a berry compote for the topping? And we should probably get a salad together and some more protein so Logan and Roman are happy. What else do you want with it?”

Virgil and Patton decided to make a chicken avocado salad with red onions, baby spinach, lebanese cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, candied pecans, sliced radishes, and a passionfruit vinaigrette. Once the salad was made and the panukakua was in the oven, Patton turned to Virgil.

“Thanks for helping kiddo! This is gonna be great!” Patton smiled gently before opening his arms. “Would you like a hug?”

Patton saw Virgil hunch in a little and chew his lip. He felt some of his excitement fade. *Did I make him uncomfortable? Oh gosh, we’re in the kitchen, there’s not really an escape route! Oh gosh Patton you really screwed this one up!*

“J-just a hug, right? Nothing m-more?” Virgil timidly asked.

Patton softened his face as much as he could through the heartbreak. “Of course kiddo. Just a hug. I’m not expecting anything more baby. I wanna hug you to hug you, not to move to something else. I love hugging you!”

Patton felt some of his excitement from before come back as Virgil smiled. “Yeah, I think I’d like that.”

Patton giggled as he bounced forward and wrapped Virgil in a firm hug. Virgil wrapped his arms around Patton’s middle and buried his face in Patton’s shoulder. Patton smiled as he felt Virgil slowly relax against him. He held his anxious little bird against him in silence for several minutes. He wouldn’t deny the electricity he felt where they touched, but this hug wasn’t about that. Patton *loved* hugs from Virgil. He loved hugs from anyone, but Virgil’s were always extra warm and soft because of his gorgeous hoodie! It was like hugging a living teddy bear that had a heater inside!

Finally, he felt Virgil start to pull back, and Patton let him go, resting his hands on Virgil’s shoulders. With a final smile and squeeze, he let the smaller Side go as they heard Roman and
Logan descend the stairs.

Chapter End Notes

Panukakua is a traditional Finn dish that my grandmother taught me. The recipe she gave me is sweet and soft and fluffy and delicious. No other recipe compares. AND IT'S ALL MINE MUAHAHAAHAHA!!

Also, Logan knows full well the effect his endearments have on his boyfriends. Logan is secretly a little shit and you can't convince me otherwise.

The boundaries thing is something that the Internet really helped me out with that I didn't want to talk to my therapist about, so I wanted to give Google credit where credit is due.
Hi folks!! There'll be some discussions of relapse and sex, but nothing too graphic in here! Enjoy!

Virgil picked at the cuff of his sleeve as he waited for Dr. Picani to show up. How’s he gonna react? Will he approve? Will he think I’m going too fast? Oh god, what if he doesn’t like it? What will I do then?!

“What’s up doc?”

Virgil smiled and looked towards the door. “Isn’t that my line?”

Dr. Picani chuckled. “You didn’t call dibs! Other than that, how are you doing Virgil?”

Virgil couldn’t stop the goofy smile from spreading across his face. “Pretty great, I think.”

“That’s awesome! I want to hear all about it!!”

Virgil’s smile faltered a little. Dammit, I’m going to have to start with the less fun stuff.

“Yeah, it started out bad, but that was mostly my fault anyway. So, um, I should probably start at the beginning? It might not make a lot of sense if I don’t.”

“That’s alright! Start wherever you’d like!”

Virgil shifted in his seat. “Well, I had taken a nap about a week ago, and I woke up when Patton came in the room. He uh,” Virgil looked down and smiled at the memory, “he confessed that he wanted to be in a relationship with me, and made it sound like the other Light Sides wanted that too.” Virgil could feel Dr. Picani’s excitement radiating from his side of the room.

“So I got up and fixed my appearance and put on my nice clothes and all that, and then I overheard a conversation between Roman and Patton.” Virgil swallowed at the memory. “I know now that what I heard was totally out of context. But at the time, I thought that all of the times they said and acted like they loved me or cared about me since I was rescued was a prank to them. I, uh, isolated myself for, like, 5 days. And I kinda snapped at them whenever I saw them, because, y’know, I thought they were being awful to me.” Virgil looked down in shame, his cheeks burning.

“I relapsed,” he whispered. “I… I thought it didn’t matter any more, that I didn’t matter, and everything hurt so bad. I,” Virgil swallowed, “I couldn’t stop crying for those five days. I went back over every single interaction we’d had and thought it was all fake.” Virgil started getting choked up. What the hell?! I know it wasn’t, why am I still acting like this?! He cleared his throat.

“So I cut. And I really regret it, I do! I wish I could take it back. Isolation, y’know, and low self-esteem. I just had really bad timing. Logan got me to sit down and talk with the Light Sides, and we eventually figured out that I just happened to hear them at exactly the wrong moment in time. I slept with them that night - just together! Not, like, sex or anything,” Virgil mumbled in a blush.
Dr. Picani just smiled at him.

“Anyways, we got up that morning, and I realized that Patton coming in and confessing to me wasn’t part of a prank, so I asked him, and then I asked them, and then,” Virgil’s face turned into a wide smile against his will, “we got together.”

Dr. Picani sighed happily. “I’m so happy for you Virgil. You deserve to be happy.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “Thanks doc.”

Dr. Picani inclined his head. “What happened next?”

“Patton tackle-hugged me, everybody was crying, I hugged Logan, and then we ate breakfast. Roman was talking about the dates he wanted to take me on through mouthfuls of food. Then we decided to watch the first Avengers movie as, like, a new relationship thing.” His smile faltered again. “I, uh. I kinda got in my own head and had a panic attack. Before that we were hanging out on the couch and it was real good, and then I had to go and ruin it.”

“It’s alright Virgil. What happened that led up to the panic attack?”

Virgil sighed and looked down. “I… I know it’s beyond fucked up, but I knew what to expect from the Dark Sides, but now that I’m in a normal relationship with the Light Sides, I have no idea. And I don’t know when they want… want sex.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “I can see why that could have caused a panic attack. You mentioned that you don’t know what to expect from the Light Sides, and that’s understandable. Let’s start from the beginning. What do you know about being in a relationship?”

Virgil huffed out a humorless laugh. “Not much, except that people get fucked.”

Dr. Picani just smiled sadly. “It’s okay to be unfamiliar with these things Virgil.”

Virgil visibly deflated. “Yeah, I know, it just… I don’t know what to expect! And it’s kind of… scary.”

Dr. Picani let Virgil breathe for a moment. “Let’s figure it out. What part or parts are scary to you?”

Virgil grunted. “All of it!”

“Alright. And right now, what you know about being in a sexual relationship is that there is sex involved. Would it be accurate to say that sexual intimacy is the most intimidating thing for you in a relationship?”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, kind of. Like, they say they’re going to wait for me, but how long until they get frustrated? I know ideally partners will wait forever, but reality isn’t always like that. What’s a reasonable amount of time to wait? For both kissing and sex.”

Dr. Picani hummed. “It sounds like you’re looking for an average timeline of when most people might get frustrated by waiting?”

“Yeah! Exactly!”

Dr. Picani braced himself. Here comes the hard part. “The answer is that there really isn’t a timeline unfortunately. People are all so different, it’s impossible to say something like that for
sure. And I think you’d be surprised by how many people are willing to wait.”

Virgil scoffed. “Maybe in dreamland. That’s not actually the reality though.”

Dr. Picani smiled. “Let’s switch gears a little bit. Do you feel up to talking about your relapse?”

Virgil chewed on his lower lip. “Yeah, we should.”

“Oh, I know it’s not easy to talk about. You mentioned isolation as a trigger. Are there any other triggers you can think of?”

Virgil shifted. “I… I had a lot of complicated emotions going on.”

Dr. Picani smiled sadly. “I can understand why! What were some of those emotions?”

Virgil looked down. “Pain, grief, anger, betrayal. God, there was a lot of pain around betrayal. Like, I had trusted these guys, and they abused my trust just for a joke? And I had changed my mind and thinking because of the things they were doing for a joke!”

Dr. Picani nodded. “I’m hearing anger and helplessness in there. You were helpless to stop them from hurting you by taking advantage of trust you had given them so carefully. You had taken such a huge risk, and they used it against you in a horrible way.”

“Yeah! That’s it!”

“I think that would be a pretty big trigger for a lot of folks! For some reason, the trigger managed to circumnavigate the safety plan. What parts of the safety plan failed?”

Virgil hummed as he looked up in thought. “I guess the finding someone. I would’ve had to go into Roman’s room to see you, and I figured that Saul and Remy would just want Thomas happy and healthy, and they wouldn’t want his Light Sides upset by them getting involved.”

“Would Saul and Remy actually do that? Prioritize the feelings of the Light Sides over your emotional health?”

Virgil snorted. “No, they’ve threatened to fight the Light Sides on more than one occasion to defend my honor or whatever shit. I think I was just in a bad place mentally.”

“Got it. What might be a solution in the future if you and the Light Sides ever have a disagreement? Is there a way we can make sure you feel comfortable going to the Neutral Sides, even when you’re in a bad place mentally?”

Virgil leaned back in his chair as he pondered that. “I think I’ll feel fine going to them now that I’ve been through it, y’know? I can look back and see how skewed my thinking was, so I can use this experience to remember that.”

Dr. Picani wrote in his notebook. “That’s great! It sounds like you primarily use appearing and sinking out as ways to communicate with the other Sides, including the Neutrals, right?”

“Yeah, pretty much.”

“Seeing someone in person and asking them to support you when you’re already hurt and vulnerable can be scary! How would you feel about using your phone to contact them in the future if you need something and you’re feeling hesitant about asking them for help?”

Virgil’s eyebrows twitched. “Yeah, I can do that.”
“Great! Are there any other changes you’d like to make to the safety plan?”

Virgil shook his head. “Not that I can think of.”

“Okay! If you do think of something, let me know. How would you feel about tackling one more topic today?”

Virgil smiled. “I think I can handle it.”

“Sounds good! I know earlier you had said that you don’t know anything about relationships except that people have sex. Can you think of any other features of a relationship besides sex?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, not really.”

“Let’s talk about the Avengers movie. What kinds of things did you do together?”

Virgil looked down, a blush reappearing on his face. “We cuddled. That,” Virgil’s smile returned, “that was nice. We just spent time together without worrying about anything else, y’know? It was just nice to be around them and to be in a relationship with them.” He shook his head. “But sex is expected as part of this relationship! Not just the stuff that leads up to it!”

Dr. Picani tilted his head, knowing to address what Virgil had said at a later time. “What about relationships between asexual and allosexual people? Many of those relationships don’t involve sex.”

“I’m not asexual though, so kissing and sex are kind of expected of me.”

Dr. Picani thought to himself, Here it goes, “Is it? Do the Light Sides expect you to do something you’re not ready for?”

“No, but I don’t want them-” Virgil’s voice choked off and became tearful, “I don’t want them g-getting b-b-bored of me and d-dumping me because I wouldn’t,” Virgil sniffled, “I w-wouldn’t let them f-fuck me.”

Dr. Picani sent Virgil a sympathetic glance. “You’ve wanted them for so long, and now that you have them it would be even more painful to lose them.”

Virgil nodded as a sob escaped him. Dr. Picani slid the basket of comfort items over to Virgil, and Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish.

“I don’t want them to leave me because I won’t kiss them or let them fuck me,” he whispered.

“Would they do that?”

“I don’t know! Yes! Maybe? I don’t know!”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Exactly. We don’t know. Although from what you’ve told me about the Light Sides, I would lean more towards that they wouldn’t leave you for not kissing them or having sex with them.”

Virgil sighed into the plush doll. “I don’t know…”

“Are you familiar with Schroedinger’s cat?”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah. We’re not allowed to talk about it anymore though. Logan explained it one day and had to spend a half hour calming Patton down.”
Dr. Picani let himself smile. “Gotcha. We won’t tell Patton then. But, in any case, there’s at least a 50% likelihood of that happening or not happening, right?”

Virgil clutched the toy closer to his chest. “I don’t like those odds doc.”

“Hang in there with me. It’s 50%, although I think lower, that the Light Sides would leave you for not having sex with them or kissing them. And instead of opening a box and looking at a cat, we need to ask the Light Sides what their timeline and boundaries are.”

Virgil snorted again. “I keep finding the words “boundaries” getting thrown around a lot. I did some research on the Internet today.”

“It sounds like the writers of those articles know what they’re talking about!”

Virgil chuckled. “Yeah…”

Dr. Picani smiled. “How do you feel about being in a relationship with them?”

Virgil looked up in surprise. “I… I’m really happy!”

“That’s great! How did you feel when you sitting on the couch with them?”

“It… it was really nice,” Virgil said, his eyes growing distant and his smile becoming more relaxed.

“Do you think the Light Sides enjoyed spending that time with you?”

Virgil blinked rapidly. “Yeah, I think so?”

“Do you think they’d spend time with you for the sole purpose of getting that feeling?”

Virgil squinted his eyes and turned his head to look at Dr. Picani sideways. “Yeah…?”

“You mentioned earlier that them cuddling with you was only a lead up to sex. Can you see how they might want to spend time with you just for that feeling and not necessarily to get sex from you?”

Virgil looked down. *Huh.* “I-I guess so…”

Dr. Picani smiled gently. “Would you hang out with them to get that feeling?”

“Yes, I would.”

“Then why would they be any different?”

Virgil didn’t respond. Dr. Picani let the silence drag on a full minute.

“It’s alright if you need time to process,” Dr. Picani said softly, “just remember that sex isn’t the pinnacle, end game, or goal of a relationship. It’s merely one of many facets of what some relationships include.”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. He looked up. “You mentioned *End Game*?” he asked with a smirk.

“Oh boy, I guess I did!”
Picani rockin' out again!! Knowing when to push and when to stop is an art and a science. Also, I'm still not over *End Game* and I'm projecting that onto Picani.
A few days later, Virgil was sitting on the couch in the commons making sure Thomas didn’t embarrass himself on stage. He only had another half of a scene to go, but the last moments were the ones people remember the most and oh god what if he flops right at-

Virgil pulled himself away from that train of that train of thought. Thomas needs Roman right now. I have to stay back.

Soon enough, the torment was over and Virgil felt comfortable enough to pull back farther and be completely present in the mindscape. He stretched and cracked his neck before deciding to hang out in the commons until dinner. He pulled up Tumblr and decided to lurk in the Sanders Sides fandom to see what fanart they’d created (he’d learned to avoid fanfic ever since he’d first stumbled upon it. The first couple fics were nice, but then he came across a fic that had him hurting the Light Sides and Thomas. He appreciated the creative take, but knew to avoid his triggers). After a half hour of that, Logan descended the stairs with a book. He smiled at Virgil.

“Greetings Virgil. May I sit next to you as I read?”

Virgil shrugged with a smile. “Sure.”

That was another thing. He couldn’t stop fucking *smiling*. Smiling’s nice and all that, but he looked like an idiot half the time because he couldn’t stop smiling around the Light Sides. *What the fuck changed? I’ve been attracted to them since forever, so what-*

When Logan sat down and sent him a soft smile as he lifted his arm across the back of the couch, Virgil got it. *Oh. That’s nice. What is it that changed though?!!*

“Virgil? Are you alright?”

Virgil looked up and met Logan’s gaze; his nerd’s brows were furrowed and his eyes were dark with concern. He smiled.

“I’m good. It’s just… ever since we got together, it feels… *different*, being around you guys.”

Logan’s brows furrowed deeper. “Is this a positive difference, neutral difference, or negative difference.”

Virgil snorted. “A good different. I just don’t know *why* or what exactly the feeling is.”

Logan’s features relaxed as one of his small smiles graced his face. “I believe that is called romance my dear.”

Virgil flushed at the sweet words. “I-is *that* what that feels like?”
Logan brought his free hand down, slowly enough for Virgil to tell him to stop if needed, and carded his fingers gently through Virgil’s hair. “I cannot be certain, as I cannot feel what you are feeling, but I believe that context has provided enough information to, dare I say, leap to a *logical* conclusion.”

Virgil smirked. “No inference observation confusion?”

“Not unless you disagree.”

Virgil responded by shifting over and resting his head on Logan’s shoulder and chest. Logan let his arm fall across Virgil’s and had his hand squeeze and rub Virgil’s upper arm intermittently. Virgil closed his eyes and listened to music while Logan read his book.

After a hour of pleasantly dozing, Virgil was startled awake by the opening chords of a Skillet song. He fumbled with his phone to turn the now-loud music off. He forced himself to breathe normally so he wouldn’t hyperventilate over *a fucking song*.

“Are you alright Virgil?”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, a loud song came on. I must’ve put my playlist on shuffle by accident.”

“Oh.”

Virgil and Logan rested in the easy silence.

*Come on you coward, time to ask! You’ve been putting it off for three days, ever since your Picani appointment!*

*I haven’t been putting it off! I just haven’t... found the right time yet.*

*Oh, of course, my mistake.*

*... fuck you.*

Virgil cleared his throat. “Hey, uh, L?”

“Yes my dear?”

Virgil blushed. “I, uh, was wondering,” Virgil cleared his throat again, anxiety closing his throat. Logan put his book down to look at Virgil fully, squeezing the arm he had around the smaller Side’s shoulders.

Virgil inhaled deeply through his nose. “I was wondering when you were expecting me to kiss you?”

Logan had to take a moment to decipher what Virgil had said in his rush, but once he did he smiled. “No earlier than you’re ready, even if that’s never. I will be happy to be in a relationship with you regardless of our level of physical or sexual intimacy,” he said matter-of-factly.

Virgil chewed on his lip. “So you won’t get frustrated after a while if we don’t kiss or f- have sex?”

“I won’t.”

Virgil sighed and relaxed back into Logan’s shoulder. Logan tightened his arm around Virgil and resumed reading his book.
Virgil felt his eyes begin to burn and the lump in his throat return. *He said it like it was so obvious, like there was no other option. He… he means it.*

Virgil laid against Logan until they heard Patton start moving around to start dinner. Virgil thought he’d hidden his tears fairly well until Logan wordlessly offered him a Kleenex. Virgil took it and started cleaning up his face.

“Would you like to talk about it?” Logan asked.

Virgil looked up at Logan and smiled. “No, but...thank you, Logan, for…” he trailed off, not sure what to say.

Logan just smiled. “It is my pleasure. Let us see what Patton is making for dinner.”

Virgil nodded and stood. *One down, two to go.*

Patton was buzzing around the kitchen preparing to cook. Virgil offered to help, which Patton accepted. Once the chicken marsala was done, Logan fetched Roman, who serenaded him with *Someday My Prince Will Come.*

Dinner was… *normal.* Virgil didn’t know what he’d expected, but eating with the Light Sides - his *boyfriends* - felt relaxed in a way he hadn’t expected. Patton suggested onesies and a movie night, which everyone readily agreed to. Virgil had Roman help snap him into his bat onesie, and soon everyone was piled on the couch. Virgil was in between Roman and Logan, and was being held underneath Roman’s arm. Patton had his legs draped over all three of them, and Logan had snaked a hand up to Virgil’s hair and was gently running his fingers through it, causing a rumble to emanate from his chest.

Virgil snuggled into the soft, warm feelings of the onesies. He wasn’t overheating, which he suspected Roman had something to do with. He thought he’d be uncomfortable by the close proximity of everyone, but he wasn’t.

*It feels… safe. Protected. L-*

Virgil cut off that train of thought before he became emotional. *I’m not about to cry before the opening credits finish for shit’s sake.*

Feeling safe, warm, and comfortable while being cuddled, Virgil dozed off about halfway through *Moana.* He distantly registered that movies were being changed, but just basked in the warmth and the soft textures he was surrounded by. He’d smell roses, cinnamon, and fresh air every once in a while, and he caught whiffs of lemon, lilac, and vanilla a couple of times. When they were nearing the end of *Winnie the Pooh,* Virgil woke up more fully. He blearily opened his eyes and blinked slowly, taking in his surroundings. Logan was leaning against him more, beginning to become sleepy himself, and Roman still had his arm wrapped around Virgil. Virgil shifted and rolled his neck, which alerted the Light Sides that he was awake.

“Sleep well?” Roman teased. Virgil just sighed and relaxed back into Roman’s chest. Roman squeezed his arm and nuzzled the top of Virgil’s head.

“I think it may be time to go to sleep,” Logan mused. Virgil groaned and pressed back against Roman’s chest while pushing his head against Logan’s hand.

Virgil could hear a smile in Logan’s voice. “I do believe that sleeping out here will only cause us to wake up in a fair amount of pain.”
Virgil grunted. The Light Sides started to shift off of him, so he reluctantly opened his eyes. All three were staring at him like he was… *cute* or something.

_Nope, not cute!*

Virgil stretched his back and rubbed his eyes. With a final huff, he brought himself to his feet. All four Sides made their way upstairs and stopped at Patton’s room, the first door in the hallway.

“Goodnight my love,” Roman murmured as he kissed Patton.

“Sleep well darling,” Logan said quietly before he kissed Patton sweetly.

Virgil was panicking on the inside. His whole body was stiff and locked up. *Oh god, what if Patton wants me to kiss him? Do I have to kiss him?! Everyone else did!!*

Patton turned to Virgil and smiled. Virgil returned the smile, despite the war going on in his head. *Come ON, you owe it to him.*

_But I don’t want to!*_

*Oh my god, grow up! It’s something adults are expected to do in normal, healthy relationships. You’ve done WAY more with the Dark Sides. What’s wrong, don’t want to cheat on them?*

_Fuck you!*

*What an eloquent response. You’ve succeeded in proving your point.*

Virgil was overcome with an internal chant of _I don’t want to I don’t want to I don’t want to_, so he took a risk and raised a hand in a wave. Patton’s smile grew as he waved back. Virgil felt the previously locked muscles relax as the three remaining Sides wandered down the hall.

*Oh god, my room’s next!! What if they want to kiss me? Logan said I didn’t have to, but I can’t exactly say no if he leans in!! Oh god, I can see him leaning in! And then I have to close my eyes and kiss him back for however long he wants to kiss, and then Roman’s going to want to kiss me and I don’t want to and he’s going to be more passionate and touch me more, and he’ll pull me against him and-*

Virgil froze outside his room. He was aware he was hunched over, staring at the floor, every muscle in his body drawn tight.

“Virgil? Virgil, my sweet, what’s wrong?” Roman asked.

Virgil felt terrible, but he couldn’t make himself answer. He couldn’t move; his body was ready for _something._

“We kissed Patton goodnight. Is that the cause of your anxiety?”

Virgil could only respond by closing his eyes.

“Virgil, it is alright. We will not touch you without your consent. I promise. There is no expectation for you to kiss us simply because we kissed someone else.”

“What he said!”

He knew it was weird, but with Roman’s slightly goofy echo of Logan’s statement, Virgil’s muscles felt safe enough to let the tension seep from them.
He looked up and smiled sheepishly at the two Light Sides.

“Sorry for freaking out like that guys.”

“No apologies are necessary. You had an understandable reaction to a frightening stimulus. I can see how you reached the conclusion that you did. Do know that neither Roman nor I will touch you without your full, freely-given consent.”

Virgil’s smile turned a little more genuine at that. “Thanks guys. Um, goodnight.” He paused, and decided to just say it. “Tonight was fun. I enjoyed it.”

It had the desired effect. Roman was glowing, while Logan smiled one of his rare full, goofy smiles.

“I am glad to hear it.”

“That is wonderful!!”

Virgil snorted as he waved and went into his room. He picked up Shelly on his way over to his bed. After a moment, he decided to keep his onesie on and just sleep without a blanket. With Lucas in his arms and Shelly by his pillow if he needed her, he fell asleep fairly quickly.

Chapter End Notes

Sweet dreams Virgil. :)}
Chapter 82

Chapter Notes

Hello lovely readers!! First and foremost, the chapter does begin with sexual assault. That section ends at the line of tildes. There's another section that contains both sexual assault and torture, which includes suffocation and choking. It's a large block of italicized text enclosed by lines of tildes. After that, there is a little discussion of suffocation.

I've been debating with myself what all from my past to put in this fic, like what is too much, what might scare folks away, etc, but I wanted to include this particular thing so I hope it's not too much/ crossing a line. I want to be completely true to my own experiences in this fic while taming down a few aspects, and ufda is that a hard balance to achieve!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman and Virgil were cuddling on the couch watching a movie that Virgil had long lost track of, with Logan on the armchair and Patton on the other side of Roman. Roman was pressing kisses into his hair, and although Virgil was uncomfortable with it he let it happen. It's just kissing, no big deal, I can handle this. This isn't a big deal.

Roman started rubbing his hand up and down Virgil’s arm. Virgil didn’t like it, it felt different than the other times Roman had held him. Roman started leaning more of his weight against Virgil, and Virgil felt himself leaning backwards against the increased pressure. Roman brought his head down and kissed Virgil firmly on the lips. Virgil made a sound against Roman’s mouth and Roman smiled. Make him think you liked it!! Come on, don’t be an asshole and make him stop! Don’t make him feel bad!! How horrible do you have to be to make him feel bad, like he’s like... one of them when he’s not?!

“Do you like that Virgil?” Roman asked.

Virgil couldn’t say anything before his lips were recaptured. Roman pushed him all the way down onto the couch so Roman was resting his entire body weight on Virgil. Virgil was finding it harder and harder to breathe, but he could still get some air in so he elected to ignore it in favor of making sure Roman felt good. I have to make Roman happy. He makes me so happy, this is the least I can do for him.

Roman’s hands started wandering more and more, and Virgil felt Roman’s erection pressing into his thigh. Virgil’s thoughts went from make sure he feels good, don’t make him feel bad to I don’t like this, I want to stop, I don’t know what’s happening. Roman’s kissing was feeling more heated and passionate, and Virgil was so confused and lost and everything’s going so fast, I don’t know what’s going on, I can’t stop this, I can’t tell him to stop, what’s happening, I’m scared, someone help me please…

Virgil flinched as Roman pulled Virgil’s shirt up and began fondling his stomach and chest. Virgil’s muscles instinctively tried to curl in to protect him, but with Roman crushing him into the couch there wasn’t very far he could go.
Roman just chuckled. “It’s just touching Virgil, it’s not like I’m doing anything else.”

Virgil’s head spun. *It’s just touching, it’s just touching, it’s just touching, I shouldn’t have freaked out, he’s right, I fucked up, what’s happening, this is new, I don’t know what this is...*

“This okay?” Roman asked as he trailed his hand lower and lower.

“Um,” Virgil replied automatically, barely aware of his own speech, unable to think and having no idea what to say as Roman’s lips reconnected with his own forcefully. He didn’t know what was going on, *what do you do when you don’t know what’s happening?* He was too overwhelmed to formulate a response. Roman just kept going and going, and Virgil was confused and scared.

*What are Patton and Logan doing?* Virgil looked around and saw the other two Light Sides staring at him with dark eyes. He let his head fall backwards and felt himself floating and beginning to blink out as Roman pulled himself out of his black slacks and started undoing Virgil’s pants.

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Virgil woke with a gasp. He lay still for several minutes, until he could confirm that he wasn’t underneath Roman. Virgil grabbed Lucas from next to him and sobbed into the plush toy. It was exactly what he was afraid of happening, and although he *knew* it was a dream, it’d felt so *real*.

Virgil sobbed until his throat hurt, and even then he couldn’t stop. When he finally felt slightly more in control, he lowered Lucas away from his face and focused on breathing exercises. Once he was sure he wasn’t about to hyperventilate and pass out, he turned his red, scratchy eyes to his clock. 5:46 AM. Virgil groaned as he shut sore, grainy eyes. He picked himself up and dragged himself to the bathroom, intending to shower and hopefully get his appearance looking normal enough.

After showering and putting on lotion, he braved a look in the mirror and winced. He pulled out his concealer palette and went to work on his nose first, then the area around his eyes. Thinking of his throat, he grabbed a lozenge and sucked on it while he worked on the rest of his appearance. He threw on some mascara to hopefully hide the redness and styled his hair so it had extra volume. He finished just in time for Patton to knock softly on his door. Virgil let Patton know he’d be down in a few minutes and took a final look in the mirror.

*Only so much lipstick you can put on a pig.*

Virgil grabbed his usual outfit, put Shelly back in her spot on the desk, and headed downstairs. The three Light Sides were already in the kitchen and Patton was getting ready to serve up customized waffles. Virgil’s heart clenched with love when he saw blueberries in his.

He sleepily grabbed a mug and filled it with coffee before slumping at the kitchen table and resting his head in his arms.

“Rough night?” Roman asked beside him. Virgil grunted in response.

“May I rub your back brave knight?”

Memories of the nightmare flashed through Virgil’s mind as he flinched.

“Not right now. Don’t wanna be touched. Sorry,” he mumbled into his arms.

“Not a problem at all love! Is there something I may provide that can give you comfort?”
Virgil sighed internally. *Princey needs to do things or else he feels terrible. What can I give him to do...*

He brought himself up to eat. “Yeah, can you pass the butter?” Virgil didn’t really like butter on his waffles that much, but he wanted to help Roman feel better. Sure enough, Roman presented the butter with a flourish, which unfortunately knocked the knife that had been resting on it to the ground. Roman looked at it as if it the floor and said, “Oops.”

Virgil snorted and took the butter from Roman before there were any more casualties. He spread only a thin layer over the top of his waffle and covered it with homemade whipped cream (“I just whipped it up this morning!” “Patton, we agreed no puns before 8 AM.”) and a few loose blueberries. Roman was considering redecorating his bathroom to incorporate more red.

“Say, Edgar Allen Woe, how have you been liking the upgrades to your bathroom?”

Virgil shrugged. “It’s nice. I can take a shower or a bath when I want to, and the tiles are really nice to lay against- wait…” Virgil turned to look more fully at Roman. “It’s a heated floor, but the tiles are cool sometimes. Is it on a timer or something?”

Roman scratched the back of his head and smiled sheepishly. “I, ah, may have enchanted it so if you have a fever the tiles become cool?”

Virgil frowned. “But I haven’t had a fever. Why would it become cool?”

“It’s enchanted to see if your face is warm or has more blood in it, so if you’re distraught it may have the same effect?”

Logan hummed. “Fascinating! Roman, that’s brilliant.”

Roman turned bright red. “I- yes, well, it’s no trouble at all really! Just a twist of magic here, a spot of spells there, and you have an enchanted floor!” he said with wide arm movements.

Virgil bit back laughter at seeing Roman so flustered at the praise. Conversation carried on throughout breakfast, Virgil staying mostly silent and just waiting to go back to his room to rest. Once breakfast was finished, Patton said he didn’t need any help cleaning up while Logan retired to his room to help Thomas with business proposals and sponsorship offers. Roman finished his fourth waffle, second pile of bacon, and sixth egg just as Virgil finished his much more reasonable breakfast. As Virgil stood and stretched, Roman stood with him.

“How are you feeling my love?”

Virgil shrugged. “Better.” And he was feeling better. The light banter, caffeine, and food had helped to separate him further from his nightmare.

“Would you like a hug?”

Virgil took stock of his body. *Skin’s feeling okay, thinking about a hug is nice… okay.* He nodded somewhat shyly. Roman opened his arms and smiled sweetly. Virgil let a small smile onto his face and curled into Roman’s chest. Roman wrapped his arms tenderly but firmly around the smaller Side and pressed his face into the top of Virgil’s head. They stayed they for a full minute in silence, swaying ever so slightly.

*I wonder if I’ll ever get used to how good hugs feel.*

They gently parted, and Virgil blushed and looked down at the ground, unable to remove the smile
from his face.

“That was lovely Virgil. Thank you.”

Virgil’s blush deepened. “You’re not so bad yourself.”

“I am glad to hear it my little raven. I’ll see you later?”

Virgil bashfully looked up at Roman. “Yeah.”

“Wonderful. Fare thee well my love.”

Virgil was certain he’d combust on the spot. He shook himself and headed into his room. He checked in with Logan and Thomas, making his influence more active than passive, but found he didn’t need to. *Logan’s doing a damn good job. This sponsorship is already awesome!* Virgil kept his awareness tied to Thomas just to make sure he didn’t commit any social faux pas, and decided to journal a bit more on his boundaries. *Gotta figure out my own shit before I ask them to.*

After an hour, business deals and sponsorships were done, and Virgil relaxed against his bed. His eyes fell to his closet and he smirked.

*Roman thinks he can get away with turning me into a mess? I’ll show him!*

Virgil stood and went over to his closet. He grabbed his t-shirt with the cutout and high collar, and picked up the choker as a last-minute decision. Virgil tossed the shirt on his bed and brought the choker around his neck. He barely had time to register “too tight” before he slipped into a flashback.

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*Malice had been gifted Virgil for two weeks as a reward for keeping Thomas in the closet in high school. He started by having Virgil hold a dictionary in each hand, with both arms completely extended away from his body. Virgil dropped the books after two hours, which Malice was waiting for.*

“Uh-oh, looks like little Virgie couldn’t pass the test!! What do you want, academic or corporal punishment?”

Virgil gulped as tears rolled down his face. Thomas was in 10th grade, and he’d just figured out what corporal punishment was.

“Too late! Corporal it is!! Here’s your new friend! His name is Angeronius. Say “Hi Angeronius!”’”


“Do you know what we’re going to do with this little Virgie?”

Virgil shook his head. ‘It’s just a rope with a loop at the end, what could it be used for?’

“Awww that’s okay little guy! Come on over here, I’ll show you!”

Virgil shakily walked over to Malice, limping from what the other Dark Sides had done to him previously, since they wouldn’t get to see him for two weeks. He kept his eyes down, knowing he’d be in even more trouble if he made eye contact. He paused right before Malice, who put the loop over Virgil’s head and around his neck. Malice was holding some kind of remote control in his
other hand. His crazed grin became wider and wider as Virgil heard some kind of mechanical sounds and the rope started getting tighter. Virgil understood once the rope cinched around his neck and lifted him a few inches off the ground.

He started to struggle, only to get zapped with a cattle prod for his efforts. After he had screamed out the last of the air in his lungs, Malice got inches away from his face.

“Dammit Virgil!! Don’t think you can get away with that bullshit just because you’re with me!! You know better! Stay still and accept your punishment!!”

Virgil did his best to relax his arms and legs through his tears, but still had reflexive twitches moving his body. As his vision was tunneling in, panic took over and he began struggling, although at that point he could barely lift his hands a foot. The last thing he saw was Malice’s demented, wide-eyed smile.

Virgil came to on the floor. The first thing he registered was the disgusting smell of Malice’s carpet; it smelled like death. The next thing he felt was the rope still around his neck but looser. As soon as the pain in his lungs hit, he was overtaken by violent hacks, his lungs feeling like there were a thousand needles poking into them, while he attempted to breathe in the air his body was screaming for. Once the hacking had died down slightly, he registered a new pain in his lower half, and knew what Malice had done while he’d been unconscious.

“T ook ya long enough! You were unconscious for fifteen minutes, and you just spent 20 coughing! And you’re still going!! Useless piece of shit.”

Virgil did his best to regulate his coughing, despite the blinding pain coming from his throat and chest. “I don’t want him to be mad at me! I’m trying to be good! It’ll hurt worse if he gets mad!”

Malice got up from his dark, twisted throne, and strode over to Virgil. He lifted Virgil’s head in mock tenderness, then grabbed his hair and roughly hauled him to his feet. He held Virgil there until the rope was tight enough, then let the rope lift him up again.

Virgil didn’t know how long he’d been alternately choked and revived by Malice. Malice made Virgil try to beg him to fuck him, promising that if Malice was convinced Virgil wanted it he’d stop hanging him. If Virgil managed to get the words out around the noose, Malice would pretend that either he needed more time to recover from the last time he’d fucked Virgil, not always waiting until he was unconscious, or that Virgil wasn’t speaking loud enough. Usually he’d try to wait until he was sure Virgil couldn’t respond.

One day, Jealousy entered into the room while Virgil was hanging and choking.

“Looks like you’ve been busy. I thought you might want some real food since it’s already been five days and none of us have seen you come out.”

“Ha! Come out! I like that one!”

Jealousy looked over to where Virgil was choking and twitching. “Nice. You might want to give him a break soon though. Don’t want to crush his trachea.”

“Ugh, fiiiiine! You want a turn?”

“Sure, but I want him on the ground.”
Malice hit a button on his remote control device, and Virgil fell to the ground, desperately gasping against the ruined carpet. He was covered by Jealousy’s much larger body a moment later, who wasted no time in entering Virgil. Malice was curiously silent as Jealousy used Virgil. Jealousy didn’t last long, just looking to find release in Virgil’s body. He held himself there and collapsed on top of Virgil, crushing him beneath his weight and making it even harder to breathe. After a few minutes, Malice finally spoke.

“You look like you needed that!”

“Mmmm, I did. He’s all yours.”

“Thanks! I’m just getting the supplies together for the next phase.”

“What supp- oh. My my Virgil, you’re in for a treat!”

~~~~~

Virgil was suddenly out of the flashback, on his floor. He hacked violently as shooting pains consumed his lungs, desperately trying to gasp, kicking his legs despite being on the ground. He was still trying to get away from the noose, get away, you’re going to die! You’re not breathing!! Run run run run fight fight fight fight fight RUN!!!

Virgil cried out, then silenced himself. They can’t hear you, don’t let them hear you!! He curled almost completely into a ball and relaxed, still coughing but the pain thankfully fading. He lay there limply, his breaths turning into hitches, the occasional whimper escaping him, too horrified to do anything else.

He reflexively twitched when someone knocked on the door.


Virgil didn’t respond; he couldn’t respond. A whimper chose that moment to escape him.

“I’m coming in.”

Patton slowly opened the door. Once he spotted Virgil curled on the floor, breaths hitching weakly, he opened it the rest of the way and knelt in front of him.

“Oh baby, it’s okay, you’re safe. Can you hear me honey?”

Virgil whimpered quietly. Patton’s face twisted into a grimace of pain.

“Oh sweetie, I’m here. Can I touch you?”

Virgil flinched backwards. Patton raised his hands.

“Okay, okay, I won’t if you don’t want me to, I promise. Would you like a blanket?”

Virgil shook his head, regaining control over his body. He didn’t want to be warm any more.

Alright. Can you tell me what you want?”

Virgil closed his eyes and focused on breathing exercises. After a dozen rounds of those, Patton patiently kneeling in front of him, Virgil reopened his eyes. Patton seemed clearer, like a haze that had been filling the room was gone. Virgil looked around his room, feeling much more present and grounded in reality. He looked back at Patton and extended his arms slightly.
“Do you want me to hold you baby?”

Virgil nodded, a whimper escaping him, quickly followed by tears. Patton scooped Virgil up and held him against his lap. Patton shushing Virgil and rocking them as Virgil cried into Patton’s chest and neck.

“Oh honey, it’s okay, you’re safe here. It’s okay, I’ve got you.”

Virgil whimpered and pressed himself more into Patton’s chest; Patton responded by holding Virgil tighter. He sensed the other Light Sides and the Neutral Sides come into his room.

“Shhhhh sweetheart, I’ve got you. You’re safe.”

Half an hour later, Virgil calmed down. He sagged against Patton, completely exhausted. Patton rubbed his back.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Virgil shook his head, then reconsidered. “Th-they ch-choked m-m-me. W-w-with a rope f-from th-th-the c-ceiling. A-a-a-and th-then they’d u-use m-m-me w-w-when I w-was un-nconscious, or c-c-conscious s-sometimes.” He felt Patton gasp and squeeze him and heard gasps and growls from around the room. “I d-d-didn’t l-like it. I-it h-h-hurt. W-why did they h-hurt m-m-e s-s-so m-much when I w-was s-s-so m-much s-smaller th-th-than th-th-them?”

Patton gripped Virgil protectively as whimpers came from behind the moral Side. “Oh my sweet baby, I don’t know. I-I’m so sorry that happened to you.” Patton sniffled as his voice cracked. “It’ll be okay baby, I promise. We’re not going to hurt you ever, I swear. We won’t let anyone hurt you ever again. Oh my sweet little bat…”

Virgil closed his eyes and relaxed against Patton as Patton gasped and sniffled. Once Patton had pulled himself back together, he pulled back slowly. Virgil opened his eyes to meet Patton’s milk chocolate ones, now stained with a bit of red.

Patton smiled wetsly and swiped a thumb across Virgil’s cheekbone, collecting some tears there.

“How are you feeling?”

Virgil closed his eyes. “Tired and sick.”

“Sick? Can you describe it a bit?”

Virgil shivered. “Like, nauseous. I didn’t like what they did.”

Patton’s hands tightened on him. “Oh sweetheart, I’m so sorry. Do you want something for that?”

Virgil sighed. “No. It goes away on its own. ‘M tired.”

“Alright honey. Want to take a nap?”

Virgil nodded, then paused. “Um, Pat? C-can you s-stay w-with me?”

“Oh course baby.”

Patton shifted his hands underneath Virgil and picked him up, gently laying him on the bed.

“I don’t want blankets.”
“Okay sweetie, we’ll lay on top of them.”

Patton crawled in next to Virgil and lifted his arm up. Virgil used the last of his remaining strength to crawl underneath the arm as he sensed the four other Sides leave his room. As he clutched the front of Patton’s shirt and drifted off, he thought he heard crying coming from downstairs.

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty, so a couple things about my beta Jasper01!!

1) They're awesome and this fic is so much better because of it!!
2) They came up with the ending A/N for last chapter, I only tagged on the smiley face at the end, so blame her. :P We're just encouraging each other to be more and more evil. It's wonderful. The most evilest feedback loop to ever exist!
3) The name Angeronius is Roman and comes from my beta!! The name originates in the feminine form of Angeron, which we'll come back to in a bit. Here's what Jasper says are the meanings: to constrain, to strangle, to torment, also the name of one of the Roman goddesses of death. Jasper loves the idea of an ancient Roman couple naming their sweet little daughter "the strangler", which I too find hilarious.
Chapter 83

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There are some intense descriptions of panic attacks in this chapter, which do include loss of breath, so be careful! <3 As always, please let me know if I need to tag/warn for anything in a particular chapter! I don't get annoyed, I promise! I'm actually extremely grateful because I know I'll never catch everything, so anybody who takes the time and energy to let me know I missed something has my gratitude! Accessibility is important!!

Virgil stirred and groaned as he woke up to a pounding headache. He felt a thick, strong arm tighten around him, and tensed only for a moment before he remembered that it was Patton. The arm loosened immediately, but *he wanted it back dammit*. Virgil gripped the polo material in his hand more tightly and pressed himself into the strong body beneath him. As the arm came down tentatively, he let out a rumble. Another hand came up to brush the bangs out of his face, and Virgil relaxed. They laid there for a few moments before Patton broke the silence.

“How are you feeling honey?” he asked in a whisper.


Patton cooed. “Let’s see if we can get rid of that. Water and food?”

Virgil shifted on Patton’s torso, not wanting to move. “Mhm.”

Patton giggled quietly, causing Virgil to smile. Patton scratched the back of Virgil’s head, earning another rumble.

“I’m thinking you could use some water and food silly.”

Virgil grunted, knowing there was no escape from Patton Care™. Patton slowly starting sitting up, and Virgil followed. He ran his hands over his face and moaned.

“Pretty bad one huh?”

Virgil groaned in response.

“Why don’t you clean up in the bathroom and I’ll tidy things up in here?”

Virgil looked around his room at that and cringed. It looks like several items of clothing had fallen on the floor in his collapse, and his necklace tree had been knocked over. He stretched and stood, going into the bathroom in an attempt to look like a human. With one glance, he wiped all of his makeup off and started from scratch. *No way I’m saving that.*

Virgil smudged eyeshadow underneath his eyes in a thick layer and applied mascara to lessen the look of swelling. He ran his fingers through his hair until it was an acceptable shape, then filled a glass with water and slowly drank it. As an afterthought, he popped three ibuprofen.
When he came out, his room was in order again, save for the special t-shirt hanging over the foot of the bed. *Patton must have moved it after he set me down.*

Virgil went over and picked it up, running his fingers over the smooth fabric. He knew he was in his room, as opposed to feeling half in his room and half… *somewhere else.* He shivered, trying to shake off the memory.

“Hey kiddo.”

Virgil hadn’t realized that Patton was looking at him. Patton smiled softly.

“Want me to put that away for you?”

Virgil looked up and smiled.

“Naw, I think I want to wear it.”

“Okay! Want me to leave the room while you change?”

Virgil bit his lip and frowned, looking at the slightly risque shirt. *Am I actually thinking about it…?*

“Actually… can you just turn around?”

Patton looked surprised, but smiled and did so. Virgil set the t-shirt back down, grabbed the bottom of his shirt and paused. Closing his eyes and taking a deep breath, he tugged his current purple shirt over his head. He spared a glance towards Patton, who was still dutifully facing the wall. Virgil smiled to himself and tossed his t-shirt on the bed. As opposed to when he’d taken off his shirt in Patton’s bathroom, he felt *okay.* It didn’t feel bad or wrong; he was actually rather comfortable. He quickly pulled the sexier shirt on and smoothed his hands down the front. He had to admit, Remy had done a damn good job picking this shirt for him.

“Alright Pat, you can turn back.”

Patton turned back and his eyes were immediately drawn to the cut out section of the t-shirt. He blushed and forcibly tore his eyes away from the exposed collarbone, chest, and shoulder to meet Virgil’s eyes.

“It’s a good shirt,” he said weakly.

Virgil tried and failed to stifle a smile and a blush.

Patton cleared his throat. “Wanna go downstairs and do some spa stuff with a movie?”

Virgil smiled more fully. “Sounds great Pat.” As they walked out of his room, Virgil spied the black tourmaline necklace hanging from his necklace tree.

*Fuck those assholes for not letting me wear the choker!*

Virgil grabbed the necklace and threw it over his head.

*Ha! I can still wear stuff around my neck! Fuck you!*

Once downstairs, Virgil sensed Patton summon something. Patton revealed a Tupperware filled with cold tea bags.

“I thought it might help with your headache!”
Virgil shot him a shy half-smile. “Thanks Pat. It’s a good idea.”

They sat down on the couch and put tea bags over their eyes. Patton quietly talked about the people Thomas got to interact with that day and how excited he was for the new business partnerships because that meant he got to make more friends! Virgil smiled serenely as he listened to Patton talk. Once their eyes were as cold as they could stand, Patton vanished the tea bags and summoned some granola bars and popcorn for them. He was putting in *How to Train Your Dragon* when Virgil realized it was only 4 PM.

“Hey Pat? Shouldn’t we save room for supper?”

“Well sure kiddo! But we’re having leftovers for dinner tonight, so I think we can sneak in a little something extra!”

Virgil chuckled at Patton’s antics. He grabbed a granola bar and didn’t miss how Patton had also conjured Gatorade for them to drink.

“Wanna cuddle?” Patton asked.

Virgil thought for a moment. *No, don’t touch!!* “Uh, not right now Pat, sorry.”

He was confused when Patton beamed. “No problem kiddo! I’m just so proud of you that you let me know when you didn’t want to!! Offer stands if you change your mind!” and he turned back to the television. Virgil furrowed his brow in confusion, but let it go once the opening soundtrack started playing. Virgil ate his granola bar and shared the popcorn with Patton, which suspiciously never seemed to empty.

Once the credits started to roll, his brain started screaming at him. *Come on, ask him already!! It’s not fair to him if he doesn’t know why you’re scared of them sometimes!*

*I’m not afraid of them!*

*Oh, sure* you aren’t. *You realize this is basically a date, right?*

...oh.

Yeah, “oh.” *So figure it out!! You’re not even letting him touch you! How are you going to react when he kisses you?!!*  

*H-he wouldn’t do that without my permission!*

*Oh wow, even stuttering in your own fucking head. Nice.*

Virgil shook himself from his thoughts. He looked down.

“Oh, hey Pat?”

“Yeah kiddo?”

“So like,” Virgil inhaled sharply through his nose at the spike of anxiety, “I know you guys said that I can move at my own pace and stuff, and I appreciate it! I was just, um, wondering when, you know…” Virgil trailed off and scratched a part of his face, “when will it be too *long* to wait for kissing and, um, sex?”

“Never. Whenever you’re ready is perfect timing.”
Virgil snorted dryly. “That doesn’t exactly give me a timeline on when I’m expected to do things Pat.”

Patton tilted his head. “Are you wondering when I’ll expect you to be ready?”

“Yeah, basically.” Here it comes, he’s finally going to be honest with you. Focus on what he’s saying you fucking moron, this is important! You need to know when you’ll have to let them kiss you and fuck you!

“These things can take time honey. If you’re never ready, that’s okay. I don’t expect any more from you. I just like hanging out with you!”

Virgil smiled shakily at Patton, not quite believing him but having a hard time coming up with a counter-argument. Virgil helped Patton clean up, then helped him make dinner.

Okay, okay, I think I can get used to this.

///

Virgil was hanging out in his room several days later after lunch, intending to nap, when he sensed something magical enter his room. He looked over to the door and didn’t see anything at first. Feeling apprehensive, he took his headphones off and pulled up Roman’s number on his phone. Only because he has a sword. He crept over to his door and saw an envelope. He carefully picked it up and saw a red wax seal with Roman’s emblem. Relaxing slightly, he tore open the envelope, only to find a note encased in gold glitter that was now all over his floor.

Well shit, I guess I have to murder Roman today.

Virgil opened the note, written in an unnecessarily loopy cursive that was no doubt written with an oversized feather quill.

My dearest Virgil,

I would like to formally invite you to a walk on my castle grounds in the evening, with a lovely dinner for us. Please circle your response:

Yes No Maybe

Signed,
Your Beloved,
His Royal Highness Prince Roman

Virgil stared at the letter, in awe of the amount of extra Roman put into what essentially amounted to an elementary school note. Virgil chuckled and picked a pen up off his desk. Just as he was about to circle “Yes”, his brain decided to yell at him.

This is a date! With Roman! Alone! In the Imagination, which is his realm!! Just what do you think he’s planning?!

Virgil’s hands began shaking violently as the letter fluttered to the ground. The shaking soon spread to the rest of his body, his legs feeling like gelatin and his chest feeling like it was full of knots getting pulled tighter and tighter and tighter…

He realized he was having a panic attack when his knees hit the floor. He tried focusing on his breathing exercises, but the voice in his mind was screaming too loudly.
Roman will be so turned on he won’t see you getting uncomfortable! You can’t say no to him! What the fuck dude?! How awkward and uncomfortable would you make literally everyone if you told someone to stop?! Do you think he’d actually stop? Or that he wouldn’t hold it against you? He’ll hate you! They’ll all hate you!! You made him stop!!! Of course they’re going to hate you!!!!

Virgil pressed a hand to his mouth in an effort to muffle his cries, despite the fact it allowed even less air through. He’s going to force me, he’s going to initiate something and I won’t be able to stop it!!

The last thing he saw before he collapsed was a pile of glitter.

///

Virgil grabbed his head sluggishly as he came to. He slowly blinked his eyes open and was face to face with a veritable mountain of golden glitter. He pushed himself up slowly, wary of his dizziness, and reviewed his room. An envelope and a letter were on the ground, and glitter was fucking everywhere. As he remembered what had caused his panic attack, he had to focus on his breathing exercises as he waved to turn on the music in his room. With his music helping to drown out some of his thoughts, he turned back to his breathing exercises.

He could still feel his anxiety growing, so he grabbed the note and left his room. Not gonna be helped in there. Virgil went downstairs on flopped face down on the couch.

Shit, I left my phone.

Resigned to his fate, Virgil turned the TV to some mindless reality show. He laid down, and tried focusing on his breathing exercises. Then he quickly opened his eyes and gasped, anxiety suddenly renewed.

Roman’s expecting a reply!! I haven’t sent one yet!! Shitshitshitshitshitshit…

Virgil grabbed a pen off the coffee table and quickly circled “Yes”. The letter levitated, transformed into the form of Tinkerbell, and fluttered up the stairs and into the hallway. Despite his anxiety, he snorted and shook his head. Several moments later, Virgil heard a loud cheer come from the hallway. He had to put his hand up to his face to muffle his laughs.

He laid back down on the couch and closed his eyes, listening to the television and counting his breaths.

“I take it you accepted Roman’s invitation?”

Virgil jumped at the unexpected voice. Logan was standing at the foot of the couch with a single eyebrow raised.

“You knew?”

“It is literally the only thing he’s been talking about for the past two days, 12 hours, 15 minutes, 46 seconds, 47 seconds, 48 seconds.”

“Got it. Huh, so he really wants to take me on a date to the Imagination. That’s,” Virgil paled as his anxiety spiked again, “nice.”

Logan tilted his head. “Your last statement appeared to cause you discomfort. If you are uncomfortable with a date with just Roman, I’m certain he wouldn’t mind rescheduling.”
“No! It’s fine!” Virgil quickly assured. *Can’t let Roman know I’m scared.* “I just… it’s my first time on a date like that, y’know?”

Logan smiled gently. “I do. You deserve a good experience Virgil, which I’m sure Roman will endeavor to provide. Roman requested I keep the facts of your date a surprise, so I cannot say much more, but I do hope you enjoy yourself.”

Virgil shot Logan a half smile. “Thanks L. I hope so too.”

Logan nodded. “Would you like to stay with me while I read?”

“Sure.”

Virgil scooted down the couch to make room for Logan and focused all of his energy to summon his phone from his room. Logan rested his arm across the back of the couch, but Virgil knew he couldn’t handle touch at the moment. As Logan read, Virgil turned to Google and started typing.

*How to make someone think you’re enjoying sex*

Chapter End Notes

I wonder how Virgil's date with Roman will go?

In Roman's defense, he didn't *intend* to glitter bomb Virgil's room, he was just like "~*SPARKLES*~".


The morning of the date found Virgil in his sleep clothes, on the ground, mid-panic attack. He’d barely been able to get out of bed before terror gripped him and made him collapse.

_He’s gonna make me, he’s gonna make me kiss him, I’m going to have to let him fuck me _I don’t want to!!!_

_You don’t even know how to kiss properly. Fifty bucks says they dump you after you have to kiss Roman and Roman tells the others how useless you are._

Virgil bit his knuckle and tried to get control of his breathing again when a knock came at the door.

“Virgil, my stunning night raider!! Wilt thou be accompanying us to breakfast?”

Virgil tried to answer, but could only manage panicked breaths.

“Darling? Are you alright?”

Virgil whimpered and curled into a ball.

“You’re ruining this, you’re fucking everything up, you had a good thing and you ruined it…”

“I’m coming in Virgil.” Roman opened the door, holding the handle of his sword. When his eyes landed on Virgil, he let go and rushed over to the shaking Side, kneeling down a few feet away.

“Oh my sweet. Can I touch you?”

Virgil shook his head. _Come on, at least tell him why you’re freaking the fuck out._ “I can’t… I, I don’t want to… I’m scared…” _Nice, real specific. Totally lets him know what’s going on._

“It’s okay angel, I won’t let anything happen to you. Can we try some breathing exercises love?”

Virgil nodded. “Wonderful! Breathe in for one, two, three, four…”

Virgil followed Roman’s instructions, and he was soon feeling slightly less panicked. _Having Roman here not hurting me helps too. I can see him not hurting me._

“How are you feeling my love?”

Virgil uncurled from his position and shakily pushed himself up. Roman was watching him carefully, barely holding himself back. Virgil leaned back against the wall. Upon seeing the torment in the other’s face, he rolled his eyes and motioned for Roman to come over. Roman sat next to Virgil, not touching him, with his back also against the wall. As Virgil caught his breath, he saw Roman’s arm and shoulder twitching out of the corner of his eye. He smiled fondly and pressed against Roman’s side, the arm eagerly wrapping around Virgil’s slender shoulders. Virgil
relaxed against Roman’s shoulder and closed his eyes. Roman used his other hand to gently lift Virgil’s.

Virgil was relaxed until Roman started running the pad of his thumb over Virgil’s knuckles and *oh that’s a nice feeling*. Virgil knew Roman was just holding his hand, he probably didn’t know the effect it was having on the younger Side. Virgil felt heat low in his gut from the simple movement and a stirring where he normally wouldn’t. His blood and skin started heating up, and there was electricity traveling all the way up his arm and shoulder into his spine. Full-body goosebumps took over. He had no idea how having his hand held with a thumb running over his fingers was so hot and *arousing*, but damn if he wasn’t the most flustered and gay he’d been since he could remember. Virgil felt the contradiction of soft skin and calluses that somehow worked in perfect harmony for his prince. The tender care Roman was holding his hand with was in stark contrast to the strength just humming beneath the surface of tanned skin. Virgil felt as the thumb bumped slightly as it slowly hit each knuckle, the not-quite-ticklish sensation of the four other fingertips on his palm, and the side of the warrior’s palm supporting his hand. Barely biting back a moan, Virgil shifted, but Roman didn’t stop touching his hand.

“Can you tell me what happened stormcloud?”

*Welp, there that goes.* “I was panicking for no reason. It’s my specialty.”

Roman squeezed Virgil’s upper arm slightly with the hand that was resting there. “Don’t let Patton hear you.”

Virgil snorted where he was resting against Roman’s shoulder. “Yeah yeah, he’ll physically fight me.” Virgil’s goosebumps returned with the vibration of Roman’s deep chuckle.

“Your feelings are valid, little crow.”

Virgil sighed. *I guess he should know in case he wants to cancel the date and our relationship.* “I… I was actually kinda freaking out because…” he inhaled deeply. *How do I say this?* “It’s just that… I’ve never been on a *date* before and I don’t know what to do or what to expect and I don’t want to mess it up because I’m *me* and I fuck things up and—”

“Slow down beautiful raven. You had a panic attack because of our date?”

Virgil pressed into Roman’s chest slightly. “Not *because* of it, just that I don’t know…” he tried to succinctly summarize what he didn’t know, but the list kept growing, “…anything. I literally don’t know anything about this date, or any date for that matter.”

“Oh my sweet. Firstly, I sincerely doubt you could ruin anything about this date. If you are there, it is perfect.” Virgil was grateful Roman couldn’t see his blush. “Secondly, would it help if we talked about what to expect on the date?”

Virgil sagged, tension leaving him he didn’t realize he was carrying. “Yeah, that’d be fucking awesome.” He tensed. “I just want to know what to prepare for,” he whispered.

Roman held Virgil a little closer and spoke softly. “That is completely understandable. I was thinking I would lead you through the door to the Imagination, and we’d start by walking to the castle grounds. I could show you the plants and flowers and tell you their stories. We could gaze upon the topiaries and the mountains. The air would be comfortable and clear, with wispy clouds in the sky. As the sun nears the line separating it from its heavenly throne, we’d depart the grounds to enjoy a private dinner. Afterwards, we’d leave, I’d escort you to your door like the chivalrous prince I am and bid you goodnight.”
Virgil found himself relaxing as Roman told his idea of events. It was like he was reading a
fairytale. He almost forgot to respond when Roman asked, “What say you?”

Virgil snuggled into Roman’s chest with a smile. “That sounds nice.” He bit his lip. “So you don’t
want to kiss or fuck me?”

Virgil felt the twitch and small gasp. “Angel, my sweet, I’d never want to do anything that you
don’t want. As for making love, I do believe that is a ways off. Kissing is nearer by if that kind of
intimacy is something you desire, but I don’t expect or require it. Whenever you feel like it you
have my consent to kiss me.”

Virgil curled in, tensing slightly. “I just… I don’t know…”

Roman pressed his face against the mass of hair beneath him and breathed in the scent of lavender
and oud. “Kissing and sex frighten you?”

Virgil flinched. “I know, it’s stupid, I’m a fucking adult, I shouldn’t-”

“Love, anyone of any age can be intimidated by physical and sexual intimacy. And heavens above,
you have more than enough reason to be wary. May I propose that you initiate anything intimate so
you won’t feel pressured to do something you don’t want?”

Virgil froze. Holy shit, that… actually works really well. Roman won’t try anything and I won’t
have to stop him if I don’t want it.

“I, uh, yeah. That actually sounds really good. Might work.”

Roman smiled against the top of Virgil’s head. “Wonderful. Shall I see you at, say, 5:30?”

Virgil smiled. “Yeah. That sounds good Princey.”

“Wonderful. Now as much as I love holding you in my arms, we may wish to attend breakfast, lest
Patton worry.”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah, you’re probably right.” Virgil looked down and winced. “Uh, I should
probably change.” Virgil got up with Roman and looked around. “Dammit, where are my pants?!?”

“Had a good night sugar?”

Virgil yelped and jumped. Remy was leaning against the doorframe sipping a Starbucks
monstrosity with a straw. “Shit, Rem! I was just-”

“You can dish later sister, and I want all the deets. Apparently Logan got his coffee and shot back
up to his room, so I guess we’ll be seeing him never. Patton sent me upstairs to check on you and
your lover boy to make sure you were okay, but it looks like you two had a great time.” Remy
leered and waggled his eyebrows.

“Rem, it’s not-”

“Dish later sister, this bitch needs to get her own D. Ciao!”

Virgil felt like his ears were about to set his hair on fire. Can someone die of mortification like in
the Sims? God I hope so. Let’s see… Nope. Dammit.

Virgil turned to Roman, who was wearing his own blush. The royal cleared his throat.
“Would you like me to summon your clothes for you?”

“Yeah, better do it before Remy comes back,” Virgil muttered. Roman snapped and Virgil found himself in his usual outfit. He shot Roman a grateful smile and they went downstairs together.

Virgil was a nervous wreck. He’d spent the last hour showering, exfoliating, lotioning, perfuming, and generally beautifying himself, and he still didn’t look good enough for Roman, and Roman was going to be by in ten minutes.

Virgil gripped the edge of the sink and performed several rounds of breathing exercises. He looked in the mirror.

Okay, hair and skin look good, eyebrows are tamed, my nails are fine, ugh I should have had Remy do them, eyeshadow looks good, now what the actual fuck do I wear?!

Virgil had added a light brown smoky eye to his usual eyeshadow, and had thrown on a bit of mascara at the last second. He shakily walked over to his wardrobe and opened it. He grabbed the jeans Remy had picked out for him and, after a moment’s consideration, a purple v-neck t-shirt. I’m not getting a weird-ass triangle sunburn on half of my chest. Virgil tugged on socks and his strappy combat boots before throwing on a couple rings and his black tourmaline necklace.

Virgil appraised himself in the mirror. Better than usual. Still not good enough for Roman. Not good enough for any of them. He fought back tears, mostly in an effort to not ruin a half hour of makeup application. He jumped at the knock on his door.

“Good evening my love. May I be honored with the blessing of thine presence?”

Despite his nerves, Virgil couldn’t help but crack a smile at Roman’s enthusiasm.

Just wait until he sees your disgusting body.

Smile gone.

Virgil walked over to the door and with a breath in to steel his nerves, opened it. Roman was smiling with 11 roses, some deep red, others orange, and others lavender. I’ll have to look the meanings up later, Roman has absolutely put meaning into them. Virgil smiled, took them, and saw that Roman had summoned a very gothic vase with water for them on the desk. Virgil set them in water and Roman stayed just outside the threshold. He appraised Roman’s look. Although still in his prince uniform, it looked different, like it had been freshly pressed. His hair was even more impeccable than usual, and he seemed to have put on some highlighter. Virgil smiled shyly and ducked his head, embarrassed to be such a disgusting mess in front of an actual fairy tale prince.

“You look exquisite, my love,” Roman intoned deeply.

Virgil looked up through his eyelashes. “Really?” he asked, breathless and disbelieving.

Roman leaned forward slightly. “Very much so,” he rumbled.

Virgil’s face lit on fire. “I, um, thanks. You don’t look so bad yourself.” Virgil internally kicked himself. Goddammit, that’s the best you got?! You have a fucking dashing Prince Charming in front of you, and that’s what you say? God, I hope for his sake he-

Roman chuckled. “I am glad to hear it my dark angel. Shall we?” he asked as he extended his
elbow. Virgil raised an eyebrow but put his hand in the bend of the creative Side’s arm.

Roman led them to his room and opened the door to his wardrobe with a wave of his hand. They stepped onto the gravel road and began walking towards the castle. Virgil breathed in the fresh air that seemed permanently attached to Roman wherever he went and marveled at the sky. It was just as Roman had promised; thin, wispy cirrus clouds were painted across the evening sky, just beginning to darken. Virgil couldn’t deny the effect having Roman so close and touching him was having on his body and mind. It felt like his hairs were standing on end for a very good reason and jolts of lightning were going through him whenever his arm brushed the royal’s body.

“I do hope you enjoy the castle grounds. There are many citizens of the Imagination who are quite passionate about creating, so a great deal of effort has been put into it.”

Virgil looked up at Roman. Roman had pride on his face, but the hairline tension told Virgil he was nervous as well.

Virgil smiled. “I’m sure it’ll be dope.”

Roman smiled back and turned toward the castle. “The first thing we shall encounter on the grounds themselves will be a lovely stream with flowers along the sides. Sarah, one of the maidens from the village, has a particular passion for lilies, so you’ll notice quite the variety! And Daniel is quite proficient with water grasses, so the stream itself is quite healthy. We’ve a number of frogs, toads, fireflies, bees, and butterflies. I heard from Peter that a turtle has recently moved in! Peter takes care of the goldfish in the pond.”

Virgil listened as Roman passionately described each villager and their contributions to the village and to the castle. He could tell that Roman wasn’t anywhere near done as they approached the stream.

“Ah! Here we are!” Roman moved more quickly to the stream and pointed.

“You see! There are some of the fish! And a frog!”

Virgil smiled at the idyllic scene. A few brightly-colored goldfish were swimming just below the surface and a toad was sitting on a lilypad. The water itself was crystal clear and slow-moving, allowing Virgil to see the smooth, sandy bottom. Just as Roman had described, there were perfectly-placed reeds and grasses growing out of the stream, and lilies lined the banks and area around the stream. Virgil listened as Roman chattered excitedly about how they’d gotten the small ecosystem set up.

“Oh, look at me, just talking about myself! I apologize for taking up all of the conversation.”

Virgil snorted and looked at the prince. “Don’t worry about it. I like listening to you talk.”

Roman blushed. “I, well, thank you! You should, as I am the greatest orator in all the land!” he declared, moving into his Princey position.

Virgil chuckled and turned his attention back to the stream. They walked slowly along its banks, Virgil losing count of how many species of lilies there were, until they came to a massive fountain surrounded by other, smaller fountains.

“Ah, the fountain area. I was inspired to move away from only having natural water features in order to showcase the talent of the villagers more! Truly beautiful.”

As Roman explained the process of building all of the fountains, Virgil observed the engravings
and filigree on the sides of the fountains. Entire stories were being played out on every inch, and the more Virgil looked the more he saw. He was captivated. After being slowly led around each fountain, Virgil looked up to compliment Roman and paused. The evening light was turning golden and was shining off his hair. His face was lit up and his eyes were glowing with excitement and passion. Roman seemed to notice Virgil’s changed demeanor and looked down at him in concern.

“Virgil, love, light of my life, are you alright?”

Virgil chuckled. “I’m good Princey it’s just…” he looked down nervously, “you look really good today,” he finished shyly, looking up through his bangs and biting his lower lip lightly. Roman smiled and brought his free hand around to brush the backs of his fingers against Virgil’s jawline.

“As do you my angel.”

Virgil blushed brightly and chuckled quietly, squeezing Roman’s arm. They continued around the grounds slowly, Virgil content to listen to Roman’s admittedly engaging stories, taking their time in each section. Virgil would occasionally get inside his own head and worry that he was ruining Roman’s time, but the prince’s unending enthusiasm brought Virgil out of it and back into the present. The topiary section had massive sculptures of animals in motion, looking like they could come alive any second. Knowing Princey, they probably could. There were areas dedicated to every biome on Earth, with special attention paid to the Amazonian rainforest, one of Thomas’ and Logan’s passions. Virgil noticed that the order they went in kept them shielded from direct sunlight at all times, which his corneas were grateful for. Roman told stories of his adventures, pantomiming sword fights (sans a sword, thankfully for Virgil’s sanity), lunging and ducking as he told Virgil of his struggles and eventual victories. After several hours of walking through the sculpture garden and 5 other flower gardens, the sun was getting low in the sky.

“Shall we enjoy dinner?”

Virgil smiled. “Sounds good.”

Roman led them through a side door in the castle, and the royal subjects bowed and curtsied as they walked by. They ended up in a small yet grand dining room, the red table set elegantly with gold and china. Roman pulled out a chair for Virgil and sat down opposite him. They chatted while the chefs brought out leek soup and mead. Although simple, the leek soup was fantastic and Virgil ate it almost embarrassingly quickly. A Caesar salad with huge chunks of shaved Parmesan cheese was next, and Virgil couldn’t understand how the dressing was so delicious. At last, the main course of roast duck with figs and a port wine reduction was served, mashed potatoes and roasted vegetables on the side. Virgil complimented each serving; all of the food was simple but elegant and delicious.

The conversation meandered lazily, but neither Side minded as they lightly chatted about the events of Thomas’ week and laughed. Finally, a lava cake with dark berry reduction was brought out, and by the time they were finished Virgil was full. As the subjects filled each of their glasses with a healthy serving of dessert wine, Virgil sleepily listened to Roman excitedly regale him with tales of how each object found its way into this particular dining room.

Roman’s narrative was cut off by a yawn from Virgil. He smirked in amusement.

“Are you growing tired little bat?”

Virgil would normally have a retort, but the walking, food, and wine had taken its toll. “Mhm.”

Roman wiped his face on the cloth napkin. “May I escort thee to thine room?”
Virgil chuckled. “Sure. What’s with the thee’s and thou’s lately?” he asked as he took Roman’s arm again.

“Aesthetic.”

Virgil muffled a snort into Roman’s muscled upper arm, then realized what he was doing. He pulled away with a blush and Roman looked at him with a smirk. Instead of taking the long trek back to the wardrobe, Roman simply sank out to the hallway in front of his door instead. After making sure Virgil was steady, they headed down to the anxious Side’s room. Once at the door, Virgil’s anxiety spiked again. Roman must have sensed it because he squeezed Virgil’s hand and murmured into his ear, “Nothing you don’t initiate beautiful angel.”

His final synapse short-circuited because what the hell Roman you can’t just say shit like that, and Virgil relaxed only slightly as he turned towards Roman. Roman positioned himself so he was slightly away from Virgil. Virgil scratched the back of his neck.

“I, ah, I’m not sure what to do here,” he admitted, still nervous despite Roman’s reassurances.

Roman smiled sweetly. “It’s alright, raven. What would you like?”

Virgil considered his options. I could leave it on an awkward note and just escape into my room. I don’t want to kiss him yet, and he actually seems okay with it. I’ll kiss him tomorrow if it turns out he’s upset. I did, um, feel good when he was touching my hand earlier. Should I though? I’m not ready to be fucked, but it did feel nice. Fuck it, let’s see what happens.

He held out his hand. Roman tilted his head. “May I hold your hand my love?”

Virgil nodded. Roman tenderly, oh-so-tenderly, took Virgil’s hand in his. Virgil couldn’t stop the sudden intake of air as Roman’s fingertips grazed his palm. He was entranced by the sight of Roman’s stronger, graceful hand touching his own skinnier one. Roman’s eyes darted up to Virgil’s face and smiled darkly when he saw the look on his love’s face.

“Your hand is as beautiful as the rest of you.”

Virgil made a choked sound as Roman ran his thumb over Virgil’s knuckles. He paused immediately.

“Angel?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked at Roman slightly from beneath his bangs. “I-it felt good.”

Roman’s smile returned. “It did, hm?”

Virgil looked down. “Yeah. I… liked what you did this morning.”

Roman grinned and copied his movements from that morning. “Like that?” he asked lowly.

“Uh-huh,” Virgil replied, his voice slightly higher. With the date so recent, the electricity he was feeling was tenfold from the morning, and he was certain he was literally on fire. His skin was burning in an arousing way, and his face was prickling with eager anticipation. He felt the same stirring from before, his skinny jeans becoming slightly uncomfortable. As his breathing picked up and he bit his lip, meeting Roman’s dark brandy eyes, he accepted the arousal for what it was.

Roman grinned devilishly and bent his head and neck forward slightly in a small bow, maintaining eye contact the entire time. He brought his head back up and said, “Goodnight sweet prince.” With
a final smirk, he gently let go of Virgil’s hand and walked to his room.

Virgil was left standing in front of his door panting, trying to process what had just happened.

*That was... a lot.* Then he smiled. *I could do that again.*

Virgil went into his bedroom and flopped on his bed facing the ceiling, boots and all. He was staring at nothing with a dopey grin. He didn’t dare try to take care of his problem below his waistband, knowing it would only end badly.

*Maybe this isn’t so bad. I like this feeling.* Virgil was still smiling as he closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Rose meanings! You knew it was coming! From what I read, red roses are the classic "I love you". Orange means energy, enthusiasm, and excitement. And lavender is a way to say that you can’t wait to grow the relationship.

Okay, okay, I *guess* I have a heart and let Virgil have a good first date or whatever.
*scoffs* It's still a dead and cold heart!
Chapter 85

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! There are two descriptions of sexual assault, including sounding, in this chapter, both of which are italicized blocks of words encased in tildes. There is also vomiting in those sections Here's what it'll look like:

Safe
~~~~~~
TW
~~~~~~
Safe
~~~~~~
TW
~~~~~~
Safe

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil was startled out of his sleep by a clap of thunder. He jumped up and immediately focused on the outer world where Thomas was. Relieved to see it was just a passing thunderstorm, Virgil kept his awareness on his Host and stretched, knowing it’d be a while before he’d be able to sleep. The clock read in large, mocking numbers 1:41 AM. Looking down, he noticed he had another problem.

Well shit.

Virgil knew that attempting to, ahem, alleviate the building pressure would only lead to a panic attack at best and a flashback at worst. He sighed.

I fucking hate cold showers.

He stood and resigned himself to his fate, stripping as he stumbled sleepily into his bathroom. He reluctantly turned the shower to its coldest setting and stepped under the freezing spray. He gasped as the cold shocked his skin.

I was so nice and warm under the blankets, dammit!!

Virgil would normally let any issues that happened in the morning fade on their own, but he suspected this one had something to do with the date he’d had last night. Just thinking about it brought a smile to his face.

I hope we get to do that again.

Nah, you fucked it up bad. None of them will ever want to see you again, especially not Roman!

Hey? Shut up.

Despite yelling back at his brain, Virgil felt tears starting to prickle his eyes. As he wiped them away he looked down and caught sight of his erection.
Virgil had been granted a shower by the Dark Sides as a present for his 9th birthday. He had just managed to get into the shower stall before his legs buckled from exhaustion and pain. They’d kept him on edge for what had to be at least two and a half weeks before they finally let him have relief. Virgil had landed with his legs both out to one side, so he shifted, whimpering at the pain, to reach the shower handle. He barely had the strength to turn it to get water flowing, and he nearly couldn’t get the water past lukewarm. He pulled the button on the side of the shower wall that made the water come from the showerhead instead of the tap. He jumped at the first burst of cold water that had been in the pipes and whined at the pain the jostling had caused.

Virgil looked up longingly at the bottles of shampoo and soap on a shelf too high for him to reach. He settled for grabbing an old, cracked bar of soap that was on the floor. He had been scrubbing as much filth off as he could for ten minutes before he heard the door to the bathroom open. As soon as he saw Apathy enter, he quickly got into a kneeling position at the edge of the shower.

Apathy pulled himself out of his sweatpants and grabbed Virgil’s hair. Apathy’s fingers tightened painfully in Virgil’s hair and pulled him forward onto his cock, bringing Virgil’s face to his abdomen in one thrust. Virgil choked and gagged, but was experienced enough to get it under control fairly quickly. Apathy didn’t bother moving his hips, he just moved Virgil’s head back and forth. It seemed like hours before Apathy’s breath started becoming erratic and his hips started twitching. Finally Apathy came, pulling Virgil flush to his body and twitching his hips. He held Virgil’s head there for several minutes before releasing him. Virgil collapsed on the ground, gasping for air and coughing. After a few minutes of watching, Apathy picked him back up by his hair.

“Happy birthday,” Apathy sneered before tossing Virgil roughly into the side of the shower and walking out. Virgil cried out from the pain and laid in the bottom of the shower stall, trying to breathe through the pain until he passed out.

Virgil woke up with a gasp. Cold water was hitting him from above and he was laying on the tiled floor of his shower. He looked down.

At least one problem is taken care of.

He was shivering violently, but couldn’t seem to make himself move. He could still feel everything. He curled up into a ball on his side and cried. He couldn’t seem to stop, no matter how sick he felt or how cold the water was getting. Why am I like this? It didn’t just happen. It happened so long ago. Eventually, he found the strength to reach up and turn the handle so water stopped coming down. He dropped his hand and lay on the ground, shivers becoming stronger and stronger until his self-preservation kicked in and he pushed himself up, breath still hitching.

Fighting to stay upright, Virgil stepped out of the shower and grabbed a towel. He hastily dried himself off and grabbed his t-shirt and sweatpants, grimacing at the spots on his body that were still wet. His motions were jerky as he was shaking uncontrollably, but he finally managed to get to his bed and pull up the covers. Virgil peered at the clock. 4:30 AM. He twisted his hands in the covers and pulled them up over his head, cold seemingly in his bones. He didn’t know when he fell asleep.

‘Everything is wrong, that’s not right, where is it, that’s not supposed to be there, oh god oh god
“Shhhhh Virgil, it’s okay,” Deceit cooed. He was standing behind where Virgil was strapped to the table in the Room and brushing fingers through matted hair. Rage was facing Virgil and thrusting into him and everything felt different. “You’ll get used to it eventually. If this works, we may just have to keep you like this. I know I’m quite enjoying myself. Rage?”

“Mm, fuck yeah!” Rage groaned. Deceit chuckled.

“It would seem we’re all in favor. What would you think of that Anxiety?”

Virgil shook his head back and forth as he sobbed. Deceit slapped him.

“Ungrateful little brat!! You get a few things changed by Malice, and you suddenly forget your manners? What do you say?”

Virgil tried, but he couldn’t manage a “Thank you sir” through the gag. Deceit kept asking him, kept hitting him, and Virgil couldn’t make it understandable. After several minutes of that, Rage came inside of him. Virgil shuddered violently at what that could mean.

Deceit sighed. “It seems you still need to be taught a lesson.” He walked over to the tool cart. “Let’s see… these should still work!” He held a large, jagged sounding rod in front of Virgil. Virgil could only stare at the ceiling as he felt himself beginning to float.

Virgil kicked violently as he attempted to get whatever was on him off. His legs got tangled in the bed sheets, and he fell out of bed as he lost his balance. He shoved them off as quickly as he could, but didn’t make it to his toilet in time to throw up. At the last second, he puked into his shower. Once he had finished vomiting, he turned the shower head on and washed what he could down the drain. He had to keep himself from gagging at several points. Goddammit, I didn’t want to spend my morning like this.

He used two rolls of toilet paper to clean everything else up and flush it down, and to blow the chunks that had gotten lodged in the back of his throat and nose.

Virgil grabbed his mouthwash and used two doses to wash out his mouth. He winced at the state of his hair. That’s just gonna be a mess until I can shower again. He knew he wouldn’t be able to shower for a few hours at least. He combed his fingers through it but gave up pretty quickly. He smudged eyeshadow under his eyes and went into his room to change.

Once he had jeans and his hoodie on with the hood flipped up, he glanced at the clock. 6:58. He sighed, heading downstairs, knowing he looked like shit. Patton was just starting to pull ingredients out of the refrigerator. He smiled when he saw Virgil.

“Hey kiddo! How- oh sweetie, what happened?”

Patton rushed over to Virgil as he flopped in his seat. “Woke up from a nightmare,” he mumbled.

“Oh sweetheart, I’m sorry. Would you like a hug?”

Virgil laid his head down on his hands. “No, but my upper back is okay.”

“Alright,” Patton said softly as he gently began rubbing Virgil’s upper back. Virgil felt himself relaxing, although he soon shuddered at the memory of his nightmare. Patton withdrew his hand immediately.
“Honey?”

Virgil cleared his throat. “It’s fine, just the memory… of the nightmare,” he said thickly.

“Oh baby,” Patton cooed as he started rubbing Virgil’s back again. After a few more minutes of silent comfort, Patton spoke.

“I was going to make a quiche this morning. Should I make something lighter?”

Virgil shook his head where it was in his arms. “No, I can just grab some cereal or something.”

“Virgil. It’s not a problem to change the menu and I’m not going to have you feel left out and make your own breakfast if you don’t feel well. Would French toast be okay?”

Virgil smiled into his arms, tears filling his eyes for a different reason. “Yeah. That sounds awesome.”

“Bacon or sausage?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “Bacon?”

“Sure thing baby. Will you be okay if I start cooking?”

“Yeah, I’m good. Thanks Pat.”

“No problem!” Patton chirped as he went to the counter. Before he finished grabbing ingredients, he started a cup of jasmine tea in the microwave for Virgil. He started heating up the pan as the tea finished, and he silently slid the mug over to Virgil. Virgil smiled at him and wrapped his hands around it, still feeling cold. He finished a rather violent shiver just as Logan and Roman walked in.

“GOOD MORNING MY LOVES!!!”

“Good morning dears. Virgil, are you alright?”

Virgil looked blearily at the two passionate Sides. “I’m alright. Nightmare.”

Logan’s face softened. “I am sorry to hear that. Are you ill? I noticed you shivering.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down. “No, I was taking a shower with cold water and I had a flashback.”

“Oh my baby!” Patton cried. Virgil shrugged.

“I’m fine now. I’ll live.”

“Do try to relax today Virgil. Your body needs rest. Do you know how long you were exposed to cold water?”

“I dunno, I think like 3 hours?”

“Oh Virgil. Were you shivering uncontrollably?”

Virgil looked in surprise at the logical Side. “Yeah, how’d you know?”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “I believe you may have suffered from hypothermia.”

Virgil took a sip of his tea. “Makes sense,” he mumbled. He heard concerned Patton noises from
across the kitchen.

“Would you like a hug? You know I’m hot,” Roman asked. When Virgil looked over, he smirked and waggled his eyebrows. Virgil snorted.

“Nah, I’m good. Can’t handle much touch right now.”

“Is there anything I can do for you?”

Virgil sighed. “My back is okay. And the back of my head.”

Roman sat down next to him and started gently massaging the back of Virgil’s head with his fingertips. Virgil sighed and laid his head back down.

This is nice. I think I can deal with this.

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty! It might not seem like a lot got accomplished in this chapter, but it's setting up a lot for next chapter, in which important conversations are had. It also establishes that Apathy wasn't so much a passive participant as an active asshole.
Chapter 86

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! The only thing in this chapter is mention of a flashback and describing what it looks like to someone who doesn't experience them.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil didn’t realize how much time had passed with Roman massaging the back of his head because suddenly Patton was setting a plate in front of him. He looked up and was met with French toast with a bit of powdered sugar, bacon, and sliced melon. Even though a plate had also been placed in front of Roman, he only removed his hand from Virgil’s head once Virgil sat up.

Virgil grabbed a fork and started working on his French toast. He knew that tea on an empty stomach is bad news. As he started on his bacon, he noticed Patton wiggling in his seat. After a few more minutes, Patton couldn’t help himself.

“So how’d your date go?!”

Thankfully for Virgil’s lungs, he’d only been drinking tea when Patton asked so he choked on liquids instead of solids.

While he was coughing, Logan gently chastised Patton. “Patton dear, you should have waited for them to bring it up of their own accord.”

“I know, I know! I’m just so excited!!”

“Darling…”

“I know, I know, I’m sorry guys. You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to.”

Virgil smiled at Patton. “It’s okay. I… I liked it. A lot. I had fun.” He grinned at the memory. When he didn’t hear anything from Roman, dread pooled in his stomach and he looked to the romantic Side. Roman was staring at him with a sappy smile. Virgil cleared his throat nervously.

“What about you?”

Roman’s smile and eyes turned dark. “I had a lovely time, my beautiful raven.”

Virgil squeaked and blushed as he looked back at his food. He heard Patton trying and failing to hold back a squeal while Logan was only somewhat successful in muffling his laughter.

Once Patton had more control over his vocal chords, he spoke again. “I’m glad you two had a good time! Roman always makes sure we have a good time too!”

Virgil smiled at Patton. “Yeah. He…” Virgil looked at Roman, “He helped me feel comfortable.”

Roman beamed as tears started filling his eyes.

“I am glad my sweet crow.”
Virgil heard fabric shifting behind him. “You obviously do not have to, but would you mind telling us how Roman helped you feel comfortable? I believe that may be useful information.”

Virgil turned to Logan, who looked distinctly uncomfortable. “Yeah. Uh, well he kinda walked in on me in the middle of a panic attack yesterday morning. Um…” He trailed off, biting his lip as he looked down.

“It’s alright if you do not wish to continue Virgil,” Logan said gently.

Virgil turned to him and shot him a smile. “I’m good L. It’s just kind of embarrassing.”

“You’ve nothing to be embarrassed about love!” Roman objected. Virgil shrugged and poked at a piece of melon with his fork.

“Would it be alright if Roman told us what helped?” Patton asked.

Virgil chewed on his lip. *That could work…* “Yeah. Um, it was about… initiating stuff…” he finished quietly.

“Ah, yes. Virgil informed me that he is uncertain as to what to expect during dates, and when I suggested that Virgil be the one to initiate anything physically or sexually intimate, he agreed. Is that what you were referring to, my love?”

Virgil kept his eyes on his plate and nodded.

“That’s a great idea Roman! Virge, is that okay with you?”

“Yeah,” Virgil managed around a closed throat. *Why is this so hard to talk about?*

“I believe this conversation may increase your comfort in the relationship Virgil,” Logan began. “To be frank, I think a discussion of boundaries is overdue. Would everyone be comfortable with that?”

“You!”

“I am!”

“Sure.”

Logan looked toward the youngest member at the table. “If you do not want to, we can postpone.”

Virgil shook his head. “I think we gotta.”

“Alright. If you begin to feel uncomfortable, do let us know.”

“Kay.”

Logan assessed the anxious Side. *Interesting. I am feeling an unusually strong wave of protectiveness.*

“Very well. Let us begin with what has already been brought up. You would like to initiate anything sexual. Does this include osculation?”

“Huh?”

“Kissing.”
“Oh. Yeah. I’ve just, never really done that before. And I don’t know how,” he finished, humiliated.

“I find that acceptable, and it would appear that Roman and Patton do as well. How do you feel about flirting?”

Virgil couldn’t hold back his smile as his posture became less tense. “I like it.”

Logan’s chest felt warm. “I am glad to hear it, darling. How comfortable are you with flirting?”

Virgil looked up at Logan. “I’m pretty comfortable with it.”

“Are you comfortable with others initiating flirting, or would you prefer to?”

“I’m fine either way.”

Logan nodded. “Very well. We are all very comfortable with being the recipient of flirting as well. For touch, we’ve been asking before we touch you. Would you like to continue that?”

Virgil frowned as he thought. “I don’t know… It helps sometimes, but other times I just want a hug without the questions first, y’know?”

“You can have a hug any time you want!!”

Virgil chuckled. “I know Patton.”

Logan had his hand on his chin. “Hmmm… Perhaps we could continue asking verbally, but also try telegraphing our intentions non-verbally so you can say yes or no. Would you like to try that Virgil?”

Virgil tilted his head. “Yeah, that could work. We could try that. What about you guys?”

Patton beamed. “I’m almost always happy to be touched! If I’m having an off day I’ll let you know!”

Roman smiled softly. “I am similar to Patton in that regard. I very much enjoy touching you and being touched by you,” he said, lowering his voice. Virgil had to shift a little in his seat.

“I will inform you if I do not want to be touched,” Logan finished.

Virgil smiled at all of them. Patton’s face turned serious. “How would you feel about talking about when we fight?”

Virgil’s eyes widened. “Fight?”

“Not physically dear, just disagreements.”

Virgil bit his lip. “I think that’s a good thing to cover.”

“Okay honey. Tell us if you start feeling uncomfortable.” At Virgil’s nod, Patton continued. “What we have set up is we’ll try to talk it out in the moment if we can, but if we need some alone time we’ll separate for a bit until we feel better. We also don’t involve any of the other Sides in the disagreement unless they’re personally involved. Venting is okay, but asking their opinion or for them to take sides isn’t. How does all of that sound to you?”

Virgil cleared his throat. “That sounds good.”
“Good! Is there anything you want to add?”

“Not that I can think of right now…” Virgil trailed off as he thought.

“Okay! If you do think of anything let us know!”

“Yeah, I will.” Virgil snorted as he thought back. “Probably should have talked about boundaries when I tried to sleep with you.”

Patton smiled sadly while Logan tilted his head and frowned. “You tried to sleep with Patton?”

Virgil’s skin became cold. Oh shit. “Yeah. Um, and Roman. I just wanted to get it over with and help you guys destress, but they both turned me down. I didn’t ask you only because I knew you’d be too observant and know that I didn’t actually want it, I swear I’m just as attracted to you, I just-

“It’s quite alright Virgil. I’m not offended. You are correct that I would and will refuse to do anything you do not want to do.” Logan offered Virgil a small smile, which Virgil returned.

“Quite right! I won’t lay a finger on you until you’re ready, love,” Roman promised.

“Me neither!”

Virgil smiled shakily, the beginnings of a flashback taking root.

“Are there any other boundaries you’d like to discuss Virgil?”

Virgil shook his head, starting his breathing exercises. *Hands, I can feel their hands, I don’t want to!*

“You appear to be starting your breathing exercises. Are you experiencing a panic attack?”

Virgil shook his head. “Flashback,” he ground out through gritted teeth.

“You are safe Virgil. It’s not happening anymore. It’s 2020. You’re in the Light kitchen. Name five blue things you can see.”

Virgil could hear words but didn’t understand them. When Logan stopped talking, Virgil looked over at him with wide eyes.

Logan’s eyes burned. “Can you name five things that are blue Virgil?”

“Five things that are blue…” he repeated back, gaze unwavering.

“Patton, please retrieve an ice cube.”

Patton quickly summoned an ice cube and placed it in Virgil’s hand. As soon as Patton touched Virgil however, Virgil gasped and doubled over, like he was in pain. The ice cube slipped from his grip as his hands wrapped around his middle.

Roman leaned forward, putting his hand out but withdrawing it at the last minute.

They kept talking to Virgil, telling him he was safe, where he was, and who they were, but nothing seemed to pull Virgil out of his flashback. His forehead was almost touching the counter top, his
breathing coming in gasps and whimpers with the occasional cry of pain. The three Light Sides looked on helplessly as their boyfriend suffered, tears in their eyes. Finally, Virgil’s body became less tense. The Light Sides kept talking to Virgil, and breathed a collective sigh of relief when he lifted his head. He was pale and his eyes were wide, fearful, and filling with tears.

“Oh sweetie…” Patton breathed. Virgil shook his head and shrunk in.

“You do not want us to touch you?” Logan asked. Virgil shook his head again. “Alright, we won’t.”

Virgil shivered and gasped in breaths.

“Darling, tell us what we can do,” Roman pleaded.

Virgil whimpered and bit down on his lip hard enough to draw blood. “I… I gotta sleep. This is just gonna k-keep happening all day i-if I don’t.”

“Alright. Do you want us to accompany you up to your room?”

Virgil shook his head tightly. “No. I n-need Remy. I c-can’t fall asleep on m-my own right now.”

“I’m sure he’ll be more than happy to help. Let us know if there is anything we can do.”

Virgil nodded jerkily as he sank out. Once he was gone, Patton let out the sob he’d been holding in. Logan and Roman went to hold him and each other as tears streamed down each of their faces.

“My poor baby…” Patton whimpered. Roman pressed a kiss to the top of Patton’s head and Logan tightened his grip on Roman and Patton.

“He’ll be okay. He has a good support system. I’m sure he’ll feel better once he’s woken up,” Logan soothed. Patton sobbed again and pressed into Logan’s chest.

They held each other, waiting for their love to return.

Chapter End Notes

They finally laid down some important boundaries! Now to check in and see how Virgil is doing.

Also, that thing where Virgil repeated back to Logan what was said despite him not being aware of much is called echolalia. I get that sometimes if I’m not paying attention or if I’m heading down the road to a flashback.
Chapter 87

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! A couple warnings for this chapter: there are recurring themes of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and relapse. Virgil does not actually act on the self-harm urges or suicidal thoughts, but I wanted to give you a heads up because this chapter discusses them pretty intensely. I also boxed in some of the more intense suicidal thoughts in between lines of tildes so you can skip it if you need to.

I'll explain a little more in the end A/N about this chapter! It will include talks of mental health.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil appeared in the Neutral Side of the mindscape shivering with tears making their way down his face. He started towards Remy and Saul’s shared bedroom without concern for walking in on them.

I can’t tell the Light Sides, I had to lie! Oh god, is Deceit stronger now? I just wanted Saul and Remy, but I can’t hurt their feelings!!

Isn’t that why Deceit wanted Thomas to lie to Joan?

This is different!

No it’s not.

Virgil whimpered involuntarily as he approached the door and knocked. He heard heavy footsteps approaching. Saul. Oh thank god. I need him right now.

The door opened to a shirtless Saul and Virgil nearly leapt at him, wrapping his arms around Saul’s middle and burying his face in the crook of the larger Side’s neck.

“Oh Virgil… it’s okay little one, you’re safe darling.”

“What happened coffee bean?”

Virgil took a deep breath and unburied his head. “I’m tired. I had a flashback, then a panic attack and was in cold water for so long, and then a nightmare and another flashback.” He sniffled. “I think I want to cancel today.”

Remy chuckled sadly. “Oh sweetie. Can I touch you?” Virgil quickly nodded, and Remy started using one hand to massage his back.

“I just want to sleep.”

“You came to the right place! I was just about to turn in myself. Let’s go sugar.”

They made their way to the bed and crawled on it, with Virgil in the middle. He laid his head on Remy’s chest while Saul held him from behind. Remy brought a hand up and started gently
running it through Virgil’s hair.

“You’re safe, Thomas is safe, the Sides are safe. We’re going napping bitches.”

Virgil snorted and snuggled into Remy’s chest. Remy kept running his fingers through Virgil’s hair, pushing as much of his magic into him as he could inside the mindscape. Virgil dozed off and Remy followed him.

///// Virgil woke up, feeling dizzy and nauseous but happy to have gotten some rest. He heard Saul snoring lightly behind him and felt Remy’s hand still in his hair. He was content to lay there, basking in safety and comfort, but big surprise, his anxiety wouldn’t allow it. He slowly sat up, waking up the two Neutral Sides.

“Hey pumpkin, you sleep well?” Remy slurred.

“Yeah. I think I’ll feel a lot better. Thanks Rem.”

“No problem babes. Wanna hang out with us for today?”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

The three Sides ambled over to the kitchen, where Saul got started on grilled sandwiches and Remy and Virgil chatted over coffee. They eagerly dug into their food when Virgil remembered what he wanted to talk to Remy and Saul about.

“Oh! Roman and I went on a date in the Imagination!”

“Did you two fuck?”

“REMY.”

“What?”

“No. We did not. He was all princely and shit.”

Remy waggled his eyebrows. “Did he take you for a ride on his horse? Wait, no…”

Virgil laughed as Remy stumbled over his words and frowned. “Sorry babes, I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“It’s okay. We didn’t see the horses actually. We walked around the castle grounds and talked, then we ate dinner and went back to our rooms.” Virgil couldn’t stop the smile from creeping onto his face. “It was nice.”

“I’m glad sugar. You deserve a good boyfriend. What did you wear? Did you do something with your hair or makeup?”

“Yeah, I put on some eyeshadow on my upper lids. I didn’t wear the hoodie! I just wore those jeans and boots you gave me, and a v-neck t-shirt. Plus a necklace.”

“Did you wear a normal necklace or a cho- um, tighter necklace?” Remy asked.

Virgil frowned. “I wore the black tourmaline necklace. You can say choker Rem.”
Remy looked down at his drink and turned it in his hands. “I’m sorry, I just… didn’t want to upset you sweetie.”

“Why would saying choker upset me?”

“I heard what you told Patton. About Malice.”

“Oh. I guess that makes sense. But you don’t have to worry about that.”

“I do though! I don’t want to accidentally hurt you!”

Virgil had a sinking feeling in his stomach. “Rems, it’s okay. I’m not made of glass, I can handle it.”

“But it’s not okay! You have so many triggers, and I don’t know what’s okay to say or tease you about because I don’t know what’ll send you into a flashback!”

There it is. You’re too much work to be around. He’s scared to be around you. It stresses him out.

Virgil flinched backwards as his eyes filled with tears, betrayal filling his veins. Remy looked surprised at what he said.

“Virgil, I-”

“It’s fine Remy,” Virgil interrupted. “I wouldn’t want to stress you out. I’m sorry this is so hard for you and that I’m such a burden,” he spat.

“Baby, please-”

“I’ll get out of your hair,” Virgil said as he sank out. He cursed the tears that fell before he was gone. Once in his bedroom, he snapped the room soundproof, flopped onto his bed face-first, and sobbed into his pillow.

See? You’re a ticking time bomb, you’re lucky you caught Remy when he was sleep-deprived enough to not have a filter. You’re unpredictable. No one knows when you’re going to flip out and make everyone around you miserable. You waste of space, time, and energy.

I’m useless.

Yes you are. It’s wonderful to see you finally stop lying to yourself! Really Virgil, it took you long enough. Why do you think the Dark Sides had to fuck you constantly? You’re a plague of misery, spreading unhappiness wherever you are.

Virgil felt like his chest was tearing in two. He was nearly screaming with the force of his sobs, his throat quickly becoming raw and painful. He was sure he’d be spitting out blood soon.

He couldn’t stop for hours, wailing in his room. The loss of his relationship with Saul and Remy, the knowledge that he only made everyone around him miserable and that he’d just been lying to himself, and the fact that the Light Sides would be so much better off without him was making his entire body tremble in physical and emotional pain.

Six hours later, his throat and chest hurt too badly to continue crying, and Virgil’s body was trying to shut the crying down. He moaned, still so distraught he couldn’t stop writhing.

Fuck it.
Virgil lifted up his sleeve, brought his nails down onto his arm, and pressed, ready to scratch. He felt like he'd literally gotten struck by a car.

*I'm about to cut again.*

Virgil stared at the point where his nails met the skin of his arm in rapt silence. He slowly pulled his hand away.

No.

He whimpered and curled up miserably.

~~~~~

*If you’re not going to cut, you should at least get rid of the issue, which is you. You’re only dragging everyone down. Once you’re gone, they’ll be so much happier without you. Kill yourself.*

Virgil began crying in fear.

*I don’t want to! I don’t want to die!!*

*You selfish bitch!! Just off yourself and-*

**NO!!**

~~~~~

Virgil pushed himself off his bed, still crying.

*I'm not safe right now. I need to be around someone.*

He cried as the thought of inflicting himself on someone latched onto his brain.

*I need to see Dr. Picani.*

He pulled his hood up and went into his bathroom. Seeing his face in the mirror only made him cry harder, so he turned to his toilet. He grabbed several squares of toilet paper and roughly wiped his face off and blew his nose until his tears were better under control. He tossed the used tissues in the toilet and flushed.

Virgil grabbed Shelly on his way out and stuffed her in his hoodie pocket. God, I hope I don’t run into any Light Sides. He pressed his ear against his door and listened. Once he didn’t hear any sound, he carefully opened his door and looked both ways. Path is clear.

Virgil walked toward Roman’s room and was relieved to find the door open. Unfortunately, Roman was in his room working.

“Virgil! How- oh my sweet love, are you alright?”

Virgil sobbed and shook his head, moving quickly towards the mirror.

“No, I need t-to see Dr. P-Picani,” he said through his tears.

Roman stood there awkwardly. “O-okay, let me know if there’s anything I can do for you?”

Virgil let out another sob as he walked through the mirror. He landed in the familiar waiting room
and immediately headed back to Dr. Picani’s office, setting Shelly on the seat next to him, still crying. Dr. Picani didn’t take long to show up and he didn’t give his usual greeting, instead wordlessly sliding the basket of comfort items over to Virgil. Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish and hugged it, burying his face in it as he cried. Dr. Picani let Virgil cry for a minute before beginning to speak.

“What’s going on today Virgil?” he asked gently.

Virgil sniffled a few times and grabbed a Kleenex. He blew his nose. “R-Remy said th-that I have a lot of triggers and h-he d-doesn’t know w-what’s going to upset m-me! I’m unpredictable and terrible!! And a useless fucking burden!!” he cried hoarsely. He began coughing from his sore throat. Dr. Picani handed him a bottle of water.

“I’m so sorry Virgil. That’s terrible for someone to go through. Are you having suicidal thoughts?”

Virgil hiccuped and nodded. “And I almost relapsed. But I didn’t! And I don’t want to die! That’s why I came here!”

“I’m so incredibly glad you did Virgil. That’s really hard to do, and you did it! Let’s break down what’s going on. It sounds like there are a couple of things going on and they’re all big?”

“Yeah. A-and none of them are fixable. There’s just too many.”

“We’ll get there in a minute. Let’s tackle these one at a time. Was Remy the beginning of these feelings, or did something precede them?”

Virgil let out another sob into the plush animal. “I-I h-had a terrible night. It was a-a-a-awful!!” he said as he dissolved into tears again.

Dr. Picani hummed. “I am so sorry Virgil. What was the first thing that happened last night?”

Virgil sniffed. “I g-got back f-from a d-d-date with R-Roman. I-It was n-nice.” He allowed a small smile onto his face, which Dr. Picani returned. “Th-then I woke up with… um, a boner. And I w-went to t-take a shower to get rid of it. A c-cold one! I can’t deal with it normally!” he added quickly. “And I had a flashback in the shower. I think I was in cold water f-for, like, 3 hours because I was freaking out about a stupid little flashback. I’m so weak and awful.” He shivered at the memory. “And I fell asleep eventually, Logan said I probably got hypothermia which makes sense. And then I had a flashback nightmare and I woke up. Breakfast was okay, we talked about boundaries and stuff - the Light Sides and I. But then I had another flashback and I went to Remy and Saul and they helped me sleep, but then I woke up and we had lunch and he told me what he really thinks of me,” Virgil finished bitterly.

“Good grief! It sounds like you’ve had a terrible night and day! Let’s start with Remy-”

“And all the Light Sides would be better off without me!” Virgil cried into the plush.

“Let’s tackle one thing at a time Virgil.”

“M sorry,” Virgil mumbled.

“It’s okay. What exactly did Remy say?”

“H-he said that I have so many t-triggers he doesn’t kn-know what’s o-o-okay to say b-because h-he d-d-doesn’t want t-to send me into a f-f-flashback!”
“Oh Virgil, that must have hurt so much.”

“It did!”

“I can see why. Did he say or do anything after that?”

Virgil shifted. “H-he seemed to regret being honest f-for o-once. He kept trying to say something,
but I’m weak and pathetic so I didn’t let him and I sunk out to my room.”

“I don’t think you sound weak or pathetic. You were doing what you could to prevent yourself
from getting more hurt.”

Virgil grumbled into the plush toy.

“So what I’ve heard you say so far is that you had a terrible night and morning, so you went to
Remy and Saul for help. They helped you initially, but then Remy said something hurtful, and that
has led you to this spiral of thinking you’re useless and a burden. Do I have that right?”

“Yeah, basically.”

“Okay. It sounds like a perfect storm came together to make you feel terrible about yourself today.”

Virgil huffed a dry laugh into the stuffed animal. “Sounds about right.”

Dr. Picani smiled sadly. “You didn’t deserve that Virgil. It sounds like Remy said something really
awful and then tried to backtrack. Since he’s Sleep and works at night, do you know if he slept
enough?”

As soon as Virgil realized what Dr. Picani was getting at, he felt stupid.

“I’m such an idiot. Of course he didn’t mean that! I’m such an idiot. Of
course he didn’t mean that! He was just tired and misspoke. And the thing about the horse… Once
Remy’s statement was torn down, most of his negative thinking went with it.

Virgil shifted. “I think he only got, like, four hours after helping me.”

“Okay. And you say he tried to backtrack?”

“Yeah… I’m kind of feeling stupid right now.”

“Don’t feel stupid. I can absolutely see how you came to the conclusion you did! I think a lot of
people would have! Do you think it might be possible that Remy was tired, worried about you, and
said something in the wrong way?”

“Yeah… I honestly do feel better doc. I help the Lights and Neutrals and Thomas. I… I’m sorry for
wasting your time.”

“You didn’t waste my time at all! I’m actually very happy you came to me if you needed to talk!
Sometimes just saying things and working through things is all someone needs. You were in such a
tough spot, but you made a plan to get help and followed through on it. I’m very proud of you!”

Virgil blushed and hid his face in the stuffed animal. “Thanks doc.” He took a few deep breaths
before continuing. “What do I do about Remy?”

“Well, that depends. Do you want to make up with him or cut him off?”

“Make up with him! He’s usually really awesome.”
Dr. Picani smiled. “From what you’ve told me, it sounds like he’s usually fantastic, he just slipped up this time. A strategy that some people find helpful is to wait at least overnight until you’re feeling better, and then see if he wants to talk.”

Virgil’s phone chose that moment to buzz. It was Remy.

_Coffee bean, I’m so sorry!! I SWEAR I didn’t mean it like that at all baby! Once you feel comfortable with it, can we talk?

Virgil sniffled. “It’s Remy. He says he’s sorry and didn’t mean it like that. He wants to talk when I’m feeling better. How do I respond?”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “Do you feel like you’d respond best now or later?”

Virgil chewed his lip. “Later, I think. I’m really hungry. And just… tired.”

“I can imagine. So you’ll text Remy when you’re feeling better and try to make up with him. It sounds like loss of relationships and isolation really accelerated the spiral. Would you agree?”

“Yeah.”

“Is there anyone you can stay with tonight?”

Virgil paled as he thought of Roman. “I could stay with Roman. He saw me come in here pretty fucked up, so he’s probably worried.”

“Is he who you want to stay with tonight? Roman will be okay even if you don’t want to talk to him right now.”

Virgil sighed. “No, I do. He really does help me feel better.” Despite the circumstances, he felt himself smile.

“I’m so happy you have such a good support system. And again, I’m really proud of you for being able to remember and follow through on the safety plan! Is there anything you’d like to change about it now that you’ve experienced this incident with Remy?”

Virgil shook his head. “Not that I can think of.”

“Okay! How are you feeling right now Virgil?”

Virgil hugged the flying dolphin fish. “I’m feeling a lot better. Like, I shouldn’t feel this okay after how I’ve been all day. But I also still feel shitty.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “That is actually very common. Once the base of the issue causing a spiral is taken care of, people tend to start feeling less in crisis pretty quickly. Although you’ve had a horrible 24 hours, so I’m not surprised you still don’t feel good.”

Virgil nodded, then made eye contact with Dr. Picani and shot him a half-smile. “Thanks doc.”

Dr. Picani smiled back. “It’s my pleasure to help you Virgil. Is there anything else you’d like to talk about today?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, I’m good.” He put the fish back in the basket.
“Okay. I’ll see you soon?”

Virgil stood shakily and looked shyly at the doctor. “Yeah.”

“I’m glad to hear it. Take care Virgil.”

“Thanks, you too.”

Dr. Picani nodded his thanks and Virgil left to go to Roman.

Chapter End Notes

I'm pretty proud with how this chapter turned out! I think it's important to show what crisis can look like and how a competent professional might handle it. A couple notes about this chapter's crisis:

1. Improper food, water intake, and sleep make everything so much worse. You're starting in the negative and working backwards. It's just fighting yourself.
2. Support systems aren't perfect because they're made up of human beings, and human beings sometimes fuck up. Shit happens, it's how you deal with it that matters.
3. Putting things into perspective and externalizing is so powerful and important. It's amazing once you can do those things with someone else (who knows what they're doing) how fast you start to feel better.
Hey folks! No warnings for this chapter, so here's a shameless plug for my Tumblr, Lilfellasblog! https://lilfellasblog.tumblr.com/

Feel free to come on over and chat!

Virgil stepped through the mirror and landed in Roman’s bedroom. Roman looked up from his desk and when he saw it was Virgil, immediately stood.

“Love? How did… are you okay? I mean, um, how are you feeling?” Roman stuttered.

Virgil decided to put Roman out of his misery. “I’m feeling better. Had a bad day.”

“I am sorry to hear that my raven. Is there anything I can do?”

Virgil shoved his hands in his hoodie pockets, suddenly nervous. He wrapped his hand around Shelly. “Yeah. Um, would it be okay if I stayed here tonight? You don’t have to say yes if you don’t want me to! I’m just—”

“It’s quite alright dear Dr. Doom. I would love nothing more than for you to stay with me tonight. Would you like pyjamas?”

Virgil bit his lip. “Maybe just sweatpants?”

“Certainly love. Just a moment.” Roman snapped and a pair of sweatpants appeared on the bed. “Would you like to change in the bathroom or out here?”

Virgil shrugged. “Wherever.”

“Very well. Excuse me while I change,” Roman said as he went into his bathroom. Virgil grabbed the sweatpants and changed quickly, giving him an opportunity to study Roman’s room. The desk was chaotic and littered with papers, the most cluttered he’d ever seen the royal’s desk.

Roman came out of the bathroom in matching white silk pyjamas, which had gold trim and accents. Both the pants and shirt were full-length, but the center was unbuttoned, giving Virgil clear view of the royal’s abs and pecs. He stared at the display of muscles for a moment before he was able to tear his eyes away. He blushed and looked down.

“See something you like?” Virgil could hear the smirk in the creative Side’s voice. Damn him.

“Shut it Princey,” Virgil grumbled half-heartedly. Roman chuckled and stretched.

“Shall we?”

Virgil looked at Roman. Roman was smiling, but his eyes were heavy with concern. Virgil nodded,
and Roman climbed in. Virgil followed him and rested his head on Roman’s chest at the lifted arm. Roman held Virgil close.

“What do you want to talk about it dark angel?”

Virgil grabbed a handful of the silk in his hands. “It was just a bad day.”

Roman squeezed Virgil slightly. “I am so sorry my sweet. Was it because of the conversation we had at breakfast?”

Virgil shook his head as much as he could against the firm chest. “No, it started at night. Our date was the last good thing that happened before my brain decided to fuck me up.”

Roman brought a hand up and started gently rubbing tiny circles on the back of Virgil’s head with his fingertips. Virgil closed his eyes and rumbled. “I am glad our date was a positive experience for you, my love.”

Virgil hummed. “What about you?”

Roman’s voice dropped an octave. “I had a wonderful time,” he purred. Virgil flushed and hid his face in Roman’s chest. The reverberating chuckle gave the anxious Side goosebumps.

“That’s, um, good.”

Roman huffed a laugh into Virgil’s hair. They laid there for several minutes until Roman broke the silence again. “Is there anything else you’d like to talk about?”

Virgil opened his mouth to speak but was interrupted by his stomach. Roman laughed.

“Are you hungry?”

“Yeah. I haven’t eaten anything since lunch.” Virgil paused in realization. “Huh. I’m used to eating now…” he said to himself. Roman tightened his arms around Virgil.

“I am glad your body is used to eating regularly. Would you like me to summon some food?”

“Sure.”

Roman gently pulled away from Virgil and walked over to the microwave and minifridge. He pulled out a covered plate, removed the tin foil, and put it in the microwave. Virgil saw a post-it note on the tin foil that read, For Virgil, Love, Patton <3. Virgil teared up at the consideration. He quickly pulled Shelly out of his pocket and placed her next to him so he could pet her.

Roman quickly brought the food back to Virgil along with a glass of milk. He paused at the sight of the spider and his eyes widened.

“She’s plastic, don’t worry. I don’t want something escaping and literally scaring Patton to death.”

Roman relaxed minutely and nodded, then paused.

“She?”

“Oh, yeah, I named her Shelly. She helps me feel better sometimes.”

“Ah. Greetings Shelly!”
Virgil snorted as Roman set the food and milk down on the nightstand. The plate was piled with mashed potatoes, Montreal seasoned chicken breast, and oven-roasted garlic veggies. Virgil ate eagerly, chugging the milk at the end.

“Would you like some more angel?” Roman asked. At Virgil’s decline, he banished the dishes to the kitchen sink. He crawled into bed once more, careful to avoid the spider, and raised his arm, smiling when Virgil quickly dove under it and nestled in on his chest.

“How are you feeling now love?”


“I am glad. Do you want to stay up longer or go to sleep?”

Virgil tensed slightly. “I know I should get some rest, but I’m anxious. I know, big surprise, better call J. Jonah Jameson.”

Roman couldn’t help but smile at his prickly little crow. “What is making you anxious currently?”

Virgil sighed. “Just… I’m gonna be awkward around Remy tomorrow. More than usual, I mean.”

Roman brought his hand back up to massage the back of Virgil’s head again, knowing how much he liked that. “Why? What’s going to make it awkward?”

“You mean besides me?” Virgil drawled. When Roman just kept rubbing the back of his head, he sighed. “We had kind of a fight. It was mostly my fault, I totally overreacted.”

“I’m so sorry. I know you and Remy are close. What happened?”

Virgil gripped white and gold silk in his fist. “He was sleep-deprived and just wanted to make sure he didn’t hurt me. He said that I had a lot of triggers and he didn’t know what would set me off. He tried to backtrack, but I didn’t let him because I’m a mess and I just sunk out.”

Roman’s arms tightened on him and the hand in his hair paused. “He. Said. What.” Roman growled. Virgil flinched at the furious tone and ducked his head. Roman relaxed his arms and took a few calming breaths. “Forgive me, my sweet angel, but I do not think you overreacted. That is a terrible thing to say to someone who has experienced traumatic events.”

“I don’t know, I mean now I don’t think he meant it, I think he was just tired and said the wrong thing…”

“This triggered your spiral?”

Virgil clenched the fabric in his hand tighter. “Yeah. The usual stuff, you know, that you all would be better off without me, I make everyone around me miserable and scared because I’m fucked up, pretty typical.”

Roman buried his face in Virgil’s hair. “You are none of those things Virgil,” he whispered harshly.

Virgil sighed, not quite believing it but not having the strength to argue. “Okay.”

Roman’s chest clenched at the obvious disbelief in Virgil’s voice. He vowed to make sure Virgil knew how much he meant to him and the others. “I love you Virgil. So much. You’re so important to me.”
“I love you too Ro.”

Roman forced himself not to kiss the top of Virgil’s head at the sweet whisper.

“Goodnight my love.”

“Night Princey.”

Roman stirred and looked down at the weight on his chest. He smiled when he saw Virgil still sleeping soundly, shoulders rising and falling slowly. The warm pressure of his dark love safely curled against him made his heart melt and a surge of protective love go through him. Virgil’s eyes were closed and his mouth was slightly open, his face relaxed and angelic. Roman was still trying to figure out how to best tell his emo that. He’d have to settle for soliloquizing how handsome and gorgeous his dark love was for a reasonable two hours. *I can always work up to longer.*

Roman savored the feeling of holding the relaxed form in his arms, protected from the world, lithe muscles covered by soft cloth underneath his hands. He felt complete holding his little bird, safely tucked against his body.

After a half hour of admiring his sleeping lover’s form, Roman felt Virgil begin to wake up. His muscles twitched slightly and he closed his mouth and swallowed. He frowned, scrunching his face and he inhaled deeply through his nose and shifted. He opened his eyes to peer up at Roman, sleep still clouding his half-shut eyes. Roman rubbed Virgil’s upper arm.

“Good morning my love.”

Virgil closed his eyes and stretched his arms slightly forward. “Mmmmm, mornin’ Ro,” he rasped deeply, his voice causing the prince to shiver. He relaxed back on Roman’s chest and started to doze off again. As much as Roman wanted to simply hold Virgil safely in his arms, he knew they’d both function better with food in their systems.

“My sweet, as much as I would love to hold you until the end of time, I believe we should attend breakfast if you’re feeling up to it.”

Virgil responded by groaning and nuzzling into Roman’s chest. “But you’re waaaarrrrrrrrm.”

Roman chuckled. “I believe “hot” is a better term, and yes, I know. Would you like to eat or go back to sleep my dark angel?”

Virgil sighed. “The answer to that question is always sleep, but I know we should probably go eat something like people. Ugh, I don’t wanna be people…”

Roman laughed. “Then you shall be my beloved cryptid. Come now, even cryptids need to eat.”

Virgil grumbled as he sat up. He extended his elbows above his head and stretched, and Roman definitely didn’t check him out. Virgil grabbed his jeans and changed in the bathroom while Roman snapped his prince uniform on and waited for Virgil to finish in the bathroom. Once the door opened, Roman walked inside and headed over to the vanity. He first dampened and styled his hair so it looked effortlessly perfect, which took a quick 20 minutes. He then washed his face, exfoliated, applied moisturizer, witch hazel toner, another moisturizer, anti-aging cream, eye cream, a lip scrub, chapstick, and SPF. It was a relaxed day, so there was no need to do his full routine.
When he walked out, he found Virgil dozing on the bed again. He chuckled and ran fingers through his hair.

“Virgil, love, sweetheart, light of my life, darkest angel, it is time for breakfast.”

“Jesus Christ, how many of those do you got?”

“Many! Would you like to hear them all?”

“Nope! I’m good! Let’s go downstairs,” Virgil quickly cut Roman off, not wanting to spend another 45 minutes waiting for breakfast. He put Shelly in his pocket and took off for the door.

Roman followed him closely, humming *Kiss the Girl* as he appraised the sexy man before him. Virgil slumped into his seat as he smelled the eggs cooking. They both greeted Patton, Virgil by giving a short wave and Roman with a good morning kiss. Roman grabbed Virgil a large mug of coffee, which Virgil accepted with a grunt of thanks. Logan soon descended the stairs, working on something on his tablet. Once breakfast was served, the three Light Sides chatted amiably while Virgil ate slowly and pushed food around his plate. Patton was the first to notice.

“Kiddo? You feeling okay?”

Virgil shot him a half smile. “Yeah, just anxious. Remy and I kinda had a fight because I decided that overreacting was the best thing to do, so now I’ve gotta talk to him.”

“I disagree that you overreacted,” Roman growled. Virgil shrugged noncommittally.

“I am sorry to hear that Virgil. Would you like a hug?” Logan offered. Virgil shook his head.

“Naw, don’t want to be touched right now.”

“Alright. Is there anything we can do?”

Virgil smiled. “Not right now. Thanks though L.”

“Of course. Do let us know if there is. And good luck with Remy.”

“Thanks man.”

Breakfast continued, with Virgil managing a bit more food while going over different scenarios in his head.

“I’d love to help!” At Roman’s exclamation, Virgil tuned back into the conversation.

“Oh good!! Thomas needs to write a letter to his Aunt Patty, and I’m not as talented as you are with art!”

Virgil smirked. “Speaking of letters, Princey…”

Roman turned to him with a confused look. “Yes, my love?”

“That letter you sent me. It was cool, but you fucking glitter bombed my room.”

Roman winced. “Ah, my apologies dark knight.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll get you back.”
“What?”

“Anyways, how’s Aunt Patty?”

Patton giggled at the frightened pallor Roman’s face had taken on. “She’s doing great!! Her birthday’s coming up! She’ll be 50!”

“Oh that’s cool.”

They chatted until everyone had finished eating, Roman watching Virgil out of the corner of his eye. Once the prince had finished, he quickly stood and escaped to his room. Virgil snickered.

“How long do you intend to make Roman suffer?”

“However long it takes to get everything ready.”

“Get what ready?”

“All of it. When the time comes, don’t interfere. I don’t want any collateral damage.”

Although Logan smiled and shook his head fondly, he made a note to never prank the anxious Side.

Virgil stretched when he was finished and helped Patton clean up. Patton chatted about Joan, who had texted Thomas a good morning text and isn’t that the most adorable thing ever?! Virgil chuckled as he listened and soon went up to his room as they finished cleaning the dishes. Closing his eyes and doing several rounds of breathing exercises, he grabbed his phone and pulled up his messages. He performed another round of breathing exercises, then typed:

Wanna get together today?

Chapter End Notes

Roman is doomed.
Chapter 89

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! No warnings for this chapter! We shall see the attempt to smooth things over between Remy and Virgil!

Also, I'm on Discord now! My username and Discord server are both Lilfella!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The reply was almost instantaneous.

Of course babe! Come on down whenever!

Virgil pocketed his phone. Gotta get this over with. Steeling himself, he focused on sinking down and reappearing in the Neutral Sides’ kitchen. Remy was there waiting with two drinks. Virgil caught Remy’s eyes and looked down, nervousness stealing the words from his throat.

“I got you a dark chocolate mocha sweetie. Wanna sit?”

Virgil nodded and walked to the chair, keeping his eyes down.

Holy shit I hate myself. This sucks. Why did I have to freak out and overreact? God, I had a good thing and I ruined it. It’s what I do to all the goodness in my life.

“I’m sorry.”

“I’m sorry.”

Virgil looked up in surprise to find Remy looking equally surprised. They met each other’s gaze and after a moment, both cracked a small smile. Virgil looked down shyly.

“I really am sorry sugar,” Remy said quietly. “I said the exact wrong thing and hurt you while I was trying to avoid hurting you. I really didn’t mean it like that.”

Virgil turned the styrofoam cup around in his hand as he sighed. “I know Rem. I’m sorry for running off and not giving you a chance to say what you actually meant. I’m fucked up and that just hit a sore spot for me, and I overreacted and ran away instead of hearing you out.”

“No no baby! I said something really bitchy and you felt bad, which is not an overreaction!”

Virgil shrugged and didn’t say anything, twisting the cup around on the counter a few more times before taking a sip and tearing up. Perfect temperature. Like always.

“You know I’m not mad at you, right?”

Virgil looked up in surprise. Okay, I’ve got to tell him thank you. That’s pretty gracious of him. “Why?” DAMMIT BRAIN.

Remy’s face twitched. “You were upset and wanted time alone. I don’t think that’s unreasonable. That’s actually smarter than what I would have done. I would’ve stayed and bitched you out,” he
finished with a half-smile.

Virgil snorted. “Yeah, but it wasn’t fair to not let you talk. And then I didn’t text you for the whole day and night.”

“Sweetie, I knew you needed some time. It’s okay, honest. You know me, I keep shit 100. I’m not mad at you at all. I’m more mad at myself honestly.”

Virgil felt the hurt from yesterday bubbling back up. “Then why did you say it?” he asked quietly.

“Oh babe, I’m so sorry. That was my dumb bitch way of trying to ask what things might upset you and what things I shouldn’t say.”

Virgil took another sip to try to soothe the lump in his throat. It didn’t work. “I… when you said that, it made me feel like I was nothing. Like I was worthless, like I just make everyone around me miserable and my fucked up shit is all they see about me. I hate that.” Virgil huffed out a humorless laugh. “I guess it’s a sore spot for me.”

“I’m so sorry coffee bean. You’re none of those things, I promise!! I love you so much,” Remy’s voice cracked, “and I promise none of those thoughts are real. If those thoughts come back, I will bitch slap them.”

Virgil huffed again, this time from amusement. “Thanks Rem.”

“Of course babe. I love you so much.”

“I love you too Rem.” Virgil started picking at the label on the side of the cup. “I guess I should tell you what upsets me? Then you won’t be guessing.”

“Only if you want to sugar.”

“No, it’s cool.” Virgil shifted in his seat. “I, uh, don’t like talking about the Dark Sides-”

“I’ll fucking kill them,” Remy growled. He cleared his throat. “Sorry hun, that was, like, a reflex.”

Virgil shot him a half-smile. “It’s okay. Uh, I guess for me it’s a lot of physical stuff? Like, if I don’t want to be touched and I get touched, I have a hard time with that. Or if someone focuses on my… past, that can be hard if I didn’t bring it up first. Dr. Picani’s really good at balancing that though.”

“Picani is the fucking bomb and I will blow him if I ever meet him.”

Virgil snorted into his coffee.

“Is there anything else I should avoid?”

Virgil chewed his lip and frowned. “Nothing that I can think of.”

Remy sipped the last of his iced coffee from the Starbucks cup loudly, vanished it, and summoned a new cup. “Is it… is it okay if I tease you like I have been doing?”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “You mean asking if I’ve fucked the Light Sides yet?”

“Yeah. I won’t do it if it triggers you.”

“No, that’s fine. Answer’s still no by the way,” Virgil added as he saw the corners of Remy’s lips
turn up. Virgil took a few gulps of his drink.

Remy leaned forward slightly. “Want a hug?”

Virgil smiled. “Sure Rems.”

Remy practically leapt out of his chair and quickly wrapped up Virgil in a hug.

“I’m so sorry baby,” Remy whispered.

“I know. It’s okay, I promise.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

They stayed like that, just soaking in each other’s presence, until they gently parted.

“Wanna watch some trash TV?”

Virgil shoved his hands in his hoodie pockets. “Naw, I’ve got to get revenge on Roman.”

“Oooooo sounds exciting! What did he do?”

“Accidentally glitter bombed my room.”

“Oh shit. Glitter is forever.”

“I KNOW. I’ll make him regret it.”

“Can I help?!”

Virgil considered that. “Maybe. Do you have any decorative contact lenses?”

“I like where this is going already.”

///// Roman stepped out of the Imagination and grimaced at his own body odor. He noticed Virgil had been in his room and was glad that he had visited Dr. Picani again. He snapped out of his prince uniform, not having the energy to deal with getting it off, and stepped into his shower. He’d battled the dragon-witch to save a beautiful prince locked in a tower that bore no resemblance to Virgil whatsoever, and it was a hard-won victory. He was covered in dirt, sweat, a bit of blood, and some kind of slime the dragon-witch had conjured. He stepped under the cold spray, cooling his heated skin as he turned his face towards the showerhead. He could feel sweat running into his eyes and didn’t dare open them; sweat stings, and he already had enough aches to deal with.

He clumsily grabbed for his pre-shampoo conditioner and poured some into his hand. Once he had a good amount in his palm, he frowned. Was is always this liquid? Maybe I’m still warm from the Imagination’s sun. I may need to adjust that. Roman worked the conditioner into his hair and let it sit while he got out his moisturizing body soap. After he’d scrubbed himself clean, he grabbed his first facial cleanser and got his face clear. He rinsed everything off, then grabbed his shampoo. He frowned at the shower water. Great Disney, I must have been dirtier than I thought! He poured his charcoal-based exfoliating shampoo into his hand and massaged it into his scalp, the menthol cooling the skin there. He washed it out, then grabbed his post-shampoo conditioner and worked that in. After thinking about his choices for a moment, he decided to use a light acne-prevention
cream as his second facial cleanser. He used a sugar scrub and his hands to gently exfoliate his body, then rinsed again. He turned off the shower, grabbed his towel, and set about drying himself off. He quickly rubbed in body lotion, foot lotion, and hand lotion, before carefully cleaning all of the dirt out from under his nails.

Pleased with his body’s appearance, he went over to the vanity to begin his face and hair routine and froze.

*My hair. My hair. OH MY GOD MY BEAUTIFUL HAIR!!*

Roman screeched in indignation and horror. *It’s black!! When did it turn black??!!* Roman rushed over to his shower and opened up his bottles of conditioner. Instead of white and lavender respectively, they were both black.

Roman wrapped his hair in a towel and was about to put on a clean prince uniform when he heard something moving around in his room. He froze, then summoned a sword and wrapped an additional towel around his hips. Checking once more to make sure both the towel around his head and the one on his hips were secure, he quietly walked to his bathroom door and pushed it open a few inches. He was surprised to find his room completely darkened. He took a deep breath, then slammed the door the rest of the way open and charged into his room with his sword raised. He could barely see anything with the light from the bathroom being the only-

Roman jumped as the bathroom door slammed shut on its own. He whipped around, trying to find the intruder. He heard something shift on top of his wardrobe. Walking over to it slowly, he summoned a ball of light and sent it there, only to be met with a sight straight from a horror movie.

Virgil was in his vampire costume, blood dripping from his mouth and his eyes milky white. Once the light came near him, his face became more angular and morphed into a demonic visage. He let out a feral hiss as he lunged at Roman. The prince let out a high-pitched scream and threw his arms up to protect his face.

(Elsewhere in the mindscape, Patton thought he could hear the neighbor’s dog howling.)

Roman brought his arm down away from his face when he didn’t feel any impact. The presence in his room was gone, so he snapped to turn on the lights.

Only to find his entire room completely encased in spiderwebs.

Roman sighed, but compared to everything Virgil had done already this was hardly an inconvenience. He snapped his fingers to clear the cobwebs, only to realize too late the one on the ceiling was holding something.

Black glitter.

He could do nothing as the dark, sparkly arts and crafts supplies rained down and coated his bedroom. He picked some up off the floor.

*“This isn’t even holographic you heathen!”* he shouted into the void.

Roman turned to go into his bathroom when he saw a note had fluttered down and landed neatly on top of the glitter. He opened it and squealed.

*Now we’re even.*

*Date tonight? Y/N*

*V*
Roman almost forgot to snap on his prince uniform before he floated out of his bedroom and down the stairs, looking for Virgil. He ran into Logan in the commons area.

“What happened to you? I heard you scream.”

Roman sighed dreamily, figurative hearts in his eyes. “Virgil put black hair dye in my shampoo and conditioner. And put cobwebs filled with glitter in my room. And also glitter bombed it. He’s so romantic. And I have a date!”

Logan huffed out a laugh and returned to reading his book. Roman tilted his head.

“If you heard me scream, why didn’t you come looking?”

Logan didn’t look up from his book as he turned a page. “We were told not to interfere.”

“...Fair enough.”

Chapter End Notes

You can thank Jasper01 for a good portion of the interaction in the prank and the line, "Glitter is forever"! She and I excitedly talked about Virgil’s prank, and she came up with some amazing suggestions!!!

Here's her Tumblr! She's got a series called Renegades that she's posting both here and on AO3, and it's awesome!!! Make sure you check it out!!

Remy and Virgil won't go back to completely normal right away, that's not how friend fights work sadly, but this is a step in the right direction.

And don't worry too much about Roman's hair; Virgil used a temporary hair dye that doesn't use any developer, so it's not damaged and the color will wash out. Eventually.
Virgil spent their date in his room watching Disney with Roman, cuddled together on the bed. After their fourth movie, they decided to go to bed for the night. They both got ready in separate rooms, and cuddled once again on Virgil’s bed. Virgil fell asleep in Roman’s arms, smiling and content.

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Deceit finished inside of Virgil and pulled out harshly, causing the smaller Side to flinch and whimper. Deceit slapped Virgil’s emaciated ass, still bleeding from the belt, and stepped away. He heard the Dark Sides walk away and started trying to breathe through the pain. He closed his eyes, in vain hope that he might be able to fall asleep before he was used again. Thomas and the Dark Sides were 15, causing them to use Virgil frequently. His arms and shoulders were straining from holding up his limp body and the edge of the table dug into his skin.

He had no idea how much time had passed, with waves of pain washing over him in his fruitless attempt to sleep, but he soon heard two sets of footsteps. They paused by the kitchen table where he was cuffed.

“That’s quite a bit of blood. Rage and Malice got a bit carried away.”

“Indeed they did. You know, I don’t think we caused any blood ourselves. The whore’s so loose I bet he doesn’t even tear any more.”

Virgil quietly whimpered at the thought as he identified Jealousy and Greed.

“He made a sound! I think it’s about time we contributed our fair share to the blood, don’t you?”

“Yes, I do.”

That was the only warning he got before Greed twisted his little finger and he heard a sickening crack. He did his best to muffle his scream by keeping his mouth closed, but it wasn’t good enough.

“My turn!” Jealousy shouted excitedly.

His ring finger was grabbed and twisted by Jealousy next, which made him breathe heavily before throwing up on the countertop. He was gasping for air so harshly he kept having to spit out vomit before he inhaled it.
“That doesn’t seem to be teaching him properly. What should we do next?”

“I know!”

Virgil shivered at the gleeful tone in Malice’s voice. There was a pause before Greed spoke, and then a chuckle.

“I like how you think.”

“Well, you know, you mentioned how loose he was, so this shouldn’t be too bad!”

Malice showed Virgil what he was holding. It was one of their largest toys. Jealousy took it from Malice and went behind Virgil, who had begun to shake violently. Everyone was completely silent as the seconds dragged on, and then Virgil’s world exploded into pain. He screamed as it was pulled in and out of him rapidly. It seemed to go on forever, as the Dark Sides kept telling him calmly that if he could be quiet, it would stop, but he had to stay present in order to learn his lesson.

Suddenly, it stopped, and Virgil heard fighting going on and people being hurt. The toy was still stuck in him and his whole body was cramping, but at least it wasn’t being moved anymore. He felt a hand on his shoulder and flinched.

“It’s okay, we’re here to save you,” Creativity whispered. Virgil began sobbing uncontrollably. Creativity started trying to pick the lock of the cuffs that were installed on the kitchen table.

“Shhhh, it’s okay, it’ll be okay. We’ll get you taken care of. Has… My god, has this been going on for a while?”

Virgil nodded, crying in relief. ‘It’s over. It’s over. I can be safe. They’ll take care of me! They’ll protect me!’

“How long Anxiety?”

Virgil hiccuped. “E-ever s-s-since th-they t-t-took me f-from Sleep and Lust!”

“Good lord. How old are you? You look smaller than us.”

Virgil sniffled. “I-I’m 10 now!”

Creativity was suddenly pulled away and Virgil heard a cry of pain come from the fanciful Side. More fighting was heard, closer to Virgil, then it stopped.

The Dark Sides brought the Light Sides around the table so Virgil could see them. The Light Sides were all various levels of battered, while the Dark Sides were barely harmed.

“You think you can join the fucking Light Sides?!?” Rage roared. He was restraining Creativity, who was bleeding from what looked like a stab wound to his abdomen. “You’ll see!” And with that, Rage snapped Creativity’s neck. The cracking sounds from the Side’s now lifeless body seemed to echo, followed by the screams and cries of horror from Morality and Logic. Virgil sagged against the counter before throwing up and crying. Malice grabbed Morality’s face and kept his hands there, relishing the sounds of terror he was causing, before breaking Morality’s neck.

Deceit had Logic, who was weeping.
“I’m not as fond of that particular method of execution,” Deceit hummed before summoning a large knife and cutting Logic’s throat. Virgil watched in mute horror as blood spurted out from his neck and almost instantly soaked his entire neck and chest. Deceit dropped him and slowly walked over to Virgil, casually stepping over the bodies. He gripped the younger Side’s hair harshly.

“You’ll never escape us,” Deceit hissed, “You are mine. Mine to use and pass around. Do you understand you worthless sheath?”

Virgil nodded, his cries dying down as full-body numbness took over. The Dark Sides took turns using him until he passed out. He woke up in the room and saw he was surrounded by both Thomas’ and the superintendent’s Dark Sides.

By the end of the three weeks, he was convinced that Dark Sides like himself couldn’t die.

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“Virgil! Oh my sweet angel, wake up, please!”

Virgil let out another scream as he felt something tear from the Dark Sides.

“Virgil! Wake up, please, you’re safe, I promise!”

Virgil began sobbing at the hallucination Malice was feeding him. Please, not this again, I can’t! I can’t!

“Oh stormcloud, I promise you’re safe now. Can you open your eyes for me, little bat?”

Virgil shivered, but did as he was told. Roman was leaning slightly over him and was holding one of his hands. A tear escaped Roman as he smiled.

“There you are. Can you tell me where you are?”

Virgil opened his mouth to reply, but didn’t know what the right answer was. Am I in my room? Is this still the Dark Side? Virgil closed his mouth and shook his head. Several more tears ran down Roman’s face at that.

“It’s okay love, can we do a grounding exercise? Would that be okay?”

Virgil vaguely remembered what a grounding exercise was. He still felt phantom hands on his body. “Will that help with the hands?” he asked.

Roman frowned lightly. “What hands angel?”

Virgil curled in slightly, frightened he’d made a mistake. “The ones that aren’t there.”

Roman’s brow furrowed more until realization struck. His eyes widened and his eyebrows shot up. “Oh! Yes, yes it will, I’m so sorry you’re going through that my love. Can you look around the room and name five things that are purple?”

Virgil looked around. “That poster, my walls, the chair, um, that jacket over there, and the lamp in the corner.”

“Perfect! That’s perfect love, you did so well,” Virgil felt a tiny bit of relief loosen his chest, but he knew better than to get his hopes up. It could just be a ruse by the Dark Sides to let his guard down and hurt him even more.
“Name four things you hear?”

Virgil bit his lip. “Um, you, me, the Dark Sides, and the bed beneath us.”

Roman bit back a cry, but not before some sound escaped. “My sweet raven, beautiful night, I’m so sorry. Keep focusing on me, alright? Can you do that for me?”

Virgil quickly nodded. Roman sighed. “Good. You’re doing so good love, I’m so proud of you. What are three things you can feel?”

“Um, you, the bed, and a pillow?”

“Perfect. How about two things you can smell?”

Virgil tried smelling, but his nose was clogged. He started whimpering in fear. *I can’t do what he says! Can I lie? No, he’ll know!*

“Oh love, I’m sorry, I should have given you this first!” Roman offered Virgil a handkerchief, which Virgil used to blow his nose as fast as possible. When he was done, he looked at it in confusion.

Roman extended his hand slightly. “I can take that if you wish?”

Virgil handed the handkerchief to Roman.

“You’re doing so well, I’m so proud of you my sweet. Are you able to smell things now?”

Although he was still crying, Virgil sniffed and could smell cinnamon, fresh air, and roses. He felt like he’d ben physically jostled as his brain switched gears and he realized where he was and what was going on. He felt embarrassed as he closed his eyes, tears still leaking out of them. Roman was holding his hand, and Virgil’s skin was crawling at the sensation.

“Virgil, love, can you open your eyes again for me? Please love?”

Virgil obediently opened his eyes but avoided looking at Roman.

“You’re safe love, I swear you are. Can you hear me, my sweet angel?”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded.

“Wonderful. Name two things you can smell?”

Virgil shivered and tried to curl in on himself. “Roses and cinnamon and fresh air.”

“Perfect, that’s wonderful. And you’re sounding much better already, my precious treasure. Now name one good thing about yourself?”

Virgil huffed humorlessly. “I’m back, that’s one good thing.”

“Oh thank god!” Roman gushed. He leaned forward. “Can I hold you?”

Virgil stared at Roman, new tears springing to his eyes at seeing Roman *alive*. “Can I touch you?”

Roman and Virgil both looked equally surprised at that, but Roman recovered first. “Yes, of course you may.”
Virgil shakily lifted the hand that Roman had been holding to graze his fingertips across Roman’s face. Roman stared at him, more than a little confused but willing to do whatever he had to in order to help his frightened love.

Virgil’s hand kept going lower until it reached the carotid artery on the side of Roman’s neck. He kept his hand there, feeling the pulse for several silent minutes. He slowly trailed his fingers to the back of Roman’s neck and felt his neck vertebrae in alignment. At that, he collapsed backwards onto his bed and began sobbing again.

“Virgil! Oh love, what’s wrong?”

Virgil shook his head.

“Oh, it’s okay, you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to. You’re safe love, I promise.”

Roman kept murmuring reassurances to Virgil as his sobs slowly petered out. Once he was reduced to hitching breaths, Roman checked in with Virgil.

“Do you want to talk about it love? It looks like you had an awful nightmare.”

Virgil shook his head. “I don’t w-want to.”

“Alright, that’s okay. Do you want me to hold you?”

Virgil sobbed and shook his head again. “N-no, but c-can you s-stay?”

“Of course angel. I’ll stay, I’ll always stay. Is there anything I can do?”

Virgil shook his head and he rolled onto his side facing Roman. “No, I just want you here.”

“Then here is where I shall be.”

Roman and Virgil settled back on the bed, with Roman on his back and Virgil on his side. Roman lifted his arm up and put his hand under the pillow.

“Night Princey.”

“Goodnight my love.”

Although Roman fell asleep a half hour later, Virgil stayed awake all night, trembling and watching Roman breathe.

Chapter End Notes

Hi folks! Below the first line of forward slashes is the rationale for the scene inside the lines of tildes, and below the second line of forward slashes is a brief description of that scene.

///////////////////////////
So the reason I included another fake rescue/ murder of the Light Sides scene is because there were several fake rescue attempts and staged "murders" that we (the other kids and I) saw. The first one I saw was like the first fake rescue attempt, where
they took the "rescuers" into a separate room and just made it sound like they were being killed. The second and all proceeding attempts used guns, blanks, and blood packs. Not the greatest special effects, but little kid me was stupid lol. The reason I had the Light Sides' necks broken and cut was because both my beta and I agree that guns seem kinda weird in the Mindscape. Also, broken fingers are easy to explain away to any teachers.

Below the next line of forward slashes is a brief description of the potentially triggering scene.

/////////////////////////////////////

The Dark Sides sexually assault and torture Virgil. Greed and Jealousy break a few of his fingers because he keeps making noises from the pain. The "Light Sides" come in and attempt to rescue Virgil, but they're killed in front of him. Roman and Patton have their necks broken and Logan gets his throat cut.
Hey folks, we've got a pretty serious A/N here. There will be a section of italicized text within lines of tildes that can be very triggering. Because of some very timely anonymous Tumblr asks, I also want to mention that nearly everything that happened to Virgil, sans some necessary changes because Mindscape and whatnot, occurred to me. I'm usually okay to talk about stuff and clarify stuff, but for the block of italicized text I cannot talk about it. I'll clarify some things in the ending A/N's for folks, but that's the extent to which I can talk about it. Jasper01 very graciously wrote the summary of the scene for those of you who want it. It will also be in the end A/N's.

The trigger warnings for that section include sexual assault, torture, suffocation, animal abuse, animal death, spiders, descriptions of a corpse, and desecration of a corpse.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil watched as Roman began to gently stir. Virgil craned his head backwards to check the time. 6:10. He looked back as Roman groaned and stretched. His pyjama top rode up as Roman stretched his arms above his head, then reached down to scratch his chest. Virgil definitely wasn’t watching. As Roman started to blink open his eyes, Virgil made sure he was looking at Roman’s face.

Roman sighed and turned bleary eyes over to Virgil, and immediately smiled.

“Good morning my beautiful storm. How did you sleep?”

Virgil bit his lip and averted his eyes. “I didn’t. Sorry.”

Roman inhaled. “Love, you don’t have to apologize. I’m not terribly surprised; that nightmare sounded just awful. You know you can wake me if you need me, right?”

Virgil sighed. “I know, it’s just… there wasn’t much you could do? Like, I didn’t want to be touched and sometimes I just can’t get back to sleep after one of those no matter what I do.”

“I’m so sorry, my brave knight. You are truly one of the strongest people I know.”

Oh yeah, I can barely keep from cutting into my own flesh, and I can’t stop from being scared of fucking memories and shit. I burst into tears at just remembering things that aren’t happening anymore. I’m not strong and I never will be. I’m too broken.

“You said you didn’t feel like being touched. Has that changed?”

Virgil shook his head. “I don’t want to be touched right now, but maybe in a little bit?”

“Alright. Just let me know.”

Virgil nodded, and they both got out of bed to get ready for the day. Predictably, Virgil was downstairs long before Roman and helped Patton make Dutch pancakes. Virgil was biting back tears and surreptitiously wiping away the ones that did manage to escape. He’s alive, Patton’s here,
he’s okay, he’s alive, the Dark Sides didn’t hurt him. He’s alive, he’s alive, he didn’t die trying to rescue me.

Logan came down the stairs and wordlessly grabbed a mug of coffee, looking exhausted. Virgil’s tears became more insistent and he had to use all of his will power to keep his breathing even. Roman entered the kitchen looking pristine.

“GOOD MORNING!!”

Both Virgil and Logan winced while Patton greeted Roman back. Patton started putting all of the food on the table when he noticed Virgil’s distress.

“Baby, what’s wrong? Why are you crying?”

All activity in the kitchen stopped just as Virgil sniffled. “Sorry, j-just a bad d-dream last night.”

“Awww sweetiepie, I’m sorry! Do you want a hug?”

Virgil took a small step away and shook his head. “Not right now, sorry.”

“Okay honey, that’s okay. Offer stands, so let me know if you change your mind!”

Virgil shot Patton a half smile. He shakily sat down in the nearest chair as Patton served each of them. Logan offered him a Kleenex, which he accepted gratefully. Thomas’ morning was relaxed intentionally since his afternoon and night were going to be hectic, so Logan reviewed the schedule with everyone. Logan’s careful and precise analysis of what would be needed to keep Thomas on track made Virgil tear up again. By the time breakfast was over, he had his head bowed and was desperately trying to hold back tears at hearing all of the Light Sides interact with each other.

“It’s okay baby, you’re safe now.”

Virgil jumped when Patton spoke as he didn’t realize Patton had moved to be next to him. When he looked up to see Patton’s warm chocolate gaze staring at him in love and concern, he slapped a hand over his mouth to muffle his sobs as he slowly lowered his head to the tabletop.

“Oh honey, it’s okay. Can I touch you baby?”

Virgil shook his head.

“Okay. Want to do a breathing exercise?”

Virgil shook his head again as the dam broke. He hadn’t had a chance to fully express how horrible the nightmare was, so he did now. He cried helplessly as the Light Sides stood near him and offered words of encouragement. He listened to their voices and soaked it up, confirming to himself that they were alive. Once his tears had dried up a half hour later, he sniffled wetly and started wiping at his face with his sleeve. A handkerchief was quickly offered and a huff from Logan was heard. Virgil cleaned his face and blew his nose quickly.

“I’m sorry guys,” Virgil grated out as the handkerchief was vanished.

“You don’t have to apologize love!! You went through a horrible experience, and you relived it just last night!!”

Virgil nodded wordlessly, humiliated. He heard Patton shift next to him.

“Since you just had a good cry, do you want to talk about it? No pressure if you don’t!”
Virgil hugged himself and squeezed his arms. “Yeah, probably should. I’m not doing good not talking about it.” He cleared his throat. “I, uh, it was a memory.” His voice choked off and he had to swallow thickly. “Th-the Dark Sides had me, um, on the kitchen table,” he rushed out in a mumble. “It was with the cuffs installed there.” Roman and Patton growled while Logan only inhaled sharply through his nose. “They, um, hurt me and then left me alone. Jealousy and G-Greed,” Virgil had to stop and close his eyes for a moment. “They came back broke a couple of my fingers for making noise when they were hurting me. Malice came by and hurt me… with something, and then he used some of his powers.” Virgil started getting light headed, so he practiced a breathing exercise while doing a grounding exercise. After he finished, he realized the Light Sides had been softly calling his name.

“Sorry. Had to get my bearings straight again.”

“It’s alright my dear. Do you want to stop?” Logan asked gently.

Virgil sent him a small smile. “No, I’m alright.” Virgil rolled his neck. “Malice… he can make you see, hear, and feel things that aren’t there. He can also make changes to things and Sides.” Virgil closed his eyes against the images flashing through his mind. “H-he made me believe you came to rescue me when I was there. I was twelve this particular time.”

“He’s done that to you more than once?”

“Oh yeah, if I ever started stepping out of line more or watching you guys more he’d do that. I didn’t realize until a lot later, like when I was 19, that those hallucinations were his way of keeping me under his control.”

“Dear God…” Roman breathed.

Virgil sniffled as the images became harder to push away while he recounted the memory. “Th-they killed you. N-not the r-real you, obviously, b-but the fake you. They m-made sure I could s-see. This t-time, th-they broke R-R-Roman’s and P-Patton’s necks and slit L-Logan’s th-throat.” Virgil collapsed into sobs again. “A-a-and th-then they p-p-punished m-me for th-three weeks w-w-with the v-v-visiting S-Sides there too.” Virgil shivered. “I-it h-h-hurt,” he finished in a whisper.

Patton was doing his best to muffle his sniffles as he cried, and both Roman and Logan had tears running down their faces.

Logan spoke first. “My darling.”

He was cut off as Virgil flung himself into his boyfriend sobbing. Logan caught him and held him tightly as Virgil wrapped his arms around Logan’s neck. Logan brought one hand up to cradle the back of Virgil’s head and one hand to gently rub his back.

“Shhhhh, it’s okay darling, we’re here, we’re safe, you’re safe now,” he said quietly. Logan caught Roman and Patton’s desperate looks. “Can Patton and Roman touch you?”

Virgil shook his head against Logan’s shoulder. Logan gently tightened his arms. “Alright, they won’t. You did so good telling us that. It’s okay, you’re safe, I promise.” Logan held Virgil and reassured him for the next ten minutes as Virgil cried himself out again. He sagged against Logan, exhausted.

“There you go. Would you like to rest with me on the couch?”

Virgil nodded. “And Patton and Roman if they’re not busy or anything?”
“Of course baby!!”

“I WOULD LOVE NOTHING MORE!!”

All three Light Sides shared a small smile when they heard a watery giggle come from Logan’s shoulder.

“Shall we move to the couch darling?” Logan asked. Virgil responded by grunting and nuzzling his shoulder.

“Shall I carry you?” Logan asked, amused. Virgil nodded quickly. Logan huffed out a laugh and readjusted Virgil so he could carry him bridal-style. Virgil kept his head in Logan’s shoulder.

Logan waddled over to the couch with some difficulty and sat down with Virgil next to him. Virgil leaned against Logan while Patton quickly claimed the other side of Virgil. Both Logan and Patton had their arms around Virgil’s shoulders. Patton held Virgil’s hand while Logan brushed Virgil’s bangs out of his face. Roman whined until he sat down next to Patton and started scratching the back of Virgil’s head, resulting in a small rumble.

Roman chuckled. “I do love it when you purr.”

“I do not purr Princey,” Virgil half-heartedly retorted.

“He’s like a little kitten!” Patton squealed.

“I’m afraid I have to agree with the other two. That is quite an adorable purr.”

Virgil hissed weakly at them, making them chuckle. They stayed like that, with Virgil occasionally turning to one of them and studying their faces, whispering quietly to himself, “You’re alive.” They each had their hearts shattered several times. They only got up once it was time for lunch.

Patton squeezed Virgil. “Come on, I think some grilled cheese and tomato soup with goldfish crackers is in order!”

Virgil hummed in agreement. They made their way to the kitchen, Virgil having loving touches against him the entire way. As Patton started making lunch, Logan and Roman stayed near Virgil’s chair, gently rubbing his back and running hands through his hair while whispering reassurances and love. Lunch passed in a similar manner, quiet and making sure Virgil knew he was safe and loved. Virgil shed a few more tears whenever his heart would clench particularly hard, but they were soon soothed by the care he was being shown. After lunch, they each had to go to their rooms, but only did so when Virgil convinced them he’d be okay on his own for a bit.

Virgil flopped on his bed, spent of all emotional energy. How does Patton do this? Goddamn. He closed his eyes and felt Shelly still in his pocket. He placed her on the bed next to him in the hope she’d help keep him awake.

Spiders are awesome.

Virgil barely had time to react before he was thrown into a flashback.

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Virgil was holding his spider, Isaiah. He’d come to rely on the tarantula’s silent presence over the past year and a half as the Dark Side’s sadism escalated. Virgil was just thankful that none of the Dark Sides had discovered his pet.
‘You really are my savior, little guy,’ he thought to himself as he gently stroked Isaiah’s thorax and abdomen.

“What the fuck is THAT?!” Malice shrieked. Virgil’s head whipped up and he paled. He looked around for a safe place to put Isaiah, but he was laying in the middle of the Room after the visiting Sides had left. He cradled Isaiah protectively against him.

“You fucking BITCH!!” Malice quickly restrained Virgil into a four-point restraint and held his mouth and nose shut. Virgil fought as Isaiah was taken from him and his vision began tunneling, but he soon succumbed to suffocation.

Virgil awoke in the Room, but shackled to the floor with his hands and arms completely immobilized. Thomas’ Dark Sides were all standing on one side of him. Virgil realized with horror that Malice was holding onto a squirming Isaiah.

“So good of you to join us Virgil,” Deceit purred, “We’ve been waiting for you to wake up. It seems you made a friend!”

Virgil started silently crying.

“Shhhhh, my sweet little Anxiety. It’s okay, nothing bad will happen to you here,” Deceit murmured, “You’re quite safe with us. As is your little friend. After getting over the initial shock, we’ve become rather fond of the little spider.”

Virgil started shaking from fear and cold. “R-really sir?”

Deceit smiled, saccharine and cloying. “Of course! And we recognize the impact it has on you. It’s quite a comfort for you, isn’t it? Of course having a more emotionally stable Anxiety will help Thomas! And it’s far better to have a toy that isn’t broken when the visiting Sides come over. Now, we will have to destroy the thing if you lie to us any more, but I think we can overlook this transgression if it’s providing you with enough emotional benefits?”

Virgil felt hope blossom in his chest. “He does help me sir! A lot!!”

Deceit’s smile widened. “That’s wonderful.” Virgil’s heart soared. “Malice, if you will? I think Virgil wants his little friend back, don’t you Virgil?”

“Yes, please! I’d love that sir!”

Deceit nodded to Malice, and Malice walked closer to Virgil, holding Isaiah away from his body. Once he was two feet away from Virgil, he brought up his other hand and crushed Isaiah’s abdomen. Abdominal fluid and guts splashed over his hand and onto the floor before Isaiah’s seizing body was placed on Virgil’s chest. Virgil stared at Isaiah for a moment before he started screaming.

“What’s the matter? Didn’t you want him back?”

“I w-wanted him ali-i-ive!!” Virgil sobbed.

“You ungrateful little slut! Did you really think you’d get to keep a fucking pet you hid from us?! You need to learn your place slut!!”

Isaiah was removed from Virgil’s chest and thrown to the floor. Virgil didn’t stop sobbing for the
hours the Dark Sides violently used him. Once they were temporarily done the next day, they left Virgil and Isaiah in the Room. Isaiah had landed on his back, and his legs curled in as the fluid dried up. Virgil couldn’t tear his eyes away from his dead friend the entire night.

The next day, the Dark Sides came in to use him again. Jealousy made eye contact with Virgil as he grinned and kicked Isaiah to the side. They had been so violent with him the night before that he was still somewhat stretched. They left 8 hours later, a bloody mess on the floor. Still Virgil couldn’t move his eyes from Isaiah’s corpse.

Malice remained behind. He pushed the body slowly with his foot and flipped it. It slowly sagged to the ground as gravity fought rigor mortis.

Over the next month, Virgil watched as the body decomposed further, gathering dust and lint. They kept him in the Room and used every available tool in there, as well as what was stored under the staircase. Virgil had been seriously concerned about blood loss at several points during the month. The Dark Sides would use a stick to poke at the body and occasionally break a piece off and mock Virgil with it. Finally, one day when he woke up Isaiah was no longer there.

He punished himself in his mind worse than the Dark Sides tormented his body for being relieved Isaiah wasn’t there anymore.

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As soon as Virgil came to, he threw up on his floor. He was curled into a fetal position, shaking. It took several minutes for the tears to come. He wasn’t sure how long he was on the floor, but he stiffly pushed himself up and made his way to the bathroom. His stomach was still roiling, and he vomited into the toilet once he was in there. He curled up on the floor and kept shaking and silently crying.

An unknown amount of time later, Patton knocked on his door.

“Sweetie? Are you okay? Thomas has been feeling a little off.”

Virgil dragged himself across the floor, not having the strength to stand, until he was at the threshold of his bathroom and bedroom.

“I’m fine Pat. Sorry.”

“It’s okay honey! Dinner’s just about ready!”

“Sorry Pat, I need some time alone.”

There was a pause, and then, “Okay sweetie, I’ll save a plate for you in the refrigerator. Let us know if you need anything, alright?”

“’Kay.”

Virgil waited until Patton had completely moved away from the door before he began crying.

I don’t need them. I can’t trust them. Better off by myself. People hurt me. Can’t be hurt anymore. I can deal with this by myself. Need to break up with them.

Virgil cried himself to sleep on his floor and succumbed to the nightmares.
TW for clarification of the potentially triggering scene in between the lines of tildes.

In my instance, it was a tomcat I named Ezekiel and had the audacity to bond with. He was a stray I interacted with through the screen window of my room. The parts about pretending to spare him, killing him anyways, and all the stuff afterwards with his body are all true to my experience. Spiders aren't as gross when they decompose as mammals are though, so those details got omitted. Summary of the scene below the next line.

Jasper01 here with the summary: The Dark Sides discover Virgil’s pet spider, and the Dark Sides pretend to let the spider live, before killing him in front of Virgil. They assault Virgil, and leave the spider’s body to decompose with Virgil for some time. Eventually the spider’s body is removed, and Virgil feels relieved, but guilty.
Virgil slowly opened his eyes. For a horrifying moment, he thought he was back on the floor in the Room. Once his vision focused, however, he realized he was in his own room. He sat up, wincing at the popping in his joints and back. He cracked his neck and took a minute to find the resolve to stand. He swayed in place and had to grab the doorjamb to keep from falling over. He went over to the mirror and winced at his reflection until the stench hit. He looked at the vomit still in the toilet and grimaced as he flushed it. Turning back to the mirror, he grabbed a makeup wipe and wiped down his entire face, then washed with soap. He didn’t have the energy for a full shower.

He walked to his bed on shaking legs, his knees nearly buckling when he flopped down onto it. He realized his phone was on the floor, and belatedly that there was a puddle of vomit next to it. He wrinkled his nose at the smell and was feeling a searing headache coming on, but he just couldn’t deal with any of it. He closed his eyes, wanting to sleep off… everything, but the blinding pain behind his eyeballs and stretching across his forehead wouldn’t let him slip under.

After an hour of fruitlessly laying in his bed, a knock sounded at his door.

“Greetings Virgil! Would you do me the honor of accompanying me down to breakfast?”

He deserves so much better than me. He shouldn’t have to put up with my bullshit. None of them should. “Sorry Princey, not right now. I’ve got a headache. I just need some time alone.”

Roman’s response was noticeably quieter. “I’m sorry my dashing prince, is there anything I can do?”

Virgil sighed through his nose. “No, just need some time.”

“Very well my love. I wish thee all the luck in your recovery!”

Virgil ground the heels of his palms into his forehead as he heard Roman walk away. He fought his headache and exhaustion all day, ignoring Patton’s attempt to get him to come down to lunch and telling Logan that he had granola bars in his room (lie) and wanted to be alone. Once 9 PM hit, he found the strength through his nausea and headache to get off the bed.

I can’t see the Light Sides yet, I’ve spent all day telling them to go away or ignoring them. Things are still awkward with Remy, and I’m not hanging out with Dr. Picani. Holy boundaries Batman!

Virgil chewed his lip, the lack of options bringing his fatigue back.

I’m such a fucking idiot. Thomas.

Virgil focused on Thomas’ surroundings, and finding no one there, popped into existence by the couch. Thomas jumped, and Virgil promptly swayed and fell onto him.
“Shit, Virge! Are you okay?!”

“Shit, sorry Thomas! Are you okay?!”

Thomas chuckled as Virgil scrambled off of him.

“Are you okay? Did I hurt you? Do you need anything?” Virgil rushed out.

“Virge, easy! I’m good!” He paused as Virgil’s eyes got shiny. “Virgil? What’s going on buddy?”

Virgil bit his bottom lip to keep it from wobbling. “A lot,” he choked out.

Thomas opened his arms. “Hug?”

Virgil fell into the hug, leaning against Thomas’ chest with his arms curled. Thomas wrapped his arms around Virgil and started rubbing his back, shushing and soothing him. The only noises Virgil made were sniffles so he wouldn’t get snot on Thomas’ shirt. Once Virgil had cried for a good fifteen minutes, he pulled back and wiped his face on his sleeve.

Thomas grabbed a box of Kleenex. “Here you go buddy. Take as many as you need.”

Virgil grabbed two, one for his face and one for his nose. Once he was done, he tossed the used tissue into the wastebasket.

Thomas put his arm against the back of the couch in invitation. “What’s going on Virge?”

Virgil curled into himself. “My head hurts.”

“You want some ibuprofen?” Virgil nodded. “Have you eaten and drank enough?” Virgil shook his head. “Okay, I’ll be right back.” Thomas quickly went to the kitchen, and returned with a bottle of ibuprofen, reheated pizza, and some Gatorade.

“Eat as much as you can.”

Virgil eagerly dug into the bacon, pineapple, and feta cheese pizza. He managed to finish all five slices and most of the bottle of Gatorade.

Once Thomas checked to see if he wanted anymore and Virgil refused, Thomas brought everything back into the kitchen while Virgil popped three ibuprofen. Thomas sat down next to Virgil on the couch.

“You were pretty hungry. When was the last time you ate?”

Virgil looked down. “Yesterday lunch.”

Thomas sucked in a breath. “Jeez, no wonder your head hurt! How does it feel now?”

Virgil rubbed his forehead. “Still hurts, but it’s getting a little better.”

“That’s good! Want a back massage? That might help.”

Virgil chewed on his lip and slowly nodded. “J-just my neck and upper back though.”

“Sure thing. Shoulders okay?”

“Yeah.”
With that, Thomas got to work. Virgil turned slightly, and Thomas rested his hands on Virgil’s back, lightly at first with increasing pressure once he didn’t get a negative reaction. Within seconds, a rumble emanated from Virgil’s chest. Thomas was experienced in giving backrubs to his stagemates and friends, and it showed. He worked tension and knots out of Virgil’s upper back and shoulders before gently moving up to the back of his neck with just his fingertips. After several more minutes of that, Thomas pulled back.

“How’s that?”

Virgil turned to Thomas and rolled his shoulders. “That’s better. Thanks Thomas.” He smiled at Thomas, causing him to beam.

“No problem! I was just shutting down my computer when you came by. Wanna watch some Parks and Rec reruns? You could say the excuse to binge reruns fell into my lap!”

Virgil snorted. “Sure. Sounds great.”

Thomas pulled up Netflix and leaned back, extending his arm across the back of the couch. Virgil stayed where he was. Can’t handle touch right now. They were 5 episodes deep before Thomas let out a loud yawn. Virgil turned and raised an eyebrow at him.


“Yeah, I guess you’re right, I should go to bed. Sleepover?”

Virgil smiled shyly. “Sure.”

They both headed upstairs. Thomas lent Virgil a pair of sweatpants and went into the bathroom to get ready for the night. Virgil quickly changed and got under the covers on the side nearest the door. They’d had a few sleepovers over the past months when Virgil didn’t want to be alone in his room but didn’t feel like being around the Light or Neutral Sides, but he wasn’t usually this upset and he was usually okay with cuddling Thomas. Virgil nestled into the pillows and pulled up the sheet, blanket, and comforter as Thomas came out of the bathroom.

Thomas crawled into bed on the other side. “Cuddle?”

“Not tonight, sorry Thomas.”

“It’s okay buddy! Good night.”

“Night Thomas.”

Virgil stared at Thomas and watched him until he fell asleep. He then carefully got out of bed and checked the doors and windows, then all of the electronics and appliances. Satisfied, he got back in bed and closed his eyes, his body demanding sleep. Now that his headache was receding, he was finally able to slip under.

/////

“OH THANK GOD!!”

Virgil jumped up and crouched on the bed over Thomas protectively, hissing and ready to fight. He collapsed to the side of Thomas when he saw it was Roman.
“Fucking hell Princey, you can’t just do that in the middle of the goddamn night!”

“My apologies brave knight. We were worried about you and didn’t find you in your room, so we checked in the Neutral Side and I came up here.”

Virgil breathed out for eight. “Okay cool, I’m here, we’re fine, let’s go back to sleep.”

“Splendid! May I join you?”

“Sure!” Thomas chirped before Virgil could say anything. Virgil quietly groaned as Roman got in on the other side of Thomas. Due to the size of the bed, they were mashed together, although Virgil found he was alright with Thomas touching him.

“You comfy Virge?”

“Yeah, I’m good.”

“Good!” And with that, Thomas nestled into the blankets with Roman’s arm thrown over him. Virgil kept his eyes closed so he wouldn’t have to meet the royal’s stare. Virgil waited until his other two bedmates’ breathing evened out, and then he sank out to his room. Once there, he curled up on his bed miserably and hugged his knees.

They won’t leave me alone. I can’t drag them down with me. They deserve to be happy.

Virgil snapped his room soundproof and locked the door to any outsiders. He fell into a fitful sleep.

///// Predictably, the next morning brought with it Roman knocking on his door.

“Virgil, love? Will you be joining us for breakfast?”

Virgil didn’t respond.

You can’t even tell them to their faces you coward? You’re seriously going to ghost them? They really ARE better off without you.

Virgil bit his lip and hugged his middle as he heard Roman walk away. He stayed in his bed for the rest of the day, refusing to respond to any Sides that came knocking and crying as he grieved the loss of the relationship and occasionally grimacing at the stench of puke as it would waft over to him every so often. He got up at 3 AM to drink a glass of water, then went right back into his bed. The second day brought more of the same, but the third day a surprise was in store for Virgil.

The typical knock came at his door for lunch, but instead of one of the Light Sides he heard, “Coffee bean? You in there sweetie?”

Virgil jerked in surprise. They called in Remy?!

“You can’t even tell them to their faces you coward? You’re seriously going to ghost them? They really ARE better off without you.

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Virgil jerked in surprise. They called in Remy?!

“Can you answer us little one? We’re worried about you darling.”

Oh and Saul too, fan-fucking-tastic.

Virgil curled his hands into the blanket more tightly, willing himself to stay silent.

Wow, you can’t even ghost someone properly? Jesus Christ.
Virgil hid his head until he heard a sniffle outside the door.

Okay, just need to hold out for a little while longer. It'll suck for them for a while, but they'll get over it and be happier in the long run.

He had a tenuous hold on his resolve until he heard another sniffle. Sighing, he removed the soundproof effect.

“I’m fine, just want some time to myself.” Push them away! “Just go away! I don’t want to talk to you! You’re just… boring and useless!” He immediately hated himself.

He heard Remy sigh. “Sweetie, I know you don’t mean that. Roman’s the actor here. I think you’re lashing out to push us away. Am I right?”

Virgil sighed. I can’t hurt them. I care about them too much. Dammit. “Yeah… I’m sorry Rem, I really shouldn’t have said that.”

“I know baby, it’s okay. I know you’re hurting so much right now. Can you tell us what’s going on?”

“I said it, I just want some time alone.”

“But you haven’t been responding at all to the Light Sides. What’s really going on sugar?”

Dammit! “They’re just annoying, I got fed up with it and didn’t want to snap at them.”

“Babe, you’re a terrible liar.”

“I want to break up with them!!” Virgil shouted. There was a silence, and he brought his hand up to muffle his cries.

“Do you actually think that’s believable? You’ve done better than that sweetie.”

Virgil laughed wetly at Remy’s sass. “Yeah, I didn’t believe that one either.”

“Come on sugar, tell us what’s really going on.”

Virgil chewed on the blanket and stayed quiet.

“It’s okay darling, the Light Sides aren’t here, you can tell us.”

Virgil sniffled as some tears slipped out. “I do actually want to break up with them,” he said in a warbly voice.

“How come sugar?”

“Because they’re better off without me!” Virgil hiccuped. “You all are.”

“Oh my god babe, not this again. I swear to god I will come in there and beat the shit out of your brain.”

Virgil snorted.

“Really darling, the Light Sides love you for you, not in spite of who you are.”

“But I’m so fucked up…” Virgil protested. “I’m just bringing them down.”
“Babe, we all have baggage. Shit, I suck at emotional vulnerability. Why do you think I tried to fuck Saul before our first date?” A pause. “Bitch I can hear your smirk, shut up.”

Virgil giggled.

“Anyways, Saul loves me because of it. Hon, you want to take it from here?”

“Gladly. I love Remy because even though he has a hard time with being vulnerable, those times he manages to be are so magical. He trusts me enough to do something really scary and really hard so we can share something special.”

Virgil started crying for a new reason. Do they really love me like that?

No they don’t, you useless, used-up, jizz-soaked cock sleeve. Why on EARTH would they EVER-

Hey brain? Shut the fuck up.

Virgil shifted in his bed. Roman’s always so happy when we spend time together and he can hold me. Logan enjoys me being the only other quiet Side. Patton is just a sweetheart. They recover so fast from me being sad about shit. They love me.

Virgil started letting out small cries. They love me, they love me…

“Coffee bean? You okay in there?”

Virgil cleared his throat. “Yeah, I’ll come out tomorrow,” he smiled to himself, “I’m just going to hang out in here tonight.”

“Alright sugar. Can I let the Light Sides know?”

“Yeah.”

“Thank you sugar pie. I’m also leaving a plate of food and cookies outside your door because I promised Patton and that boy is fucking scary when he goes into Dad mode.” Remy snickered. “Ooooo, does he have a daddy kink? I bet he does. Mmmmm, I can-”

“REMY.”

“Sorry babes.”

“No you’re not.”

“You right.”

Virgil snorted.

“Good night coffee bean.”

“Sleep well darling.”

“Night guys.”

Once they walked away, Virgil snapped his room soundproof. He went to his bathroom first and took care of his hygiene for the first time in four days. He drank some water, cleaned up his room, and ate the food Patton made for him. He settled in for the night, knowing the next morning he’d have to face the music.
Chapter End Notes

Me: *types Virgil's thoughts into the fic*
Virgil: *stares*
Me: What? I'm not projecting. I barely know her!

Also, we're nearing another milestone for Virgil. Is it a good milestone or a bad milestone? Who knows? Besides me, of course. 3>:D
Chapter 93

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! We've got a few mentions of spiders, animal abuse and death, and a few very brief mentions of corpse desecration. There's nothing very graphic in this chapter.

Also, a quick reminder that anytime Virgil's speech is bolded, that's his tempest voice coming through.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next morning, Virgil got up early to shower again and make himself look more presentable. They're gonna be pissed, they're gonna be so mad. What if they hurt me? I'd deserve it, honestly. I gave them the silent treatment and tried to ghost them. I made them suffer, all because I'm f*cked up.

Virgil closed his eyes as he braced himself on the sink while he did several rounds of breathing exercises. He applied eyeshadow underneath his eyes and took one last look at himself.

*Time to see if they want to break up with me.*

Virgil had to bite his lip to hold back tears that threatened to spill over. He put Shelly back on the desk and pet her for good luck before opening his door and going downstairs. He tried to appear confident, he really did, but he couldn't help hunching in on himself more and more as he got closer to the kitchen. He heard the Light Sides conversing with each other.

*They sure sound happy. Probably because I'm not there.*

As Virgil rounded the corner, he expected scorn. Instead,

"Heya kiddo!! It’s good to see you again! I missed you!!"

"It is indeed nice to be in your company once more."

"WELCOME BACK VIRGIL!!"

Virgil looked at them with wide eyes and his mouth slightly open.

"I made waffles and bacon this morning! I’ll get you some!"

Virgil walked over to his chair in shock and sat down. They're not pissed? Why aren't they pissed?

Yeah, don’t they know you’re a murderer? An ANIMAL murderer?

I... I can’t tell them.

If you hadn’t bonded for literally no reason with that spider, he’d still be alive!

I know! I know, okay?

Selfish whore.
Virgil jumped slightly as a plate with food and a mug with coffee was put in front of him. He smiled a thanks at Patton and dug into his breakfast. Logan went over the schedule for the day while Roman interjected with creative input.

It was terrifyingly normal, and Virgil had no idea what was going on.

Are they pissed? They must be. Fuck, I did something wrong, of course they’re pissed. How much do I have to do before they’ll admit it and stop torturing me by acting all cheery and like there’s nothing wrong when they know I know they’re mad?! Oh god oh god oh god oh g-

“Virgil, can you breathe in for four seconds please?”

Virgil jumped and cowered away from Logan, frightened. A flash of pain went through the intellectual’s eyes.

“It’s alright Virgil, you’re safe. I believe you may be having a panic attack. Can you breathe in for four seconds?”

Virgil followed Logan’s instructions and was feeling calmer after a few minutes. He cleared his throat.

“Sorry guys, I got inside my own head for a minute there.”

“It’s quite alright Virgil. How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged and looked down. “Better now.”

“Excellent. Is there anything we can do?”

“No,” Virgil answered automatically. Then he paused. “I guess… Just, can we stop putting this off?!”

Logan looked taken aback. “Putting what off Virgil?”

“I ignored you guys for, like, three days!”

“We were under the impression that your mental health was suffering and you did not feel up to socializing.”

“Well, yeah, but that’s no excuse!”

“It is indeed a valid reason,” Roman cut in. “If you are sick and require time alone, we will not hold that against you. We’re simply happy you’re back!”

Virgil assessed Roman. He seemed genuine enough, and didn’t seem to be harboring anything negative. He did seem to be happy to see Virgil, but…

They don’t know I’m a killer.

Virgil sent Roman a forced half-smile and looked back down, taking a sip from his mug. Conversation continued normally after that, with everyone leaving the table and Virgil helping Patton clean up. On his way up to his room, he saw the couch in the commons and was hit by a sudden wave of exhaustion. He dragged himself over to the couch and laid down, pulling down a blanket from the back of the couch. He closed his eyes and rested his head on the arm.

If I hadn’t bonded with a spider, he’d still be alive. There was no need for me to pretend to have a
pet. I knew the Dark Sides would be mad at me for it. Why did I do it?

You’re a murderer. Isaiah would still be alive if it wasn’t for you!!

I know. I didn’t mean to kill him…

But you did. You are directly responsible for his death. The Dark Sides wouldn’t have killed him if it wasn’t for you!

I know.

Virgil spent the rest of the day on the couch, exhaustion consuming his muscles, fighting off the occasional flashback. He declined lunch and just whined and buried his head into the blanket when he was offered dinner. He slept on and off through the night. When next morning arrived, the Light Sides were very concerned.

“Do you think you can eat something kiddo? Maybe a bit of yogurt or toast?”

Virgil sighed and closed his eyes. They’re looking at me and they don’t even know I caused the death of a completely innocent, sweet animal. “Dunno.”

“Can you try?”

The thought of trying was exhausting and made him pull the blanket up higher. I should probably answer him. “Sorry. Maybe?”

“Okay! I’ll bring some over!” Patton chirped as he skipped away. Virgil heard Logan and Roman follow him shortly after.

Patton deserves better than your dysfunctional ass. Good thing he’s so sensitive! Be cruel. Push him away.

Virgil kept his eyes closed as Patton approached.

“Hey kiddo, can you open your eyes for me? I know you’re not feeling good.”

That last statement just about broke him. The care, worry, and acceptance almost made him cry. Almost.

Virgil inhaled deeply and opened his eyes, intending on spewing vitriol. However, Patton’s gentle gaze and sweet face completely annihilated that plan and made him melt instead. He teared up as he thought of the secret- no, the lie of omission he was keeping from the sweet Side.

“Baby, what’s wrong? It’s okay, I know you’re feeling bad right now.” Virgil heard the other two Light Sides come back over as he started sniffling.

“Y-you shouldn’t l-love me…” he forced out thickly.


“Because I murdered an animal!!” Virgil shouted.

Silence reigned for a moment before Logan adjusted his tie.

“That seems quite out of character for you-” Logan was interrupted by Virgil’s sob. He continued more softly. “Can you tell us what happened?”
Virgil sobbed again at the memory of Isaiah. “It was a male Mexican red-rump tarantula… He came to me one day when I was recovering from time in the Room. I was on the mattress in the common area. I knew, I fucking knew, the Dark Sides would kill him, but I was fucking stupid and bonded with him anyways-” Virgil cut himself off by burying his face in his hands and sobbing for several minutes. He was only able to speak once he had done so.

“Th-they found h-him when I w-was h-holding him. And they pretended to let him live, and then killed him right there and I had to watch as they hurt his body and stuff for a month!”

Gaspes came from around him and Virgil curled in on himself, sobbing, waiting for them to rebuke him and banish him back to the Dark Side where he belonged.

Patton spoke first, his voice shaky. “Can I give you a hug sweetie?”

Virgil hiccuped and sniffled. “Only if you want to.” No WAY is Patton going to want to touch a filthy animal abuser like you. You killed-

“I do honey. C-can I?”

Virgil nodded at Patton’s hopeful tone and instead of a body crashing into his like he was expecting, he was gently scooped up so he was sitting against Patton instead of laying down. He cried into Patton’s shoulder, grieving Isaiah and reliving the haunting images. Patton held Virgil firmly but gently against his body and rocked him slowly, murmuring soothing words into Virgil’s hair. Virgil felt Patton’s chest hitch occasionally.

“May I?” Logan asked. Virgil nodded, and soon he had a delicate hand on his upper arm and a body pressed against his other side. He felt the couch dip further, a sign that Roman was next to Logan.

They’re only holding you to say goodbye.

Virgil started crying harder. I know.

Patton held him more tightly in response to the increase of volume. “Oh baby, shhhhhhh, it’s okay, I promise it’ll be okay. I’m so sorry they did that to you. That was sick what they did. They killed an innocent animal, one you cared about, in front of you and left him with you for so long-”

“And they poked at him with a stick and moved him around!” Virgil cried.

Patton held Virgil close and hid his face in the smaller Side’s hair to make sure he didn’t start crying. Both Roman and Logan were silently crying already.

“You didn’t deserve any of that kiddo,” Patton whispered. “I promise.”

“But I killed him!” Virgil hiccuped and sniffled. “W-when do you w-want m-me to move out?”

"Why on Earth would we make you move out?!’ Logan exclaimed. At Virgil’s flinch, he softened. “My apologies Virgil. But why would this cause us to no longer want your presence?”

“B-because I k-killed an animal!”

Logan tilted his head. “You didn’t kill an animal, the Dark Sides did.”

Virgil growled in frustration. “But i-if I hadn’t b-b-bonded with Isaiah he-” Virgil sobbed, “he’d s-still be alive!”
“Falsehood. For one, the Dark Sides may have found Isaiah and killed him. As another fact, the Dark Sides had no reason to kill Isaiah besides cruelty. You are not at fault for the choices they made, nor are you at fault for seeking out basic necessities. They are at fault for twisting everything you ever experienced into horror and pain. They chose to be monsters. Their choices never were, are not, and never will be your burden to carry.”

Virgil was still crying, but his brain was trying to process everything Logan had said. The words sounded right, but there was something else in him telling him that the words were wrong. Virgil accepted that he’d need to sort through it later and just settled against Patton. Patton pulled his head up and loosened his grip once Virgil started calming down.

“There we go kiddo. It’s okay,” Patton said, gently rubbing Virgil’s back. “It’s okay, I promise. None of us want you to leave baby, I swear.”

Virgil closed his eyes and sighed as he leaned the side of his head on Patton’s shoulder.

“Tissue?” Logan asked. Virgil nodded, and he felt a Kleenex in his hand. He quickly cleaned up his face and blew his nose.

“M sorry I’ve been such a fucking mess lately.”

“Language, and don’t apologize for something you can’t control.”

“But it’s having an effect on you guys…”

“My love, while it is true we don’t like to see you or any of us suffer, we just want to be able to offer comfort in some way, be it through words, actions, or mere presence.”

Virgil closed his eyes as a few more tears escaped. “But is it worth it? Just because you get to comfort me sometimes, does that make all of the stuff you have to see me go through and all the work you do worth it?”

Roman leaned forward and took Virgil’s hand in his. Once Virgil turned red, swollen eyes to his prince, Roman said lowly, “You will always be worth it.”

That statement caused new tears to spring to Virgil’s eyes as his breath started hitching for a new reason. Everyone tightened their grip on Virgil slightly as Virgil quietly purged the overflow of emotion with silent sobs. Once he had settled down from that, Patton squeezed his shoulders lightly.

“How are you feeling honey?”

Virgil sniffled, and was simultaneously thrown tissues and a handkerchief. Virgil smiled at the two competitive Sides and used both to compose himself. “I’m feeling better.”

“I’m so glad to hear that baby! Do you feel up to some food? I’ve got water, black tea, yogurt, and toast here, but let me know if you want anything else!”

“This is perfect. Thanks Pat.”

Patton beamed. “Happy to help baby! Let me know if you need anything else! And we’re eating breakfast out here today!”

Virgil could barely raise an eyebrow before Patton zipped off. Logan squeezed Virgil’s arm before following him, and Roman took Virgil’s hand once more.
“I mean it Virgil. You are more than worth it.”

Virgil sent him a shaky, watery smile. Roman smiled back and followed the other Light Sides into the kitchen.

True to his word, Patton moved breakfast out into the common area. He waited until Virgil was upstairs with Logan before vacuuming.

Chapter End Notes

Each of the Light Sides got to flex their muscles today!

Recovery isn't linear. There'll be ups and downs along the way, and certain things can trigger dips out of the blue.
The Light Sides were getting ready for lunch when Saul and Remy rose up.

“Well hi! What can I do you for?”

“Dinner and a movie?” Remy smirked. Patton turned bright red while Roman puffed up a little and Virgil snorted.

Saul decided to intervene before Roman’s testosterone got the better of him. “We were wondering if you minded if we joined you for lunch?”

“Not at all! Have a seat! I made plenty of crab spanokopita for everyone!” Patton chirped. He soon set out the crab spanokopita, pomegranate limeade, and a Greek salad sans olives, since no one could stand the “salty hate berries” as Virgil had dubbed them. Remy and Saul had sat on either side of Virgil.

“Daaaaamn gurl this looks amazing!!! SHOW ME YOUR WAYS,” Remy gushed. Patton blushed and giggled.

“After we eat I’d be happy to show you!”

For several minutes, the only sounds were that of people eating and satisfied hums until Logan broke the silence.

“So, Remy and Saul, how have you been?”

Remy had his face stuffed with spanokopita, so Saul answered. “We’ve been well. We’ve enjoyed spending time with our little brother,” he said as he ruffled Virgil’s hair, earning him a hiss. Saul chuckled. Remy swallowed his mouthful of food.

“Aw, leave our son alone Saul.”

“Yes dear.”

Logan tilted his head. “You called Virgil your brother, and Remy called him your son. Would you mind clarifying your relationship to Virgil?”

“Besides being our precious bean?”
“Yes.”

Remy laughed. “It’s a little complicated.” He turned to smile at Virgil. “He first manifested in the Neutral Side when we were seven. He started out as being two, so we did our best to parent him. But he’s also definitely our brother.”

Logan leaned back and grabbed his elbow while his other hand tapped his chin. “That’s very interesting. Parental figures still being children and siblings to younger children. Certainly not unheard of.” He smiled at the two Neutral Sides. “I am glad he had you.”

It was Remy’s turn to blush and Saul’s turn to preen. “Why thank you.”

Lunch finished and Saul and Remy bid their goodbyes with hugs for Virgil. Logan was looking at Virgil curiously.

“What?”

Logan adjusted his tie. “I just find it interesting that you manifested in the Neutral Side of the mindscape.”

Virgil shoved his hands into his hoodie pockets and shrugged, looking at the ground.

“Yeah, the Dark Sides lured me away and took me when I was about four, but they always tried to tell me I showed up in the Dark Side on my own,” he muttered. Roman growled and Patton gasped.

“I… I apologize Virgil, it’s not something I should have asked about. I am sorry they took you away from Remy and Saul.”

Virgil smirked. “Don’t apologize for things that aren’t your fault.”

Logan tried and failed to suppress a wry grin. “Fair enough. If you’ll excuse me, I have tasks that I must attend to.”

Virgil snorted and waved him off. “Go attend.” Logan nodded at him and left along with Roman, leaving only Virgil and Patton in the kitchen.

“Hey Virge?”

Virgil turned with furrowed brows at the hesitant tone. Patton was smiling, but he was wringing his hands slightly and his forehead was tense.

“Yeah Pat?” Virgil asked, nervousness taking over.

“I was wondering… doyouwanttogoona...datewithme?” he rushed out. Virgil needed a moment to process what he had said, but he smiled.

“Yeah Pat, that sounds awesome.”

Patton squealed and bounced on the balls of his feet. “Can I give you a hug?!”

Virgil chuckled. “Sure.”

Patton launched forward and wrapped Virgil up in a hug, which Virgil returned. They both laughed a little, then parted.

“It’s our first official date!! Oooooo I’m so excited!!”
Virgil couldn’t stop smiling. “Me too Pat. Did you have any ideas?”

Patton nodded eagerly. “I was thinking we could have a romantic dinner and then play Final Fantasy XIV!”

“That sounds awesome. Do you want help with dinner?”

“Nuh-uh! I want it to be a surprise!!”

Virgil huffed in amusement. “Alright Pat. When and where?”

“Hmmmmm, kitchen at 6 PM?”

“Sounds great Pat. See you then.” He paused, then continued. “I can’t wait.”

Patton squealed. “Me too!! See you then!”

Virgil sent him a half smile and his two finger salute, and sank out to his room.

///// When it was finally time to get ready for his date with Patton, Virgil was a nervous wreck.

*We’re going to be eating romantic food, but we’re also going to be playing video games. What should I wear?!!*

Virgil had already showered and finished his skin, hair, and makeup routines, but was agonizing over which clothes to select.

*Wait, Patton really liked the shirt. I should wear that!* Virgil quickly grabbed the high-necked t-shirt with the cutout and pulled that on. He spied the choker and slowly put it on. He felt okay, so he appraised the rest of his wardrobe. He settled on a pair of his usual torn skinny jeans and his strappy combat boots. He dabbed a bit of oud perfume behind his ears and checked his makeup one more time. Before he could convince himself to cancel the date and just shake in a nervous ball of anxiety the rest of the night, he opened his door and went downstairs.

The smell that hit him as he approached the kitchen made his mouth literally start to water. He had to swallow before he dared enter the kitchen. Patton was stirring something in a pan on the stove. He was wearing a blue plaid long-sleeved button up, light and medium blues throughout, along with his usual khakis and shoes. The addition that made Virgil’s mouth water for an entirely different reason were the black suspenders. Patton turned to him and smiled, which revealed that several buttons on the plaid were undone.

“You look good Pat,” Virgil choked out.

Patton’s eyes raked over Virgil. “So do you baby,” he said before meeting Virgil’s eyes and smiling dangerously. He yelped as the pan in front of him spat grease onto his hand.

“Sorry! I’ll be done in a minute, just finishing up one of the side dishes.”

“It’s alright Pat. Want some help?”

“Nah, I’m good! Go ahead and sit down, I made jasmine tea!”

Virgil sat down and admired the view from the back. He saw a white teapot with a blue paw print on it and poured himself some aromatic tea, wondering what was under the other domes on the
Patton plated up whatever was in his pan and set it on the table before removing the domes. There were Tuscan chicken thighs, Duchess potatoes, and honey-roasted Belgian endives and parsnips.

“This looks amazing Patton!”

Patton blushed and giggled. They both filled their plates quickly. Virgil cut into the chicken and the smell was heavenly. Virgil took an almost too-large bite, but couldn’t find it in himself to care.

“Oh my God Patton, this is so good!” Virgil attempted to say through a mouthful of chicken and creamy Tuscan sauce.

“Awwww thanks sweetie!! I’m glad you like it!!”

Virgil hummed an affirmative as he took another bite. The Duchess potatoes were next, and he almost felt bad for breaking the pretty swirls they were in. Almost.

“Fuck, Patton,” Virgil moaned.

Patton turned bright red and shifted slightly in his seat. “You like those too?”

“Oh yeah,” Virgil said almost breathlessly. “What’s in these?”

“Egg yolks, butter, heavy cream, salt and pepper, nutmeg, and some white cheddar.”

“Oh damn this is so good.” Virgil quickly finished the Duchess potato he’d broken into before moving onto the parsnips and endives. They were sweet, soft, and a perfect balance to the rest of the meal.

“Jesus Christ Patton, how long were you working on all this?! This is all so amazing!!”

“I’m glad you like it! It wasn’t too long, and really a lot of it was just waiting for things to finish cooking!”

“Mmmm, fuck you’ve got to make this again. Holy shit.”

Patton giggled. “I might just have to!”

They both ate, with satisfied hums coming from both of them. Virgil started getting worried that there wasn’t any conversation happening.

*Oh god I’m not saying anything, I’m fucking it up I’m fucking it all up-*

He was broken out of his thoughts when Patton reached over and booped Virgil’s nose with potato. Virgil blinked in shock for a moment while Patton sat back giggling. Virgil grinned and smeared a line of honey-herb glaze across Patton’s cheek. Patton’s giggles turned into laughter, which Virgil joined in on.

Virgil was able to speak first. “I’d do more, but this food is too good to turn into an actual food fight.”

Patton blushed. “I’m glad you like it so much sweetie!”

They finished dinner, aimlessly chatting about which video games Thomas should pick up at the store next time he goes out. Once they had finished eating, Patton pulled a cast iron skillet out of the oven. It was a massive chocolate chip cookie, and once he cut inside there was molten
chocolate on the inside. They were both stuffed and groaning, sipping jasmine tea.

“You know, Logan would probably have told us to pace ourselves,” Patton offered weakly.

“Yeah, but we still wouldn’t have,” Virgil countered. Patton giggled before he groaned again. They decided to put the dishes in the sink with soapy water before heading over to the couch. They sat shoulder to shoulder, heads back against the couch with their eyes closed. Once they had a bit more room in their stomachs, they headed upstairs to Patton’s room.

Virgil paused once he got into Patton’s room. Patton had set up a giant beanbag facing the television and console, with the lights dimmed to be just bright enough that it didn’t seem dark, but dark enough to make the screen stand out. There were trays with cheez-its and root beer on either side of the beanbag, and Virgil saw the controllers sticking out.

“Is this okay?”

Virgil looked at Patton, who was looking out from underneath his eyelashes slightly. He smiled.

“It’s perfect.”

Patton’s head tilted back up a few degrees and he smiled widely.

“Great! And I was thinking it might be more comfortable to play in our onesies? As good as you look in your current outfit!”


Patton smiled again and snapped himself into his cat onesie. At Virgil’s request, he snapped the younger Side into a bat onesie. They quickly got settled into playing video games, laughing at some of the dialogue and attempting to save all of the civilians. A few hours later, they both decided that it was far past Thomas’ and their bedtimes, so they turned off the console and stood. Unsure of what to do, Virgil stood there awkwardly for a moment before Patton extended his hand. Virgil smiled and took it, and Patton led them both silently to the hallway. They had just stepped out when Virgil snickered and said, “Honey glaze.”

This sent them both into a fit of giggles lasting them until they got to Virgil’s door. Patton turned to Virgil, still giggling slightly.

“I had a great time!”

Virgil smiled shyly and looked down. “Me too.”

Patton squeezed Virgil’s hand slightly. “Hug?”

Virgil nodded and curled into Patton’s chest.

*Patton gives the best hugs.*

Patton held him firmly and swayed slightly. Virgil felt the warmth coming through their onesies and could smell the vanilla from the taller Side. The solid muscles and bulk he felt underneath their layers of clothes was definitely doing things to Virgil, and he subtly angled his hips away. After a solid minute, Patton let go and pulled away slightly. “Goodnight Virgil.”

Virgil blushed. “Night Patton.”

With one last smile, Patton turned and headed towards his room.
Virgil watched Patton go, and went back into his own room. He realized he’d forgotten he was even wearing the choker until he started to undress. Once nude, he realized his problem wasn’t too bad and he could probably ignore it. He changed into black sweatpants and a plain purple t-shirt and got ready for bed. Once he was in bed, his arousal became more insistent, and he thought about his options.

*If I try to actually get myself off, that's going to end very badly, and I don’t want that for tonight. Maybe I could try getting used to it like I have the rest of my body? Yeah, let’s try that.*

Arousal beginning to cloud his mind, Virgil thought about the feeling of Patton’s body against his, how he filled out the blue polo he wore, the chest he saw earlier that night during dinner. He snaked a hand down and started just gently petting himself over his sweatpants. After a few minutes of that, he felt his arousal begin to fade as anxiety took over.

_Goddammit. At least I didn’t have a flashback I guess._

Virgil focused on his breathing exercises and summoned Shelly to help ground him. He felt himself calm rather quickly, but was still somewhat sexually frustrated. He hugged his Lucas the Spider plushie to his chest and breathed deeply, slowly falling into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

_I actually made that exact meal for my ex-girlfriend this past Valentine's Day when I was still in a romantic relationship! :'D It's SO GOOD. Although for the dessert I made chocolate and orange souffles._
Several days later, Virgil woke up slowly, having just gotten back to sleep after waking up from a nightmare. The first thing he noticed was that his morning erection was more insistent than usual. Groaning, he pushed the heels of his hands into his eyes and willed his erection to go away. When it predictably didn’t, he angrily pushed himself out of bed and stalked over to his bathroom. He got undressed and glared at the offending organ, hoping to intimidate it into backing down. It glared right back.

Virgil sighed in defeat. Cold showers are a no because of the nightmare, and I can’t go downstairs with this thing.

Virgil closed his eyes and did a few breathing exercises. This is just like anything else. If I get nervous, breathing exercises. If I start to dissociate or flashback, grounding exercises. This is just like getting used to other parts of my body. I can do this.

Virgil hesitantly wrapped a hand around himself. When he didn’t feel anything creeping up in the back of his mind, he started moving his hand, keeping a loose fist.

Huh, this feels nice. Virgil increased the pressure slightly and closed his eyes. His breathing was getting heavier, even though his own hand was a little rough against the sensitive flesh. He could feel a flush in his cheeks building as the pleasure built. There was a pulling sensation in his lower abdomen and his testicles were tingling. He brushed his thumb over the head experimentally and bent over slightly at the sensation. The skin was starting to burn from the friction, but Virgil resolutely ignored it.

Until it triggered a flashback of Malice hurting him in a similar way.

Virgil’s knees buckled as nausea and horror crept up. Tears escaped his eyes and were quickly joined by others as he fought to do his grounding exercises and stay in the present. Five grounding exercises later, he was still upset but not in danger of losing himself to the past. Virgil pushed himself back up and wiped his face off. He looked down and grit his teeth when he found his erection had deflated during the flashback.

At least one problem is taken care of.

Virgil brushed the tears that came away. If he was being honest with himself, he was becoming increasingly sexually frustrated. He’d never been able to reach climax on his own, and now that he was healthy and wasn’t in a constant state of being traumatized and hurt his body was making him desire sexual release.
Forcibly tearing himself away from the mirror, he hopped in the shower and quickly got ready for the day.

~~~~~

Virgil was helping Patton wash the dishes for lunch when Logan appeared. Virgil turned to him and heard Patton leave the kitchen. Logan’s face was impassive but tense.

“Greetings Virgil.”

Virgil quirked an eyebrow. “Hi?”

“Since we are dating, I was wondering if you would be amenable to accompanying me on a shared romantic experience?”

Virgil mouthed *shared romantic experience* to himself before realizing, “You mean a date?”

“Yes.”

Virgil smiled. “Yeah, that’d be awesome.”

A crooked smile broke across Logan’s face, as he attempted to stop it and each muscle failed in doing so. “Wonderful. May I suggest observing the cosmos through a telescope and learning partner dances after dinner?”

Virgil tilted his head. “Partner dances?”

“Yes. I learned them so I could lead Roman when he insists on dancing with me.”

Virgil snorted. “Of course you did. I’ll see you after supper.”

Logan’s smile turned softer and his eyes darkened as he tilted his head down and leaned in slightly. “I’m looking forward to it,” he said lowly.

Virgil blushed brightly as Logan nodded and left. Patton came back around the corner buzzing with excitement. “Soooo… how’d it go Virge?”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “Didn’t you hear?”

“I did, but I wanna hear you say it!!”

Virgil snorted. “I’m going on a date with Logan.”

Patton squealed and opened his arms. Virgil nodded and was soon wrapped up in a hug.

“I’m so excited for you two!!!”

Virgil chuckled. “Me too, Pat. Me too.”

/////\

Soon, too soon, dinner passed and Virgil was in his room. He’d showered before dinner, but was doing his tooth routine and touching up his makeup. He decided to wear looser clothes since they’d be dancing, but still wanted his outfit to be special for the date. Virgil looked through the sexier shirts that had appeared in his closet suspiciously soon after Remy had come to visit and chose a v-neck t-shirt with an extra low V and some strings going across it. He decided against wearing a
necklace since the pendants tended to tickle his bare skin, so he threw on a few rings and some rose and oud perfume. Tapping Shelly for good luck, he left to go to Logan’s room at the end of the hall. He noticed Roman’s door was cracked slightly open. Virgil shook his head and smiled. *Dork.*

Virgil had to do a few breathing exercises before he could knock on the door. Logan opened it up and Virgil’s brain screeched to a halt.

Logan’s hair was slicked back. He was wearing a dark blue long-sleeved button up shirt, a black vest, and a black tie. Both the vest and the tie were made out of silk, but they had sections that were shinier and showed up as galaxies when the light hit them.

When Virgil realized he hadn’t said anything, he scrambled to find something to say.

“You, uh, look really good,” he said hoarsely.

Logan smiled softly. “As do you my darling,” he murmured.

Virgil shook himself. “Um, shall we?”

“We shall.”

Logan opened the door and stepped to the side, allowing Virgil to come in. As Virgil walked by, he could smell the lilac and lemon coming off the intellectual Side. Logan followed behind him and gently led him to a telescope pointing out a window. Logan peered through the sights and smiled.

“Perfect. I would first like to show you an elliptical galaxy in formation. If you’ll look through the telescope, you’ll see NGC 3597. It is the product of two galaxies colliding and is in the process of turning into an elliptical galaxy.”

Virgil looked through the telescope and gasped. The galaxy itself had a bright white center and was surrounded by brilliant blue dots. There was what looked like an arch of dry branches over it, colored black and red.

“That’s so cool!! What’s the black and red stuff?”

“That’s fucking beautiful, holy shit.”

“I agree.”

After a few more moments of looking at that, Virgil pulled back to see Logan staring at him and smiling. Virgil smirked.

“Checking out the goods?”

Logan turned bright red. “I…! I, no, I was just-” Logan spluttered.

Virgil decided to put him out of his misery. “It’s fine L. I’d look too.” He waggled his eyebrows.

Logan coughed and his blush grew darker. “Would you like to see a spiral galaxy?” he asked a little loudly.

Virgil chuckled. “Sure.”
Virgil stepped back and Logan took his place.

“They are good to look at,” Logan said as he adjusted the telescope. He paused and pulled back. “Please strike that from the record. That was not my best line.”

Virgil laughed. “You got it L.”

Virgil though he saw a glimpse of a smile as Logan leaned back down. After a few minutes, Logan straightened up proudly.

“There. Now you should see one of the more enigmatic galaxies, the Andromeda Galaxy.”

Virgil leaned down and breathed out, “Wow.” There was a spiral, viewed from the side, of blue on the outside and orange-tan on the inside, all surrounding a bright white center. Since he saw it from the side, he could see the depth of the clouds and stars. *This is why they refer to the sky as the heavens.*

“The Andromeda Galaxy, also known as Messier 31, was named since it is in the constellation Andromeda. It is expected to collide with the Milky Way in approximately 4.5 billion years.”

“That’s metal as hell.”

Virgil heard Logan chuckle. “Quite.”

Virgil pulled back and smiled at Logan.

“May I show you the Pinwheel Galaxy next? It is also a spiral galaxy.”

“Dope.”

Logan adjusted the telescope for several minutes, swearing under his breath a few times, before he stepped back.

“I present to you Messier 101.”

Virgil snorted and looked into the view.

“Holy fucking shit.”

Vibrant blue arms extended out from the bright white center. The arms were placed so that they looked like they were in motion.

Virgil and Logan spent another hour and a half looking at galaxies and nebulas, Logan narrating the different types of galaxies and facts about each body they were looking at. Virgil stretched and popped his back while Logan winced in sympathy.

“Perhaps we shall move onto partner dance? It would likely be easier on your back.”

Virgil blushed slightly. “That sounds good.”

“Alright. We’ll start with basic steps. Do let me know if you become uncomfortable at any time. I have *Planet Earth* in the Blu-Ray player for us to watch instead.”

Virgil smiled. “Thanks Logan.”

“Of course. Shall I turn on some music?”
Virgil nodded, and once Logan turned to his record player Virgil began a few breathing exercises.

*What if I fuck up, what if I step on his toes, oh god he’s going to touch my lower back, I know how dancing works!*

Virgil jumped as violin strains came from the record player. Logan turned to Virgil almost shyly.

“I do hope you enjoy Henry Purcell’s works. I find that his music was most beneficial when I was learning how to dance.”

Virgil smiled shakily. “I’m sure it’ll be good.”

Logan nodded and walked towards Virgil. Once he was within five feet, Virgil unconsciously took a small step backwards. Logan paused and was silent for a moment.

“We don’t have to, my dear. I would not be disappointed if we watched *Planet Earth* instead.”

Virgil bit his lip. “I want to, I’m just… nervous? I’ve seen dance and it’s… a lot.”

Logan nodded. “Indeed it can be. Would you prefer to watch *Planet Earth*?”

Virgil thought for a minute. “No. I want to do this.”

“Alright. Let me know at any time if you need to stop, moonlight.”

Virgil’s head whipped up.

Logan blushed. “Apologies, I had meant to hold off on that nickname for you, I apologize if it made you uncomf-”

“I like it,” Virgil quickly reassured. Logan stuttered to a halt, was frozen, and then smiled gently.

“I’m glad. Shall we?” he asked as he extended a hand.

Virgil smiled bashfully. “We shall.” Virgil placed his hand in Logan’s and noticed how Logan waited to close his hand and pull in his arm until Virgil was closer.

“May I put my other hand on your waist darling?”

Virgil’s ears were on fire. “That’s- Yeah, that’s good.”

Logan’s hand was feather-light on Virgil’s side, up higher than Virgil expected.

“Shit, where do I put my other hand?”

“If you will, you may place your hand on my shoulder.”

Virgil let out a breath and nodded, doing so. He looked up, and realized with a start how close and *intimate* they were. Virgil could see the flecks of gold in Logan’s dark irises and a light brown ring around his pupil. His body was on alert, hair standing on end and goosebumps all over. He was certain his makeup would be burned into his skin. The hand at his waist and lithe fingers just wrapping around to his mid back almost had him arching his spine. Logan’s closeness was setting him on fire in a very good way, and the places he was touching were white-hot lightning.

Logan was looking at Virgil similarly, both Sides very aware of the fact of how close they were and how much they were touching. Logan was motionless as he studied Virgil’s face, barely-there
freckles on his cheeks and almost black irises surrounded by deep blue. The chest that was exposed in this new t-shirt was titillating, and seeing and being able to touch the handsome, sexy man in front of him was giving Logan’s brain all kinds of hormones and neurotransmitters to try and deal with.

Logan cleared his throat. “Alright, when it comes to partner dancing there is typically a leader and a follower. The leader is responsible for directing the follower and giving them enough indication of their intent to follow along. One way to accomplish this is to push or pull with hands, like so,” he said as he pushed Virgil’s waist with his right hand and pulled with his left. Virgil and Logan stepped to the left.

“Excellent! Now I’ll show you how I indicate to move backwards.”

Focused on teaching and learning, Logan and Virgil respectively found that they were less and less distracted. After another half hour of dancing, Logan was leading Virgil without words, only with his hands. They stared into each other’s eyes as the delicate string music continued playing, steps becoming smaller and smaller as the heat and electricity returned, their worlds narrowing into seeing the face of their loved one, feeling the hands on their body, and being ablaze with passion and desire. Virgil felt a familiar problem below his waistband returning, and Logan had a similar sensation. Soon enough, Virgil misread Logan and stepped squarely on his foot, breaking the bewitchment they were under.

“Sorry!”

Logan chuckled. “That is quite alright Virgil. You did remarkably well. I would not be opposed to teaching you again.”

Virgil looked down and smiled. “Thanks.”

“Of course. May I escort you back to your room?”

Virgil inhaled. Do I actually want this? Fuck, I do. I can do this. I just hope he doesn’t-

Virgil cut off his brain by blurting out, “Actually, could I stay with you tonight?”

Logan smiled warmly, the corners of his eyes crinkling. “I would love that.”

Virgil quickly got ready in Logan’s bathroom with the sweatpants Logan lent him and climbed into bed. He was happy to see that his problem had mostly resolved with the adrenaline from stepping on Logan’s foot and the process of getting ready for bed. Logan crawled under the covers a minute later and set his glasses on the nightstand. He lifted his arm, and Virgil nestled into Logan’s chest. Logan wrapped his arms around Virgil and smiled into the hair beneath his face.

“Goodnight, my moon.”

“Night, star.”

Chapter End Notes

The Light Sides, but especially Patton and Roman, root for their boyfriends so much because they’re absolute dorks. XD Also, you can look up each of the galaxies I mentioned!! They're all beautiful!! I should be more ashamed than I am about how
much of a nerd I am. X'D
Chapter 96

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! First and foremost, there are a line of tildes around a section of text discussing flashbacks Virgil has had and what happened during them. There are also a few very brief, very vague mentions of flashbacks and previous sexual assault throughout the chapter. Finally, in the later part of the chapter, there are very matter-of-fact discussions of solo sexytimes, i.e. masturbation. Take care of yourselves!!

Virgil woke from a nightmare and froze when he realized he was in bed with someone. His muscles were tensed as he listened to the breathing and tried to figure out whose room he was in this time. He dilated his pupils and took in a neat desk, bookcase, and telescope. The previous evening flooded back, and Virgil allowed his muscles to slowly relax as he smelled lemon and lilac. He couldn’t stop the tears from phantom pain in his back and stomach. He did his grounding exercises as best he could in the darkened room along with breathing exercises. The images he could remember were faint, but he remembered the pain, helplessness, and hopelessness. Why did they have to hurt me so much when I was so little? They were already so much bigger than me! I’m scared… Virgil’s breath began to hitch violently.

“Mmf, Virgil?” Logan mumbled sleepily.

“S-sorry L, didn’t m-mean to w-wake you up.”

“‘S alright. You okay?”

This is Logan. Logan won’t burn me or punch me. “Yeah, I’m fine, just a nightmare. You can go back to sleep.”

Logan woke up a little more. “Are you sure Virgil? Is there anything I can do?”

Virgil looked up at him in the darkness and smiled as the tension in his chest unwound and the phantom pain began to fade. I’m safe. He won’t hurt me. “I’m okay. I’m feeling better.”

“Alright. Let me know. Goodnight Virgil.”

Virgil nuzzled into his chest as Logan tightened his arms around the smaller Side. “Night Lo.”

Virgil kept his eyes open and listened to Logan breathe slowly and deeply. He was still upset from his nightmare, the fear lingering, but he at least knew he was safe and protected with Logan there. As if on cue, Logan snuffled and hugged Virgil in his sleep. Virgil bit back a chuckle, not wanting to wake Logan again. He stayed awake until the morning light began breaking through the window.

An alarm startled Virgil and caused him to jump. Logan grunted and hit the top of his alarm clock a few times until it turned off. Logan looked down at Virgil and smiled tiredly.

“Good morning Virgil.”
Virgil smiled. “Morning Logan.”

Logan sighed and closed his eyes. When Virgil heard Logan’s breathing evening out, he gently shook him.

“Come on L, we should get up for breakfast.”

Logan groaned, but slowly sat up and stretched. Virgil stretched laying down and had to fight the urge to be a hypocrite and go back to sleep. They both changed and worked on their morning routines before heading downstairs. When they turned the corner, they were surprised to see Saul and Remy at the table, with Remy looking exhausted.

Virgil decided to try to comfort his brother. “You look like shit.”

Remy just flipped him off. Saul rubbed his boyfriend’s back. “Thomas had a rough night last night.”

Virgil’s anxiety spiked. “Really? What happened?”

“Subconscious was acting up. He was having pretty terrible nightmares. Roman and Remy together weren’t able to keep them under control,” Saul explained.

“Damn. Any idea what caused it?”

“Homophobia,” Remy mumbled before he chugged his entire mug of coffee. Patton quickly replaced it. Remy did his best to smile at the caring Side. “You’re an angel babe.”

“No problem!”

“As this dawn breaks, a gloomy morning approaches. The muse of the thespian is weary and haggard, but presses forward still. My beloved friends and family, may you be granted strength during this trying time as-”

“BITCH YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY ONE TIRED.”

A single sigh was heard from around the corner, and then Roman dragged himself into the kitchen.

“You know, it’s rude to interrupt a prince’s monologue.”

“Prince of what exactly, sweetie?”

“... that was low.”

“Ugh, sorry, I’m kind of a bitch right now.”

“Really.”

“Now that’s enough out of the two of you. Be nice or go to your rooms.”

“But he started it,” Roman and Remy whined at the same time. Virgil rubbed his forehead to fight the oncoming headache.

“I don’t care who started it, we don’t need senseless bickering in the mindscape. Drink your coffee boys, breakfast will be ready soon.”

Both Virgil and Saul failed to repress snorts of amusement, which earned them glares from their
respective boyfriends. Remy turned his attention to Virgil, who paled. *Shit. He’s cranky and tired.*

“You look like you could have used a few more hours yourself there sugar pie. What kept you up?”

Before Virgil could speak, Logan jumped in. “Ah yes, Virgil and I had a date that ran late last night.”

“Oh really?” Remy purred as he leaned forward. “And I’m sure you escorted our little raccoon boy back to his room?”

“No, he stayed in my room.” Logan realized his error a moment later as his eyes widened.

“Oooooo Virgie!! You didn’t tell me you hit that! I can see why though! Very sexy professor vibe he’s got going on there, and he’s got a little fire in him! I bet being topped by him was hot.”

“Remy, I didn’t-”

“You topped? That’s also hot. I bet he’s a pretty bottom.”

“I can assure you-”

“Sixty-nine?”

Saul gently placed a hand on Remy’s forearm. “Have mercy on them darling.”

Remy sighed dramatically. “Fiiiiiiiiine.”

///// 

A couple of days later, Virgil chuckled as the doctor entered while singing the *Steven Universe* theme song.

“Hey doc.”

“Hello Virgil! And how are you doing today?”

Virgil shrugged. “Pretty good I think. I went on a few dates with the Light Sides.”

“That’s awesome! How did they go?”

“I think pretty well. I got nervous a couple of times, but I was either able to deal with it or they helped me feel okay.”

“I’m very happy to hear that!! Do you want to talk about what made you nervous on the dates?”

Virgil looked down. “It was just me panicking. Like, Logan taught me how to dance, and I was nervous that he was going to put his hand on my lower back, but he didn’t and asked for permission before touching me.”

“That’s all wonderful to hear!”

Virgil smiled. “Yeah… it was really nice.” The smile fell from his face as he remembered his ongoing frustration.

“Did something else happen during the date?”
Virgil sighed. “No, but…” I can’t tell him, oh my GOD who the fuck talks to their therapist about sex stuff? That’s so inappropriate. Don’t be a creep. He offered Dr. Picani an apologetic smile. “Sorry doc, it’s, ah, something that might make you uncomfortable and I don’t want to do that to you.”

Dr. Picani smiled back. “I appreciate the concern Virgil. If you want, you could tell me the general topic and I’ll let you know if I’m uncomfortable with it.”

Virgil blushed darkly and gulped. “I- I don’t know…”

“It’s alright Virgil, you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to. Just know that I’ve heard a lot, and I won’t judge you.”

Virgil closed his eyes. “Sexual stuff,” he mumbled.

“Okay! I don’t mind talking about that! What’s on your mind?”

Virgil opened his eyes. Dr. Picani was looking at him with no judgment, just patiently waiting for Virgil to talk.

Virgil cast his eyes down. “I… uh, I have a hard time with… with, um, getting off.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. Is this with a partner or by yourself?”

Virgil was thrown for a moment by how nonplussed Dr. Picani was. “By myself. I don’t think I’m ready to be with someone yet, y’know?”

“I understand! What seems to prevent you from getting off?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I start to freak out.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Do flashbacks or panic attacks seem more common?”

Virgil shifted, beginning to feel hands. “Flashbacks.” He chuckled humorlessly. “Speaking of whi-” he choked off when a particularly sharp pain went through him.

“Can you focus on me?” Virgil raised his eyes to meet warm brown ones. “Good. Can you find five things in the room that are green?”

Dr. Picani led Virgil through two grounding exercises before Virgil felt present again.

“Sorry doc, I didn’t think I’d react like that.”

“You don’t have to apologize! I think that’s probably one of the memories that gets in your way, huh?”

“Yeah…”

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Virgil pulled his sleeves over his hands and played with the hem. I can do this, I can do this, I’ve come so far already, I can talk about it.

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“They’d… hurt me,” Virgil whispered.
Dr. Picani waited a moment. “I’m so sorry Virgil. Can you say how they hurt you?”

Virgil whimpered quietly. “Can I have a comfort item?”

“Of course.” Dr. Picani slid the basket over, and Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish. He squeezed the plush toy against his chest, tilted his head down, and trained his eyes on the ground. “They’d make me stay still with different things and then make me get hard. I didn’t want to!”

“I believe you Virgil. I am so sorry they did that to you.”

Virgil clutched the marine mammal more tightly. “Th-then they’d… use it to h-hurt me and sometimes they’d force me t-” he cried and buried his face in the stuffed animal.

Dr. Picani let Virgil cry for a few minutes. “They would force you to ejaculate?”

Virgil let out several loud sobs and buried his face in the doll. Dr. Picani let Virgil cry until his tears ran out. He had full-body, earth-shaking sobs. Dr. Picani couldn’t help the twinge in his heart that he felt. Once his crying stopped, Virgil slowly lowered the doll and grabbed a few Kleenex tissues, blowing his nose and wiping away tears that continued to fall as his breath hitched.

“I am so sorry Virgil. You didn’t deserve that.”

Virgil whimpered and hugged the flying dolphin fish.

Dr. Picani decided to test the waters. “When you’re masturbating, are you able to predict when a flashback will happen or do they take you by surprise?”

Virgil shifted. “They kinda take me by surprise. I haven’t tried very often.”

“Alright. What kinds of associations would you say you have with arousal?”


Dr. Picani tilted his head. “Hm, that could be something to work on first. Let’s see if we can figure out why. If you feel comfortable, can you tell me how you touch yourself?”

“I just use my hand? Isn’t that how a lot of people do it?”

“They do! A lot of people also find using some kind of lubricant or lotion makes it feel better. Do you use anything like that?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, I never thought to. They never did, and they only sometimes used it for… other things.”

“Okay. If you feel comfortable doing so, give that a try and see if it helps. If it still hurts, we can keep chatting about it and see if we can’t solve the mystery! Do you feel up to talking about your flashbacks?”

Virgil leaned his head against the soft material in his lap. “I think so.”

“Okay. Tell me at any time if you need to stop. The most commonly used and commonly successful tactic to disassociate trauma from sexual pleasure is gradual reintroduction and re-
learning. The first step is to identify signs when you’re about to go into a flashback. These could be physical sensations, thought processes, or emotions. Pay attention to what you’re feeling and thinking, and write it down, for both when you’re not about to experience a flashback and when you are. That way, you can learn your body’s cues and avoid it. With me so far?”

“More journaling, got it,” Virgil said with a half smile.

Dr. Picani smiled back. “More journaling, yes. Before you experience a flashback, and even before you experience those thoughts or feelings, stop. And if you’re not able to and you start thinking or feeling bad or have a flashback, use breathing and grounding techniques. Does that make sense?”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, I actually already do the second part of that, with the breathing and grounding techniques.”

“That’s awesome! You’re very smart Virgil.”

Virgil blushed. “I… whatever…”

Dr. Picani felt a bit of fondness for the humble Side. “Do you have any questions or concerns about that?”

“No, I think that all makes sense.”

“Okay! Let me know if something comes up. Would you like to talk about Phase 4 of the Marvel Cinematic Universe?”

“Hell yeah.”

Chapter End Notes

Virgil did so well! He asked for the comfort item even when he was upset. Talking about past experiences at that level of detail is so fucking hard and takes so much time, but he did the darn thing!! And most therapists are fine with discussing sexual dysfunctions. They're not going to judge you for it, and they've probably heard it before. They're there to help you, and a competent therapist will.
Hi folks! No warnings here for this chapter since there's nothing graphic. This is the chapter in which we find out why Virgil is nervous around horses.

Over the next 6 months, Virgil went on many more dates with the Light Sides, with Remy kindheartedly harassing him afterwards. Virgil had slowly accepted that nothing physical was expected of him from the Light Sides during their dates; the thought rarely occurred to him any more while he was with them. At first, he had been anxious that he wasn’t doing enough, but he gradually learned that they were on a date to be with each other and share an experience, and that physical contact wasn’t necessary for that. If he was having a bad day, there were some dates he didn’t touch one of the other Sides even once, and they were still perfectly happy. After a while, he sometimes didn’t even have anxiety at the end of dates, the pressure to kiss or do more with one of the Light Sides not present in his mind. He’d just smile and say goodnight, usually with a hug. The most notable change was that he sought out physical contact such as cuddling and sleeping together. Patton was thrilled with the increase in hugs he was getting from the cautious Side, and he let everyone with ears know it. It definitely helped that they had occasionally discussed their boundaries again with each other, so Virgil knew that they were okay with him initiating everything and also with him not feeling like doing anything.

Dr. Picani had been counseling Virgil on separating trauma from sexual contact. Virgil still hadn’t been able to climax, but he was getting closer and closer. Not having it hurt when he touched himself had helped a lot. The doctor had also been working with Virgil on confronting his thought processes around dates and physical contact, which had helped Virgil to feel far more comfortable.

Which is why when he walked downstairs after preventing a panic attack and saw Logan reading on the couch, he asked and was allowed to rest his head on Logan’s lap. Logan shifted his book to one hand and used his free hand to gently scritch at the back of Virgil’s head, eliciting the expected rumble. Logan’s lips quirked; as much as Virgil hated being compared to a kitten, that was truly the best animal comparison Logan could think of.

They’d been relaxing on the couch for an hour when Roman came downstairs.

“‘Sup plebes?” Roman asked as he struck a new pose. He and Thomas were going through a bit of an experimental phase.

“Greetings Roman.”

Virgil just grumbled.

Both Light Sides smiled fondly at their tired boyfriend. Logan scritched the back of Virgil’s head and got a contented sigh in response.

“Virgil, my love, my storm cloud, my night sky, my dark knave, my-”

“I can fucking hear you Princey.”
“My sweet shadow, I believe you’ll want to be awake for this.”

Virgil groaned but opened his eyes to stare deadpan at Roman.

“Logan, you remember our date from last night that you enjoyed.”

“My memory storing functions are intact, yes. I’m still experiencing some muscle soreness, but I believe that should resolve with time.”

Roman grinned devilishly. “From which activity?” he asked lowly. Logan choked and turned bright red while Virgil almost fell off the sofa laughing.

“I was referring to horseback riding!”

“Not riding m-”

“I was not.”

“I guess I’ll have to try harder next time.”

Virgil snickered. “Harder.”

Logan groaned and hid his face in his hands. Roman and Virgil laughed a bit more before Roman focused on Virgil.

“Virgil, my love, would you like to meet the horses? I promise they’re all very well-behaved!”

Virgil chewed his lip. “I guess so…” What if they kick? What if they bite? What if one of us falls off and we hit our head or break our neck or break a bone-

“My dark knight, I can hear you over-thinking. I will not allow anything bad to happen to us while in my realm.”

Virgil met Roman’s eyes and smiled sheepishly. “Sorry Ro.”

“Not a problem love. Would you like to meet the horses? Arthur will be there!”

Roman will keep me safe, he wouldn’t have the horses act aggressively… “Okay. I’m down.”

“Wonderful!! After dinner tonight?”

Virgil smiled. “It’s a date.”

Roman squealed and smushed his hands against his face, bouncing on the balls of his feet a couple times before practically floating up the stairs. Virgil snorted and laid his head back down on Logan’s lap. They spent the rest of the morning relaxing in each other’s company.

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Patton made a light ham and split pea soup with garlic bread and a citrus-beet salad for dinner, which Virgil was grateful for since he’d be riding horses later. Virgil decided against wearing any jewelry around the horses, just in case, and chose some black and silver cowboy boots he had Remy conjure for him. He decided to go with less-ripped skinny jeans and a slightly-torn purple t-shirt. He made up for the outfit by putting a bit of subtle eyeshadow on his upper lid and adding mascara. He tapped Shelly for good luck, mostly hoping Roman wouldn’t get kicked in the head and have his last brain cell fizzle out, and exited his room. He jumped when he heard a wolf
whistle from behind him.

“Go get ‘im cowboy!” Patton cheered.

Virgil snorted and sent him an entirely different two-finger salute, continuing down the hallway. Once he got to the large, ornate doors, Virgil knocked a little hesitantly.

“Come in!”

Virgil pushed the door open and was only a little surprised to find Roman in his typical prince outfit, including his knee-high riding boots.

“Greetings Virgil! You look lovely as always!!”

“Thanks Princey. You look good too. I’m surprised you’re not wearing leather chaps though. Have you conjured any?”

Roman smirked. “My love, I do have leather chaps, but they are not used for riding horses. I’m sure you’ve heard of *Brokeback Mountain*?”

Virgil turned pink. “Got it. Shall we, um, go see those horses?”

Roman’s smirk turned into a gentle smile. “We shall,” he said as he extended his arm. Virgil rolled his eyes but took it. Roman led Virgil through the wardrobe and up the gravel pathway to the castle. For a few minutes, they just enjoyed the sounds of their environment and the feeling of touching each other. Roman breathing in lavender and oud, while Virgil smelled cinnamon and roses. Nowadays, whenever Virgil smelled one of the Light Sides there was a chance Little Virgil might have something to say on the matter. As it was, he could feel a bit of a stirring, but it wasn’t enough to warrant any attention.

“Ah, did I tell you Peter has been introducing koi into the stream?” Roman asked quietly (for him anyways).

“No, but I bet they’re beautiful. Koi are really gorgeous fish.”

“Indeed they are. Nothing could surpass your beauty, of course-”

“A fucking fish better not surpass my beauty.”

“-but I will say that although they’re still growing, they’re quite lovely already.”

Roman led Virgil over to a section of the stream that had a series of bamboo poles blocking it off from the main flow but still allowing water to pass easily. The koi had many different patterns of black, orange, yellow, and white. Virgil and Roman watched the fish swim around in silence for a while until Virgil straightened and popped his back.

“Shall we continue?”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

“Wonderful. This way, my love.”

Roman led Virgil around the back of the large castle, Virgil stealing glances to admire the light shining on Roman’s face and through his hair. He could feel the heat coming off of the prince and the wind made it so that the royal’s scent was even stronger than usual to Virgil. Finally, a large stable with several large pens in front of it and a huge pasture extending behind it came into view.
As they got closer, Virgil’s anxiety began creeping up and he unconsciously gripped Roman’s arm more tightly.

Roman stopped and gently placed his free hand over Virgil’s. “It is alright, my love. These horses will not harm you or I. If you are uncomfortable, we can always do something else.”

Virgil smiled shakily up at his prince. “I’m okay, I just… they’re really big, really strong animals, you know? What if I fall off? I’ve never ridden a horse before.”

Roman squeezed Virgil’s hand slightly and smiled. “We do not have to ride horses today, little stormcloud. We can just look at them, or pet them if you want. I want you to enjoy yourself. If you’re not enjoying something, what possible pleasure could I receive?”

Virgil felt the tips of his ears burning. Goddammit, Roman’s too... pretty. His eyes, his smile... Virgil cleared his throat. “Makes sense. I... I think I’d be okay looking at them? Arthur was tied to the tree and he probably couldn’t bite me from the angle he was at. You promise they won’t bite?”

“I swear it.”

Virgil sighed and nodded. “Okay. I think it’ll be okay then.”

“Wonderful. Do let me know if you become uncomfortable at any time, alright?”

“I will.”

Roman searching Virgil’s face for a moment longer before squeezing his hand again and turning back to the stables. As they got closer, Virgil could start to hear and smell the horses. Once they got to the stable doors, Roman pushed them open with one hand (show off) and strode in. The royal workers bowed and curtsied at the entrance of the prince and his partner. Roman quickly waved them off, and they relaxed their stances to get back to work. Virgil noticed a large table of carrots placed near one of the walls.

“Alright Virgil, are there any horses that catch your eye?”

Virgil looked around the stable. There were horses of every imaginable color, some less realistic than others. He spotted Arthur near the end of the stable.

“Can we see Arthur again?”

“Of course.”

As soon as they arrived by Arthur’s stall, a royal worker came up with several carrots on an intricate gold and china plate. Virgil raised an eyebrow at Roman.

“I thought you might like to feed the horses.”

Virgil snorted at the incredible extraness Roman put into fucking carrots, although he wasn’t entirely surprised. Virgil looked at Arthur.

“How should I...”

“Let him smell you, then you can pet his face.”

Virgil slowly extended a hand. A surprisingly soft muzzle came up and Virgil heard and felt wind blow against his hand. The muzzle lowered slightly, and Virgil gently scratched the magnificent horse’s forehead. After a minute of that, he took a carrot with a smile to the royal worker, and held
the carrot out so his hand was as far away from the tip nearest the horse as possible. Arthur took the carrot and in barely over a second the carrot had disappeared.

“Holy shit! He ate that fast!”

Roman laughed. “Indeed he did! Horses are very large animals!”

Virgil studied his joyful prince’s face. *I’m so lucky. He’s so much more handsome than me.*

“Can I feed him another one?”

“Certainly!”

Virgil grabbed another carrot from the tray and offered it to Arthur again, this time with his arm much more relaxed. The carrot disappeared just as fast, and the Andalusian stuck his head out of his stall for more, comically turning his head to the side and extending his lips. Both Roman and Virgil chuckled, and with a final pat from Roman, they left to go to the next horse.

Virgil and Roman visited each of the 30 horses, including both Patton’s and Logan’s favorites. Logan’s preferred horse was a dark bay roan with black stockings, mane, tail, and muzzle. Patton’s favorite was a stunning cream grulla with dark grey stocking, mane, tail, and adorable muzzle.

The last stall they came to contained what looked like a regular chestnut horse with bright red coloring, until Virgil saw the back of the horse.

“What’s going on with his back end? It looks like he got bleached or something.”

Roman chuckled. “This is an Appaloosa horse. That particular pattern is called a blanket with spots.”

“Oh. Dope.”

Virgil extended his hand to let the horse smell him. Once the horse lowered his head, Virgil scratched his forehead where the blaze started. He soon grabbed a carrot and fed it to him.

“What’s his name?”

“Rojo. I let one of the children from the village name him since she was there soon after his birth.”

“That’s a cool name.” Virgil silently pet the Appaloosa for several minutes until he pulled back to feed him another carrot.

“You seem to like him, my love. And he seems to like you. He tends to be a bit shyer around new people.”

Virgil smiled and pet Rojo’s muzzle. “He’s chill.”

Roman chuckled. “You’re free to visit him any time you’d like.”

Virgil smiled at Roman. “Thanks Ro. I do like him.”

“I’m glad.”

After several more minutes, Virgil pulled back and grimaced at his hands. Roman laughed softly.

“There’s a sink behind you if you’d like to wash your hands.”
Both Roman and Virgil washed their hands, and slowly walked through the castle grounds back to the wardrobe. Virgil admired the shapes and shadows of the fountains and topiary in the evening light, the brightest stars just beginning to show, the sound of water in the fountains. He smelled roses and cinnamon and… not horse?

“Hey Ro?”

“Yes beloved?”

“Why don’t we smell like horse?”

It could be a trick of the evening light, but Virgil thought he saw a bit of red in Roman’s cheeks. “I may have used a bit of Imagination magic to get the smell off us.”

Virgil snorted. “Dork.”

“Perhaps, but I’m your dork.”

“Damn right.”

Soon, too soon for Virgil, they were walking down the gravel path to the wardrobe door. Virgil clung to the strong, muscled arm more tightly, the thick fabric covering his arms somehow making them even more enticing. Virgil felt more heat in his lower abdomen, but he did his best to distract himself. Maybe if I focus on the scent… No, that’s worse! Okay, tactile… Even worse!! Goddammit, I am too fucking gay.

Before he knew it, they were in front of Virgil’s door. Roman stepped back slightly so he was facing Virgil and Virgil’s back was facing the door, all the while still holding Virgil’s hand. The romantic Side started moving his fingers across Virgil’s hand the way he knew Virgil liked it, maintaining intense eye contact the entire time.

“I had a wonderful time with you Virgil,” Roman said in a near-growl. Even though he did something similar to this after every date, Roman still managed to make Virgil speechless. As it was, Virgil’s body was on fire in a very pleasant way. There was a warm tingling on his skin, he felt his pupils expanding against his will, and he was panting slightly as he stared agape at his prince in brilliant white, gold, and red.

Every time this happens. Every. Single. Time. Roman’s too fucking good. I’m so done for.

Roman smirked for a moment before letting it fall into an easy smile and he began lowering Virgil’s hand.

This same thing happens every time. Except this time, I want…

Virgil, on impulse, surged up and pressed his lips against Roman’s. He was briefly glad he didn’t click teeth, although all thought melted away as he felt Roman’s soft lips against his. Lightning was going from his lips and spreading throughout his entire body at the connection as he felt a smile beginning to form. He felt the warmth from where he was touching Roman, their chins just barely brushing, the sides of their noses against each other. The kiss only lasted a few seconds, but in those seconds Virgil felt like he turned into the embodiment of flame. He felt a lump in his throat and wetness in his eyes from the sheer happiness and elation. He pulled back and heard a quiet… kissing sound. He opened his eyes once he was firmly back down on the ground, smiling uncontrollably, and was treated to a beautiful sight.

Roman had a gorgeous blush across his cheekbones, making the sparse freckles slightly darker.
His mouth was slowly growing from a surprised look into a wide, beatific smile. His eyes could only be described as lustrous, no, *starry*. Virgil was sure he looked the same way, except with the dorkiest smile he’d ever worn.

Virgil’s skin was still aflame, and he tilted his head shyly. “I, um, goodnight Ro!”

Roman’s smile turned sweet. “Goodnight, my love.”

Virgil giggled, then turned and opened his door, closing it quickly behind him. He heard Roman chuckle out in the hall, then walk towards his room. Virgil looked to his right and saw Shelly.

“I kissed him!” he told Shelly. “I did it! I really kissed him! It,” Virgil sighed happily and looked up at his ceiling. “It was so good.”

With a final sigh, Virgil pushed himself away from the door and got ready for bed. Once in bed, he remembered the evening with Roman. When he thought about the kiss, he giggled again, then slapped a hand over his mouth to muffle the giggles continuing to pour from him. *I get why people get so giddy after kissing someone they want to now!*

Virgil fell asleep to the memory of soft, warm lips on his and the scent of cinnamon, roses, and fresh air.

Chapter End Notes

EEEEEEEEEEEEE MY BABY GOT HIS KISS!!!!!!! HIS VERY FIRST KISS!!!!!!!!!!!! HE WAS SO READY!!!!!!

And y'all were so worried by what I meant by milestone. X'D X'D X'D

Did the beginning A/N throw you off at all? ;)

Also, a little tip of the hat to my European and Australian readers in this chapter!!
Roman still felt the slightly chapped lips pressed against his own, the smell of lavender and oud, the slight warmth from the smaller Side’s body. The kiss had been short, perhaps only a few seconds, but time had stopped moving. Roman had felt like he was being kissed for years by an enthusiastic, beautiful dark knight. He’d been ready to retreat to his room and look back fondly on the date as he got ready for bed, just beginning to release Virgil’s hand when his boyfriend leaned up and kissed him. Roman had been so shocked he’d forgotten to move his lips until Virgil had already disconnected, and by that time they were both smiling helplessly. Virgil’s shy little goodnight and blush had Roman’s head spinning as he felt his own face warm. While it may have been one of the shorter kisses he’d ever had, it was one of the most electrifying.

Roman went into his room and flopped on the bed, staring up at his ceiling and sighing happily. He was still smiling dreamily as he kept sighing and remembering the kiss. On a whim, he decided to summon Logan and Patton to his room. I must share this incredible news with them!!

Logan and Patton landed on the bed next to Roman, mid-make out.

“EEEP! Roman! What’s going on?” Patton squeaked, beneath Logan, the cat hoodie gone from his shoulders and his glasses askew.

“I do hope you have a good reason for summoning us so suddenly,” Logan said, slightly agitated, his tie nowhere to be seen and his polo unbuttoned.

“Oh, I do! The most wonderful thing happened on our date tonight!” Roman paused to sigh happily at the ceiling. After a few more sighs, an impatient Logan decided to try to direct the conversation.

“What was the wonderful thing that happened Roman?”

“Oh, so many things really! First, my god, have you ever seen in Virgil in cowboy boots? His legs.” Roman sighed happily again.

“Yes Roman, we are all very gay and attracted to Virgil. What was the other good thing that happened?”

“Oh, so many things…” Roman let out another sigh at the ceiling.

“Understood. Would you mind terribly if Patton and I were sexually intimate next to you?”

“Not at all my loves. Oh, Virgil was so wonderful tonight.”

Roman heard Logan and Patton making out next to him while he waxed poetic on how gorgeous
Virgil was or how adorable he was in between dreamy sighs, with Patton intermittently pausing the makeout session to vocalize his happiness for Roman and Virgil (much to Logan’s frustration at Roman). Eventually, Roman stopped talking and just sighed at the ceiling. Patton and Logan gave up on having sex because having a clueless dumbass next to them sighing happily at the ceiling made it a little weird. After an hour and a half of sighing and smiling, Roman noticed his vision was tunneling in slightly and he was a little dizzy. It did nothing to dampen his happiness. He continued until everything went dark.

“Roman. Roman, wake up,” Logan’s vexed voice echoed.

Roman groaned and opened his eyes, then immediately closed them against the brightness.

“What happened?”

“You sighed so much you ended up hyperventilating and passed out.”

“Oh. Ah, yes! Virgil,” Roman sighed dreamily.

“No, I am not letting you pass out again.”

“Very well. Oh, it’s truly-”

“Wonderful, yes, we know, please get to the main point of your speech with minimal sighing. Tell us what you are sighing about. Did you have sexual intercourse?” he asked dryly.

“Oh now Logie Bear, he’s just in love!”

“I gathered that from his unconsciousness. Please don’t call me that.”

Patton giggled.

“It’s even better than that! Virgil he,” Roman sighed and saw a vein in Logan’s forehead twitch. “He kissed me. Like a fairytale…”

Patton squealed loudly and Logan relaxed. “Ah. That would certainly explain the… state you’re in.” Logan smiled and ran a hand through the smitten prince’s hair.

“MY BABY HAD HIS FIRST KISS!!! I’M SO HAPPY FOR YOU TWO!!!!!”

“As am I.”

“Me too,” Roman said lovingly.

“Awwwww you’re so cute!!!”

Roman’s cheeks tinged pink. “Why thank you padre. Would you like to cuddle?”

“Would I?!?!”

Patton nearly jumped on Roman, who happily tucked Patton under his arm. Logan spooned Patton, still a little annoyed but more pleased with the new development.

/////

Virgil wandered into the kitchen early, cheerful and ready to help Patton, excited to tell him about kissing Roman until he felt his skin become cold.
Oh shit, do I have to kiss Patton and Logan now? They’re gonna be pissed it wasn’t them, and I have to kiss them to make it fair, I don’t want to be forced to-

“Heya Virge!!”

Virgil jumped and smiled at his chipper boyfriend. “Hey Pat.”

Patton giggled and shifted on his feet, buzzing with energy. “I heard about your’s and Roman’s date last night!” he sing-songed.

Virgil’s blood ran cold. “Yeah?”

“Yeah! And he told me something very exciting!!”

“Oh? W-what was that?”

“I wanna hear it from you!”

Despite his fear of being forced into kissing, he smiled at the memory. “I, uh…” Virgil trailed off as his smile grew remembering the plush lips against his own. “I kissed Roman.”

Patton set his spatula down and opened his arms. “Can I hug you?”

Virgil relaxed a bit at Patton’s offer. “Yeah, go for it.”

Patton jumped forward and squealed, wrapping his arms around Virgil. “I’M SO HAPPY FOR YOU BABY!!!!”

Virgil chuckled. “Me too Pat, although I think my ears are ringing now.”

Patton giggled and pulled back sheepishly. “Sorry about that kiddo. I’m just so excited for you two!”

Virgil chuckled and looked down, trying to put something between Patton and his mouth. “Yeah, it was pretty fucking awesome.”

Patton giggled once more and squeezed Virgil’s shoulders, turning back to breakfast.

“Whatcha making?”

“Waffles with lots of bacon and super sugary juice! I think we need to celebrate!”

Virgil blushed. “Celebrate me kissing Roman?”

“And a wondrous event it truly is!” Roman proclaimed as he Princey’d into the kitchen. Virgil snorted as his blush deepened. Roman strode up to Virgil and smiled.

“How did you sleep my love?” Roman asked, his voice still deep from sleep.

“I slept pretty well. No nightmares.”

“I am happy to hear that my sweet!”

Virgil snorted and nodded. He’s waiting for me to kiss him, but I don’t want to kiss him right now. Fuck, shit, think think think… “Want a hug?”

“I would love a hug, my dark angel.”
Virgil curled into Roman’s chest, keeping his face tilted down. Roman wrapped strong, sure arms around the slender Side and rocked them both slightly. Virgil heard Patton coo behind him. He found himself relaxing into his knight’s chest, almost dozing off, smelling the royal’s aroma.

After ten minutes, Patton gently interrupted. “Can one of you go get Logan for breakfast? I bet he fell back asleep.”

“I’ll go! It’s my fault, so I should be the one to retrieve the nerd!” Roman declared. Virgil reluctantly pulled back.

“Why would Logan fall back asleep? Did he have a late night?”

Roman smirked. “Not, but he rose early this morning.”

“Wha- OH. Got it!”

Roman chuckled, then brushed a thumb against Virgil’s cheekbone, lightly resting his fingers against the side and back of Virgil’s head. “I shall return soon, my love. Do not cry for me,” he whispered solemnly.

Virgil would have responded with a witty remark, but his brain cells were fizzling out with the sensation on Roman’s fingertips against his skull. “Uh huh.”

Roman smiled, then turned and headed upstairs to retrieve the worn-out Side.

Virgil turned to Patton, who was working the last batch of bacon in the pan. “Anything I can help with?”

“Sure! Why don’t you set the table? And set out a mug of coffee for Logan, he’ll appreciate it.”

Virgil went to work, and just finished as a sleepy Logan entered the kitchen, grumbling incoherently in front of Roman as Roman serenaded the grumpy Side. Logan beelined for his coffee mug and chugged half of it in one go. Virgil refilled Logan’s mug.

“Thanks Virgil.”

“No problem. Tired?” he asked teasingly.

“Mmmm. Very.”

“ Heard you got it up, I mean got up, early.”

Logan sent a weak glare over to Roman, who just looked smug.

Virgil sat down as Patton brought the food over to the table. A few servings and a heroic tale from Roman later, and Logan started waking up.

“Ah, Virgil, Roman told us what happened last night. Congratulations.” Logan clapped a hand on Virgil’s should. “I’m very happy for you.”

Virgil ducked his head as a dorky smile forced its way onto his face. “Thanks Lo. I kinda figured he wouldn’t be able to keep it to himself.”

“Correct. He summoned Patton and I just as we were about to engage in coitus, proceeded to sigh at the ceiling while speaking in fragments for an hour and a half, then passed out from hyperventilation due to too much sighing.”
Virgil turned with a raised eyebrow over to Roman, who shrugged but had a blush painting his cheekbones.

Logan dropped his hand and resumed eating. Virgil chewed on his lip.

*Shit, they both know, they’re gonna want to kiss me, fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck*

“Are you okay baby?”

Virgil met Patton’s concerned gaze. “Yeah Pat sorry, just… I promise I’ll kiss you guys!”

Patton looked surprised while Logan put his hand over Virgil’s wrist. “Darling, do not feel pressured. Although you have kissed Roman, we do not expect or require you to kiss us as well. If you do wish to do so, then we want you to in your own time.” Logan squeezed lightly and smiled.

Virgil sent a shaky smile back. “You-you’re not going to be mad or jealous or anything?”

“Oh baby no! We’re happy you got to have your first kiss! If you ever want to kiss us, we’re definitely open to it, but we don’t want you to push yourself!”

Virgil relaxed minutely. “Okay, that’s… good.” He wasn’t sure if he believed that they’d never be jealous down the line or that they’re not impatient now, but…

“My love, the same goes for me. We have kissed, and I am so happy we did. It was truly magical. But I do not require you to kiss me again.”

Virgil’s eyes burned slightly. “Thanks guys.”

“No problem! Make sure you finish your waffle, honey! They don’t keep too well in the fridge!”

Breakfast finished, and Virgil got hugs from each of the Light Sides. The hugs made him relax a little more, feeling how satisfied they were with hugs.

Taking a deep breath, he sank down into the Neutral Side.

“Hey babes! What’s happening?”

Virgil smiled at Remy and Saul, then bit back a grimace once he saw they were wearing bathrobes. “Hey. Mind if I hang out with you guys today?”

“We’d love that darling.”

“I’m about to go to sleep, but Saul will be awake for a while longer!”

“Cool.” Virgil was gathering up his courage to tell Remy and Saul when Remy yawned.

“Welp, I better go catch my beauty rest. It ain’t easy being this perfect. Nighty night!”

Virgil exhaled, grateful to be able to put it off a little while longer. Saul and Virgil settled in to binge-watch *Agent Carter* and roast the writers of the show. They each had to lean back and close their eyes at certain times as Thomas needed them, but they were able to get through a good chunk of the series before Remy woke up.

“Morning girls, how was your night?”

“It’s evening.”
“Whatever. Pizza?”

“Only if it has pineapple.”

“Duh.”

Remy summoned an anchovy, pineapple, feta, pepperoni, mushroom, and onion pizza with extra cheese for them. They ate in silence for a few minutes until Remy was recharged with caffeine.

“Oh Virgie, you had a date with Roman last night, didn’t you? How’d it go?”

Virgil blushed and looked down, trying and failing to suppress a smile. “It was cool. We met the horses. They’re chill.”

“That sounds lovely darling.”

Virgil bit his lip to suppress a giggle. “Yeah, it was.”

“What else did you do? Reenact *Brokeback Mountain*?”

Virgil shook his head at the expected teasing. “No, but uh…” he huffed out a laugh, sensing Remy and Saul listening with rapt attention. “I kissed him.”

“WHAT?!” Remy screamed. He jumped over the pizza and tackle-hugged Virgil into both the couch and Saul.

“MY SWEET BABY GOT HIS FIRST KISS?!?! BITCH YOU NEED TO LEARN TO LEAD WITH THIS SHIT!!!”

Virgil laughed as Remy pulled back, who cleaned up the smashed pizza and grease stains with a wave of his hand. Saul side-hugged Virgil.

“I’m happy for you little one.”

Virgil smiled shyly back at him.

“Okay bitches we are getting irresponsibly drunk tonight!” Remy decided. He snapped and a 5-gallon cooler appeared that Virgil knew from experience was filled with J. Bird Winery mead. Remy summoned three glasses and filled each one. Saul and Virgil each grabbed a glass, knowing they were about to get silly drunk.

“To Virgil getting his handsome prince!”

Everyone cheered and Virgil blushed. *Fuck, I forgot how fucking good this is. I gotta pace myself.*

Virgil ended up crashing with Saul and Remy that night.

Chapter End Notes

So first, shoutout to J. Bird Winery for making the best fucking mead I've ever had in my entire life. I have to be careful because it's 11% but tastes like an angel cried directly into my mouth, yet I still get near-blackout drunk every time because I'm stupid lol. They also supply the local Ren Fest. If you're in MN or passing through, be
sure to support them!! They have dogs on site too!!

Roman is just too much sometimes lol. Him being the one to get Virgil’s first kiss and being the embodiment of romance? The dumbass faints. I love him so much. And although he cockblocked Logan and Patton, he made it up to both of them the next morning. ;)

Did you notice this is the second time I put pineapples on pizza? I AM TAKING A STAND AND WILL NOT BACK DOWN.
Chapter 99

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!!! Most importantly, there are graphic descriptions of torture, suffocation, vomiting, and sexual assault between the lines of tildes. I've shorted the lines of tildes so folks who use screen readers don't have to listen to a computer say "tilde" twenty times, so just a heads up on that! I'll be going back and shortening all of the various lines of tildes and forward slashes to be less annoying that way lol.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Once Saul and Remy helped Virgil recover from his hangover, Virgil returned to his room just after lunch. He still felt a little weak from his body trying to process the sheer amount of alcohol he’d ingested. *Shit, the cottage mead always gets me. It’s way too good. Man, I’m *not* 21 anymore.*

Virgil flopped on his bed and summoned Shelly from across the room. His headache was mostly gone at this point, but he knew that if he stared at screens it would come back with a vengeance. He closed his eyes and passed the time by watching Thomas and making sure he was okay. Thomas wasn’t doing much that required his attention, but he was bored and didn’t have access to Tumblr.

After several hours, Roman knocked on his door for dinner. Virgil let him know he’d be downstairs and rubbed his forehead, his headache starting to return. He got up slowly, and got some water and ibuprofen from his bathroom. He trudged downstairs, knowing some food would help him. Logan was helping make a simple kiwi-based salad while Patton was pulling black bean stuffed sweet potatoes out of the oven. The first time Patton had made it for Virgil, he’d been a little dubious, but it was always really good. Patton liked switching up the toppings; it looked like this time there was cubed cheese, creme fraiche, avocado, and onions.

Logan and Patton looked up when Virgil entered.

“Heya chocolate chip!” Patton chirped before he went back to working on the potatoes.

“Greetings Virgil,” Logan intoned before going back to tossing the salad. Virgil bit his lip. *They’re just busy getting dinner ready, they don’t hate me.*

*Oh really? You kissed their boyfriend but won’t kiss them. I’m sure they’re not jealous or frustrated with you at all.*

Virgil sent them a two-finger salute and got the flatware and silverware out while Roman fussled over the limeade. Virgil took a moment to admire Roman's body in a more casual and revealing t-shirt and basketball shorts.

“What happened to your prince outfit?”

“It’s a *uniform*, and lava crocodiles happened to it.”

“Okay, like, actually don’t die.”
“I promise I shall not abandon you.”

Once everyone settled and filled their plates, Patton turned to Virgil.

“It’s good to see ya again Virgil! Where’d you go today?”

_He’s so fucking pissed, you disappeared for an entire day. You can’t even give them basic attention after getting some action from their boyfriend. Oh, and speaking of Roman’s needs-_ “Sorry about that, Remy got us all drunk after I told him about kissing Roman and I was dealing with a hangover.”

“Everyone’s just celebrating me getting to kiss Virgil, this is awesome!!” Roman said excitedly, grinning from ear to ear. Virgil snorted and took a few more bits of his food. _Healthy food shouldn’t taste this good, this is an abomination._

He was relieved to find that his heartburn was pretty minimal, even though he wolfed down his plate of food. The Sides went over their day, chatting about the new brand deals Thomas had gotten with Tumblr and Marvel. Roman was so excited he could barely eat, so they had to take breaks to allow the creative Side to calm down enough to eat.

_Shit, after supper we’re going to be having a movie night! Shit shit shit shit shit shit…_

Virgil focused on eating the rest of his salad. _Okay, Patton’s strong, so I’ll help him clean up and make snacks for the movie and just stay out of reach of him. He could pull me in and do whatever he wants, I couldn’t stop him, he’s so strong…_

Virgil planned in his head how to choreograph himself after supper as his chest tightened and his skin became cold. _Okay, after supper, I can sit on the outside. Roman and Patton are the strongest, and Logan’s still stronger than me I think, but I’ll have the best chance with Logan. Hopefully he won’t be in the middle. He usually isn’t, so I should be good there. Shit, he might still expect me to kiss him though. And this is a group date! Of course they all want me to kiss them!_

Virgil felt tears start to prick his eyes as Roman and Logan left to set up the living room for movie night. He’d been fondly remembering kissing Roman and he _really_ wanted to do it again, but he didn’t want to be or feel forced into doing it.

_Just be glad you’re getting anything from them._

_I know._

Virgil did his best to stay away from Patton, although he still ended up being near him a few times. Patton chattered away as he made chocolate-covered kettle corn, and Virgil found himself zoning in and out of the conversation as he worried about one of the Light Sides guilting him or pulling him into a kiss.

_They said they wouldn’t, they said they’d let me initiate it._

_You did. With Roman. That counts._

_But they wouldn’t!_

Virgil fought back and forth with his brain, trying to convince himself the Light Sides wouldn’t hurt him, but he knew that he owed Logan and Patton a kiss now. _Goddammit, why did I have to be spontaneous?!_
He helped carry the snacks out, and was relieved to see Logan sitting near the end of the couch. Unfortunately, that spot was quickly claimed by Patton, who began almost making out with his boyfriend. Logan didn’t seem to mind. Virgil sat down next to Roman, pretty close but not touching. Roman extended his arm across the back of the couch, inviting Virgil to cuddle. Virgil stayed where he was, scared out of his mind. As the opening scene for Aladdin played, Logan and Patton parted just enough to shift into a cuddling position, with Logan leaning slightly against Roman’s chest.

“And you say I’m incorrigible,” Roman teased.

“You are,” Logan stated simply. Roman huffed out a laugh and kissed the top of Logan’s head. Roman turned to Virgil.

“Can you believe these two?”

Virgil tried smiling, but he knew how wide his eyes were and how tense he was. Roman tilted his head.

“Are you alright my love?”

“Do you want a kiss?” Virgil hated how shaky his voice was. That caused Logan to turn around to look at Virgil and Patton to twist his body as much as he could.

Roman frowned. “Not unless you want to, and you seem rather uncomfortable. Do you want to kiss me?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down. Roman saw the small tremors taking over Virgil’s body and spoke softly. “I do not want a kiss right now, my love.” He tried not to feel a little hurt at the way Virgil’s body relaxed slightly.

Virgil paid little attention to the rest of the movie, too trapped inside his own mind. I made it awkward because I’m so fucked up, no wonder they don’t mind when I’m not cuddling with them or why they don’t mind not kissing me. I owe it to them though! They’re just too nice to say it, but their patience is going to run out!

Virgil cursed the warm trails on his cheeks moments before Logan knelt in front of him. He felt like he was breathing through coffee straws.

“Virgil, darling, can you breathe with me?”

He bit his lip and nodded, more tears slipping out. Logan began counting, and Virgil did his best to follow along, but exhaled sharply and sucked in another breath at the five-count of holding his breath.

“It’s okay my darling, we can try again. In for one, two, three, four…”

Virgil had more success, although he still struggled during the first few rounds. Eventually, although he was still frightened and had tears leaking out occasionally, he could breathe. The television screen was as bright as the sun and his clothes felt too much.

“How are you feeling?” Logan asked.

Virgil looked down. “Sorry about that guys. I think I’m just tired.”

Logan nodded. “That can certainly impact one’s mood. Do you want one or more of us to stay with
you tonight?”

“Naw, I want to get my shit in order before I do that.”

Roman shifted next to him. “Love, we want to help you. I love you, we all do. It is not such a burden to help you as you may think. The joy we get from assisting you far outweighs the emotional labor.”

Virgil smiled at Roman, and Patton decided to pipe up.

“Yeah sweetie! I love you so much, and I want to help you!!”

Virgil huffed out a small laugh. “I appreciate it guys. I’m just tired and I think I might be having a bit of sensory overload. I just need a bit of time.”

“Alright Virgil. Do notify us if there is something we can do to assist.”

“Will do.” And with that, Virgil sank out. Once he was back in his room, he ripped his clothes off.Too much, too much, too much...

Kiss them.

No! They said they don’t want to until I’m ready!

They’re lying, you know they are. Kiss them.

NO!! I don’t want to! I… I want to kiss them when I want to, not when I feel I have to.

Yeah, well, relationships are built on compromise.

They don’t want that kind of compromise! I’m not letting you mess up more of the relationship than you already have! Fuck off!!

Virgil was relieved that the voice, although still there, was now quieter. He washed his face with his phone light setting on low, then crawled into bed. He had to lay without any covers on because the covers were uncomfortable and itchy and too much. He fell into an uneasy sleep.

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Rage was already inside of him, but was going slower than usual. Virgil knew that never meant anything good, especially when it was just him and Malice using Virgil.

Malice walked into view, but kept one hand suspiciously behind his back. Malice kept walking until he was standing on Virgil’s right side.

“You know, Virgil, when butchers cut up meat,” Malice leaned down until he was eye-level with Virgil’s stomach, ”the side of the cow is where you get the flank steak.” Malice licked a slow stripe from Virgil’s back almost to his stomach on the side of his abdomen. The ticklish feeling made him shudder.

“Oh! He moved! You know what that means!” Malice yelled excitedly. He brought his other hand out from behind his back to reveal a glowing-orange knife. He wasted no time in pressing the flat side of it to where he had just licked. Virgil screamed from behind his spider gag.

“Fuck, keep doing that.” Rage groaned.
“Well if he keeps making noise, I guess I’ll have no choice!” Malice replied with a shrug and a grin. Malice kept burning Virgil, some of the skin sticking and peeling away with the knife, until Rage finished and Malice decided to use Virgil’s mouth. Malice held himself inside Virgil and pinched his nose until he passed out.

////

When Virgil woke up, he choked and coughed as fluid ran down his face.

“He didn’t swallow it all!! That means we get to punish him even more!!” Malice cheered.

“It does, doesn’t it?” Deceit purred. “While I do enjoy seeing Virgil suffer and he does react particularly strongly to burns, I believe we should take a new course of action.” Virgil was still coughing and trying to catch his breath as they discussed his punishment.

Greed stepped between his legs and inspected his genitals. “Good enough, I guess.” He then promptly began punching Virgil. Virgil was grateful that the spider gag was still in so he could turn his head to the side to throw up.

“You have a mess to clean up after this,” Greed said as Jealousy rolling in the utility cart and took Greed’s place between Virgil’s legs. As Jealousy prepared the tools, Malice came over with wide eyes and began jacking Virgil harshly. Cries fell out of Virgil’s mouth.

“Don’t worry Virgil, it’ll feel better soon! Don’t know what’s wrong with ya if you don’t like this!”

The dry friction burned until Malice stopped, and Virgil only had relief for a moment until Jealousy began.

The Dark Sides each took turns, and at the end they dropped Virgil onto the floor to clean up his mess. He wasn’t able to move for four hours, and it took him another two to crawl over to the towels and mop it up.

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Virgil woke up gasping, and soon devolved into crying.

It hurt so bad, why did they have to hurt me so bad? I couldn’t stop moving or making sounds, it wasn’t fair!!

He cried from the horror and helplessness, the impossible expectations they had of him.

I was trying, but it was impossible! It wasn’t fair!! I tried!!

Virgil found his Lucas plushie and cried into him, reliving the pain and terror. He cried and cried until his throat became too sore. He hugged Lucas, then went to his bathroom. He was grateful to see that his sensory overload was gone, but he couldn’t stop his chest from spasming and small sounds escaping his mouth. He brought a hand down and checked to see if he had any bruises from his dream. He knew, he knew, that it was just a dream, but he felt he had to check. When touching himself didn’t make him almost black out, he sighed in relief. He drank some water and tried to calm himself down, but couldn’t seem to be able to.

I need someone. I don’t know if Remy’s comfortable with me enough to go to him, and I don’t want to make it awkward for Saul. I don’t want to feel like I have to kiss Patton or Logan as payment. Since I’ve already kissed Roman, maybe that would be okay?
He was already walking towards his door, throwing on a t-shirt and sweatpants. He clutched his Lucas plush to his chest as he quietly cried and walked down the hallway. When he got to Roman’s door he knocked weakly, his shaking arm and hand not having much control. Virgil was certain Roman wouldn’t hear the knocks, much less be woken up by them, until he heard movement on the other side of the door. A golden silk pyjama-clad Roman opened the door rubbing his face until he saw Virgil.

“Oh my sweet, what happened?” he asked, his eyes widening and his body leaning towards Virgil. Virgil sniffled in a vain attempt to control his crying. “N-nightmare.”

“Oh angel, come here,” Roman breathed. Virgil curled into his chest, still holding the stuffed animal, as Roman hugged him and rubbed his back, whispering soothing words. After a few minutes of that, Virgil managed,

“C-can I s-stay here t-tonight?”

“Of course love. Would you like to come inside?”

Virgil nodded against Roman’s chest. Roman gently pulled away and started walking towards the bed. Virgil’s legs locked up as he said, “Wait.”

Roman stopped walking the second he felt Virgil pause. “Yes my dark angel?”

Virgil stared at the carpet. “C-can you check t-t-to s-see if I have b-burns on m-m-my s-stomach?”

Roman’s eyes filled with fury, although when he spoke it was surprisingly gentle. “Of course love.”

Virgil lifted his shirt, just enough to show where the burns would be, and Roman observed him for a moment before lifting his eyes away. “I don’t see any burns, little bat.”

Virgil dropped his shirt and nodded.

“Where would you like to sleep?”

“O-on your b-b-bed, with you.” He paused. “Please?” he added meekly.

“Of course sweet angel.”

The walked over to the bed, Roman crawling in first and tucking the arm facing Virgil under a pillow. Virgil got on the bed and stopped. “C-can we c-cuddle? I f-feel s-s-safer when you h-hold me.”

“Absolutely, I would love nothing more.”

Virgil scooted over and laid his head down just under Roman’s clavicle, holding onto Lucas with one arm and grabbing a fistful of golden silk in the other hand. He hid his face and kept crying as Roman wrapped his arms around the traumatized Side.

“Shhhhhh, darling, you’re safe. It’s okay.”

“It h-hurt!! W-why did it h-have to h-hurt?!”

Roman focused to make sure his arms didn’t tighten around the frightened Side. “It didn’t have to hurt, but they made it hurt. They chose to hurt you, and they’re bastards because of it. You didn’t
deserve that. You didn’t deserve any of it, I swear.”

Roman held Virgil and murmured reassurances into his hair until he calmed. He conjured a handkerchief and handed it to Virgil, who sleepily blew his nose. Roman winced at how exhausted the poor man must be. Roman banished the handkerchief and gently cradled Virgil’s head against his chest.

“Sleep well, my beautiful love.”

Roman only allowed himself to fall asleep once Virgil’s breathing evened out.

Chapter End Notes

Poor bb. Recovery isn't linear, and surprising things can make you take steps backwards. Virgil's lucky to have a good support system. And his brain needs to stop pressuring him! That's honestly the worst, when your own brain is pressuring you more than your partners are.

It also does hurt sometimes when your partner is scared of you. As much as you know it's their trauma, it's still not fun to see that. It's okay to feel hurt, just accept it and process it, and know that it's the abuser's fault.
Chapter 100

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! No warnings for this chapter!

Looking back, in chapter 48, the line where Logan is telling Virgil that he is a priceless treasure, is very similar to a line in a fic titled "fearful of the night". I definitely didn't intend to draw from that fic at all, but the lines are similar enough I wanted to give a shoutout now that I see the similarities! And you should all go check it out, it's a really good fic!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman woke first, blearily opening his eyes as he felt a weight on his chest. He smiled as he looked down and saw Virgil’s head resting on him. He was relieved to have Virgil safe in his arms. He knew he could protect his dark love so long as he was holding him. His precious angel was so perfect and so gorgeous, and to be able to hold him was the most precious gift that he could ever be gifted. Roman tightened his arms carefully as he remembered the state Virgil was in last night, and how he had asked Roman to check him for burns. Roman growled as loudly as he dared. What on Earth have they done to my love?! If Thomas didn’t need them, I’d kill them. I’d run them through with my sword and I’d-

Roman took a few calming breaths as he felt Virgil begin to stir on his chest, focusing on the feeling of holding the slender man. As horrific as the previous night had been, Roman’s heart had melted when Virgil had said he felt safer being held by Roman. The fact that holding Virgil safe in his arms not only made Roman feel better, but Virgil as well, was wonderful to hear, even from such a timid voice. Roman waved his hand to put a sign on his door that Virgil was sleeping off a nightmare and to not disturb them. Just in time, as several minutes later he heard someone walk up to his door, pause, and then leave.

Virgil pulled Lucas closer to his chest, nuzzling it in his sleep and letting out a sigh and small snuffling noises. Roman bit the inside of his cheek to stop from cooing at him.

Virgil let out a few more sounds then tilted his head up, sliding his face across the broad chest, to look at Roman with sleepy, half-lidded eyes.

“Mornin’,” he slurred.

“Good morning, my love. How did you sleep?”

Virgil tilted his head back down into Lucas. ‘Better once I was here. Should probably eat somethin’.”

“That is wonderful to hear. I’ll accompany you to breakfast once you are ready.”

They laid there in silence, both Sides sleepy and warm just basking in the other, until Roman sensed Virgil was going to fall asleep again.

“Would you like to sleep more or would you like to eat?”
Virgil groaned. “Wha’ time izit?”

Roman huffed at his tired boyfriend. “Almost 9, my sweet.”

“Oh shit!” Virgil shot up. Roman kept his hands on him loosely.

“It’s alright angel, I put a sign on the door that said you needed to rest. Relax, beautiful.”

Virgil lowered himself back onto Roman’s chest and grabbed a fistful of his golden pyjamas.

“Will Patton and Logan be down there?”

Roman frowned. “I am not sure. Did they do something to make you uncomfortable?”

Virgil quickly shook his head. “No, I just…” Virgil tensed, “I don’t want them to get jealous or mad or anything,” he whispered.

Roman pulled Virgil closer to his body. “They won’t.”

Virgil let out a huff of irritation. “But… I already kissed you!! Why wouldn’t they be jealous? Maybe they’re fine enough now, but they’ll get impatient!”

“You contribute more than your body to this relationship, my sweet angel.”

Virgil grunted. “I know, you’ve said that, and I know you guys like hanging out with me, but that’s part of the relationship now! And I’ve kissed you, but I haven’t kissed them! Isn’t the expectation kinda there more than before?”

Roman hummed. “I think I understand. You understood that there wasn’t the expectation before, but now that you’ve kissed me you believe that action has established more of an expectation?”

“Yeah!”

“I see. I can assure you that’s not true. We know that being in a romantic relationship is new for you, and that you’re trying some things out. We do not expect you to do the same thing twice or new things at all. Does that help?”

Virgil didn’t say anything for a few moments, which worried Roman.

“How do you know they feel the same way?”

Roman’s lips quirked in amusement. “I asked them.”

“Communication. Nice. I should try it out myself.”

Roman chuckled. “Is your brain trying to counter what I’ve said at all?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, it’s pretty airtight. My brain’s having a hard time coming up with something besides you’re all lying, which there isn’t much evidence for.”

“Perfect, my sweet little stormcloud.”

Virgil stretched. “I guess we should go downstairs, huh?”

“If you would like.”

“Yeah. Besides, I know I’ve got at least another 45 minutes to sleep before you’ll be ready.”
Roman scoffed while Virgil snickered. “Show me where I’m wrong.”

“I- well, you see, it’s very difficult to look this good, and, I… Just, hush you!”

Virgil laughed and leaned back on the pillows so Roman could get up. With one more stink face, Roman went into his bathroom and Virgil closed his eyes. He dozed while he listened to his prince get ready. When Roman deemed himself presentable, they went downstairs, Virgil still in his sleep clothes. Virgil didn’t see Patton or Logan, but Patton had made plates of food up for both Roman and Virgil. Once they’d finished eating and cleaning up their dishes, Roman escorted Virgil back to his room; Thomas was about to go on a small road trip and would be needing Virgil since he was driving the first half.

Once they got to Virgil’s door, Roman turned to face Virgil fully, and his eyes grew dark and intense. As he slowly trailed his fingertips down Virgil’s forearm, he said lowly, “Fare thee well, my love. I shall see you soon.”

Virgil nodded mutely, because how is Roman making touching my arm so fucking hot?! Roman smirked and walked towards his room. Virgil needed a moment to collect himself before he was able to shake it off and walk into his room. He was a little hard, but not enough to warrant any attention before he checked in with Thomas.

Virgil paid close attention to everything, and by 2 PM they had stopped at a fast food joint where Joan would be driving the other half. Virgil stretched out on his bed, then decided to shower and get into day clothes. He trailed downstairs, still a little tired from the previous night. When he saw Logan on the couch, he decided to test out Roman’s promises.

“Heya Lo.”

Logan looked up from his book and smiled gently. “Hello Virgil. How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. “Still tired, but Roman helped me feel a little better.”

“That is good.”

Virgil stood there awkwardly in silence for a few moments as Logan fidgeted and tried to figure out what stage of the social interaction they were at.

“Wanna cuddle?! Virgil blurted out loudly and immediately hated himself.

Logan’s eyebrows twitched in barely-concealed amusement. “That sounds wonderful.”

Virgil blushed furiously and cuddled up next to Logan’s side as Logan lowered his arm around him. Virgil studied Logan for any signs of deception or irritation, but found none. He shifted experimentally, and only saw Logan’s sharp face soften. Virgil allowed himself to relax at that, pulling out his phone and scrolling through Tumblr. He felt the familiar ease of being around Logan returning now that he knew Logan and Patton really weren’t expecting anything from him. Like so often since he had kissed Roman, he found his mind wandering back to those amazing seconds. The soft lips on his, the warmth coming from the other person, the lightning shared between them during intimacy.

Virgil looked up from his phone and at Logan’s face. Intelligent eyes skimmed over the pages he was reading, though Virgil knew those same eyes held a fire that was rarely expressed. Logan rarely smiled at anyone but his boyfriends, and Virgil was so grateful he got to see the small, genuine smiles that got sent his way. Logan could be temperamental and competitive, but he was also the best at staying calm and logically working through issues. Being sexy as hell didn’t hurt
either.

Virgil put his phone in his hoodie pocket and moved so he was facing Logan more directly, already smiling with butterflies in his stomach. Logan turned to him and tilted his head.

“Is something the matter Virgil?”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “No, I just… I really like you, Logan.”

Logan’s features relaxed into an easy smile. “I really like you as well Virgil.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked at Logan’s tie for a moment as his nerves tried to take over. He looked up and met Logan’s eyes once more, releasing his lip.

“Can I kiss you?”

Logan’s eyebrows shot up for a moment before he put his book down and his smile grew. “Absolutely.”

Virgil closed his eyes and pressed his lips against Logan’s, and oh they’re moving, that’s nice. Virgil let out a small, embarrassing sound and pressed closer, trying to copy what Logan was doing. Sparks were coming from where their lips met and those sparks were traveling all through Virgil’s body, occasionally causing him to let out another sound. Logan gently rested a hand on Virgil’s elbow, and Virgil tangled a hand in the front of Logan’s polo as he arched his back, trying to get closer to the scent of lilac and lemon. Virgil’s heart was pounding and he felt like he could run a marathon as he watched fireworks explode behind his closed eyes. Logan’s movements were precise and confident, with a certain passion just below the surface clearly being held back. Far too soon for Virgil, Logan pulled back, earning him a small whine. Logan’s face and lips were flushed, his dark eyes watching Virgil. Virgil wanted more, he wanted to kiss Logan again, he felt like he was starving without the electricity.

“Can we do that again?” he asked, slightly breathless.

“Yes.”

Virgil surged forward, a little more desperate. He didn’t really know what he was doing, so he tried to copy what Logan was doing before only faster, although Logan kept his lips slightly slower. Logan started slowly rubbing his thumb across the side of Virgil’s elbow, the additional movement making Virgil whimper and goosebumps to break out all over his body. Once Virgil slowed down a little, Logan matched his pace. After another minute, Logan pulled back since breathing during kissing is a learned skill and he’d rather not have Virgil pass out while kissing him. Logan admired Virgil’s flushed face and dark, glittering eyes. His lips were slightly swollen and parted, panting. Logan had to push back filthy thoughts as he looked at his wrecked boyfriend. The fact that it took so little to get him into this state made Logan wonder how he’d react to other things.

Virgil felt less desperate the second time Logan pulled back. He knew he was panting and probably looked less than put together, but his head was still spinning from the new sensations. He definitely kisses different than Roman. Though I didn’t give Roman much of a chance, did I? Virgil started smiling. Guess I’ll have to give him another chance!

Virgil grinned widely at Logan with uncontainable joy, before ducking his head against Logan’s chest and hiding his face in embarrassment. He felt a puff of air against his head as an arm slowly draped itself around his shoulders.

I should say something. “I liked that.” And after a moment, “Thanks L.”
Logan leaned down so his lips were hovering just above Virgil’s ear and rumbled, “It was my pleasure, darling.”

Virgil flushed from head to toe and shit, looks like it’ll be awhile before I can stand up.

Logan leaned back slightly and hummed. “It sounds like Patton’s in the kitchen. Shall we go help him with lunch?”

Virgil started sweating. “Uh, I need a few minutes before I can stand up.”

“Hm? Oh. OH.” Logan chuckled. “Do I have that effect on you?” he asked lowly.

Virgil shifted and nodded. Logan huffed in amusement. “Alright, I’ll have mercy.” He tightened his arm around Virgil’s shoulders so they could cuddle more chastely.

After about a half hour, Virgil was able to stand up. He kept his eyes down, though Logan chuckled and lifted his chin with lithe fingers.

“You’ve nothing to be embarrassed about, my dear. I’m quite flattered.” Logan smiled at the adorable, splotchy blush painted across Virgil’s face. Just as a last-minute decision, he quickly brushed his thumb from the corner of Virgil’s lips to the side of his cheek and turned to walk towards the kitchen. He heard Virgil follow after him seconds later, his steps slightly faster to catch up to Logan. Logan smirked to himself. I do hope Virgil wants to do that again.

Chapter End Notes

Analogical, my first ever TS ship! :) Gotta show them some lovin’!! Logan's wishes will come true! ;)

And moods are weird!! For me, as soon as the core issue is taken care of, I start feeling a lot better fairly quickly, even if I’m in crisis. Once Roman was able to rephrase things in a way that made sense to Virgil, I decided to project more onto him (shocking, I know).

Also, Chapter 100!!!!! *Jazz hands!!!*
Chapter 101

Chapter Notes

Hey folks!! No warnings for this chapter, so enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After lunch, in which Virgil told Roman and Patton that he and Logan had kissed (and Patton squealed), Virgil returned upstairs to his room. Thomas was just listening to music while Joan drove, so Virgil could take a small break. He decided to review his journal sections on touching himself and see if there was anything more to add. He usually thought about one of the Light Sides, but sometimes a cute guy that Thomas had seen or was interested in made an appearance as well.

Virgil set to writing, but he couldn’t get past the first couple of sentences before his thoughts began to drift. He smiled as he remembered kissing Logan, the delicate hand on his elbow, the feeling of polo material scrunched up in his hand, the electricity from kissing a living sexy professor… Virgil closed his notebook since he knew he wouldn’t be able to get any work done. He laid back on his bed and closed his eyes, replaying his kisses with Roman and Logan in his head. He could try touching himself, but he was having a good day and didn’t want to risk ruining it.

I’ll have to give Roman another chance to kiss me when he’s actually expecting it. I wonder how Patton kisses? Would that be weird, since I just kissed Logan? Eh, I’ve seen them kiss each other right after the other before, and I want to kiss Patton. Where is he?

Virgil got off his bed, tapped Shelly for good luck, and walked towards Patton’s room. He stood in front of the door, and realized he had no idea what to do.

Do I just ask him? Do I go inside his room? What do I do afterwards? With Roman, it was the end of a date, and Logan and I were cuddling on the couch. Shit, what do I do? Is this gonna be awkward? This is gonna be awkward. I should just go. Wait, no! Patton wants me to kiss him when I’m ready, and I’m ready, and maybe he’ll know what to do afterward. Yeah… no, wait, I should have an idea of-

“Virge?”

Virgil jumped, not realizing Patton had opened his door.

“You okay buddy?”

Virgil huffed out a breath. “Yeah, just anxious.”

Patton tilted his head. “Do you want to come in?”

Okay, Patton’s cool with me coming in, and… we can watch stuff on his TV! He started smiling to himself and observed Patton’s sweet, patient face. His milk chocolate eyes were slightly wide and his eyebrows were knitted together in concern. He remembered the comfort he felt around Patton and the love that seeped out of the moral Side’s every pore.

“Actually, Pat, um…” Virgil cleared his throat and swallowed nervously. “Can I kiss you?” he
Virgil let out a breathy chuckle as he closed his eyes and put his hands on thick shoulders. Their lips met in fire as Virgil felt two strong arms gently wind around his middle back. He made a small sound at the contact; currently, they were pressed torso to torso, and having hands on his back made his nerve endings tingle. The fire he felt surrounding him wasn’t an all-consuming blaze; it was the sweet smell of maple wood, crackling in a fireplace as the family sat around and opened Christmas presents. The sweet smell of vanilla filled his nostrils as Patton began moving his lips in small motions, smaller and less precise than Logans. Virgil thought he felt a smile against his own lips. He nearly laughed as he realized of course kissing Patton would involve a hug. Virgil slowly wound his arms around Patton’s neck, reciprocating the hug and doing his best to move his lips like Patton’s, and he definitely felt a smile there. Being pressed against a soft, pliable body with arms tenderly securing him made him feel like he was warm and safe and home. Like he was loved. He felt tears prick his eyes as his emotions began getting stronger. The kiss was sending bolts of lightning from the back of his head down throughout his body, and Virgil knew he’d never get enough. When Patton pulled away from the kiss, he brushed the tip of his nose back and forth over Virgil’s, making them both giggle. Virgil was quick to duck his head under Patton’s chin. He felt a giggle against the top of his head.

“How was that, baby?”

Virgil smiled. “It was really good. I’m glad I kissed you.”

Patton cooed at him. “That’s really sweet. I’m glad you enjoyed kissing me. I definitely enjoyed kissing you!”

Virgil huffed out a laugh as one of Patton’s arms came up to hug his upper back. They stayed there for a few moments before Patton broke the silence.

“What would you like to do now?”

“We could watch something in your room?”

“That sounds like fun!”

They stood there for a moment longer before Patton squeezed Virgil gently and stepped back. Virgil looked up and saw that Patton’s eyes were shiny and he had an adorable blush across his cheeks. That all paled in comparison to the sweet, excited smile he was wearing. Virgil smiled shyly, knowing his own face was burning up.

Patton took that as encouragement and grabbed Virgil’s hand, leading him into the room. Once they got to the TV, Patton turned to him.

“What do you want to watch Virge?”

Virgil chewed his lip. He’ll associate this movie with us kissing. “Winnie the Pooh?”

“I love that movie!”

Virgil helped Patton sort through his VHS tapes to find it and they went over to the bed at the same time as each other. Patton got on the bed first, leaned back on the pillows so he was in a relaxed sitting position, and raised his arm. Virgil crawled over and cuddled against his side, accepting the stuffed dog he was given. As the opening song began to play, Virgil noticed Patton wasn’t holding
a plush toy of his own.

“Aren’t you going to get something to hold yourself?”

Patton giggled and nuzzled the top of Virgil’s head. “I’ve already got one!” he quipped as he gave Virgil a pointed squeeze. Virgil snorted and cuddled up closer to Patton. They watched *Winnie the Pooh*, *The Spongebob Movie*, and *The Jungle Book* before Patton’s alarm went off for dinner.

As they stood at the edge of the bed, Virgil looked up at Patton while Patton looked down at him. Blushing and feeling a wave of courage, he leaned up and pressed his lips against Patton’s, this time for a slower and shorter kiss. He knew his face had to be beet red, but all he could think about was how nice it was to kiss Patton, especially when presented with a smiling, slightly emotional Patton. With a giggle (*seriously, is giggling a thing I do now? Is that the price for kissing them? ...fuck, it’s worth it. Goddammit.*), Virgil took Patton’s hand and led them downstairs to the kitchen.

Virgil helped Patton with the chicken-asparagus twists while Patton worked on the dough for homemade garlic knots. Once those were cooking, Patton got started on shrimp penne alla vodka and Virgil worked on a tomato and chickpea salad with baby spinach, lemon, and aged parmesan. As they were finishing everything up, Logan came down and helped with setting the table and Roman came down just a bit too late to help with anything. He decided to sing *Despacito* for entertainment.

Virgil bit his lip to keep from laughing aloud at the meme come to life. Instead, since there wasn’t much more he could do, he decided to rectify something.

He walked over to Roman and smiled coquettishly up at him.

“Hey Ro.”

Roman’s ears turned slightly pink. “Hello, my love.”

“I kinda sprung that first kiss on you, didn’t I?”

“I didn’t mind at all, mi amor,” he rumbled.

“Wanna do that again?”

“Very much so.”

Virgil snorted and leaned up to kiss him.

*Holy F**k, I should have given him advanced warning the first time!*

Roman had stepped forward so they were pressed together from shoulders to hips and then leaned over, consuming Virgil’s awareness and narrowing it down to *Roman*. The prince had one hand with his fingers splayed out on Virgil’s lower back and the other hand on Virgil’s face, slowly rubbing his thumb back and forth. Roman always ran hot, but this was like standing inside a swirling inferno. His lips moved faster and in more directions than Logan’s and Patton’s kisses, and he kept tilting his head in slightly different angles, just slowly enough for Virgil to follow. Virgil heard small moans coming from somewhere, and it took him a few seconds to realize the sounds were coming from him. His knees were weak and he felt like his limbs had been replaced with cloud lightning. It was all Virgil could do to try to keep up, and when he gripped the front of Roman’s uniform he heard a deep moan come from the other man.
After a second or an eternity, Virgil couldn’t tell which, Roman pulled back from the kiss. Virgil was panting and could only stare at Roman with his mouth hanging open.

“How was that, my stormcloud?” he growled.

Virgil tried to speak, but all that came out was a squeak. Roman smirked and brought the hand that was still on Virgil’s back to rest on his upper arm.

“It’s alright, beautiful crow, take a moment to catch your breath,” he chuckled. Roman truly didn’t mind; Virgil’s eyes were dark and slightly unfocused, his lips were rose red, and he had that endearing splotchy blush covering his cheeks. Roman ran his thumb across Virgil’s cheekbone again experimentally, and had to subtly tilt his hips away as Virgil shivered, closed his eyes, and rubbed his face against Roman’s palm. After a minute, Virgil reopened his eyes and focused them on Roman.

“That was really good,” he croaked out.

“I am glad to hear it, my sweet. Shall we sit down for dinner?”

Virgil nodded, still trying to get his bearings straight, and after a moment was gently led to his seat. He breathed in.

“Smells great Pat.”

“Thanks chocolate chip! You helped make some of it!”

Virgil had a dopey smile on his face. “Yeah.” He sighed. “This was a good day…” He seemed to realize what he’d said a few seconds later since he turned bright red and looked down.

Logan huffed out a laugh. “No need to be embarrassed, darling. We’re quite glad you enjoy being with us.”

Virgil looked up and smiled at Logan, then Patton, then Roman, who smirked. “I am.” Roman’s smirk melted into a sappy, shiny-eyed smile. Virgil snorted and started eating his meal. After dinner, he helped Patton clean up and sank out to his room. He grabbed Shelly by instinct and put her next to his pillow. He got ready for bed and climbed in, holding the Lucas plush that had been cleaned and smelled suspiciously of roses. He fell asleep, feeling warm from the inside out.

Chapter End Notes

The ships have sailed!! It’s kinda funny, because once I got that first kiss out of the way, I was like, ”How do other people kiss? Is it different? How many ways are there to kiss?” etc., and I went around kissing a lot of different people for a while to learn lol.
Chapter 102

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! So first and foremost, there are vague references to sexual assault and torture throughout the fic. Nothing terribly graphic at all, but it's definitely there. There is a section of text inside a line of tildes where that talk gets a little more intense and includes a mention of a character throwing up, but there aren't any graphic descriptions of sexual assault. However, there are very strong implications of torture.

Also, someone made such ADORABLE fanart of Isaiah!! Ready your tissues, because I get emotional just thinking about the picture!! His little salute, his sweet words, the halo, all of it!! Makes me cry every time! Sarma Angel

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil went downstairs the following morning and heard the coffee pot maker going. He was going to be drinking more coffee than usual today; his insomnia had been terrible the night before, and though he’d been able to sense and stop the flashbacks before they started, he’d still had several pretty bad panic attacks. He tilted his head in confusion and saw a grouchy Logan standing in front of the coffee maker staring at it, unmoving. Virgil smiled at Patton.

“Whatcha making Pat? Smells good.”

“Thanks!! I’m making cream cheese-stuffed French toast!”

“That sounds amazing. What’re you up to L?”

Logan didn’t respond.

“Logan?”

Patton smiled sheepishly. “I forgot to start the coffee maker.”

“Ah. Explains why he’s a zombie.”

Patton giggled. Logan still didn’t respond.

Roman swept into the kitchen. “Good morning my loves!”

“Hey Ro.”

“Hi Roman!”

Roman went over to Patton and kissed him deeply. When they parted, they were both flushed and Patton was giggling.

“Nerd 9000? You okay over there?” Roman asked.

“Be careful, he hasn’t had his coffee yet today,” Patton stage whispered.

The coffee pot finally finished filling, and Logan silently filled his mug. He plopped down into the
chair next to Virgil.

“Hey L.”

Logan grunted before he chugged half of his coffee in one go.

Patton placed a mug in front of Virgil, who gratefully accepted it.

Breakfast went by quickly, all of the Sides needing to get to their respective rooms to help Thomas prepare for an audition. It was for a comedic musical drama, and Roman was certain that Thomas was perfect for it. He was practically vibrating with excitement and dashed off to his room far before any of the others had finished breakfast. Logan and Patton chatted about how great the opportunity was for Thomas; despite his deal with Marvel, his roles in those movies weren’t guaranteed and they were several years out, and with the new project Thomas and his team were eager to start, he could use the money from the film. Virgil felt his nerves already working up, but forced himself to finish his breakfast. Once he finished, he sank out as soon as he could, too anxious to handle being around other people more than he absolutely had to. He grabbed Shelly off his desk and put her down next to his pillow, just in case.

Virgil closed his eyes and focused on Thomas. Roman was already instructing him through his morning routine, with special care focused on his hair and lotion. Both Roman and Virgil agonized over Thomas’ clothes, with Virgil winning on the jacket (a simple black one he uses when he plays the character he only knows as “Sleep”, which is endlessly hilarious to Virgil) and Roman winning on the graphic tee and elaborate pants. They both agreed on Thomas’ more comfortable dress shoes.

Roman let Virgil take over in getting to the audition site and approved of Virgil having Thomas practice his lines in his head. Once there, it was the agonizing wait. Roman and Logan made sure Thomas drank enough tea to stay hydrated and Patton was helping counter Virgil’s influence a bit.

Finally, his name was called, and Thomas walked into the room. Thomas introduced himself and Virgil prepared to back off before Roman could take over, but paused just before he was going to sing when one of the auditioners had to take a phone call. They were chatting about past projects when one of the auditioners spoke up.

“Thomas, I have to admit that I do like the projects you’ve had a part in.”

Oh shit, oh god, Thomas don’t make a fool of yourself, come on, this is your chance, if you say something stupid they’ll just remember that, they won’t remember how you sang, you won’t get the part-

“Thanks, you too!” Thomas blurted. Oh no, Lewis Johnson hasn’t played any parts in any productions, shit!! The auditioner raised an eyebrow as Thomas stuttered out a small laugh, “I mean, I like-”

Thomas was cut off suddenly when the other auditioner came back in the room and apologized, stating that it was a call from one of his agents. Virgil pulled back and curled up on his bed as he allowed Roman to take over, tears of shame leaking out of his eyes. I made Thomas say something stupid, and now the directors think he’s stupid and now he won’t get a part that he would have otherwise that he needed to get his other projects going and he won’t get another chance because the directors will tell other directors...

Virgil’s thoughts kept spiraling as his breathing picked up and he cried on his bed.
Roman was so excited, and I blew it for him before he even had a chance to show off. Logan knows the importance of this audition to Thomas’ career, and Patton is going to be so sad that he missed out because I made him say something stupid. They’re going to be so mad at me. Oh god, I know they say they won’t hurt me, but this has got to be good enough reason to. I fucked up his life. People don’t get many opportunities, and I messed up his big break. Will they break up with me? Maybe now that I’ve kissed them, they’ll want to fuck me to relieve some stress? The Dark Sides always did that, maybe the Light Sides will get a similar idea?

Virgil bit his lip as he heard someone walk up to his door and knocked.

“Greetings my love! I’m about to prepare a surprise as tribute of the audition’s outcome in the kitchen! Would you care to join?”

Oh god, this is it, did he install shackles? “I’ll be down in a bit, just… got a headache, waiting for the painkillers to kick in.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, love. I’ll see you soon!” Virgil heard one set of footsteps move away from his door, then heard the other two go downstairs. He cried into his pillow to muffle his sounds of anguish, replaying the moment over and over again in his head. He realized he was sending Thomas far too much anxiety and pulled back, checking on Thomas to make sure he was okay before heading to the bathroom.

Virgil splashed some cold water on his face and washed it. On impulse, he brushed his teeth and applied moisturizer to his face. He quickly reapplied eyeshadow and checked the time. Shit, they’ve already been together in the kitchen for 15 minutes!

Virgil rushed downstairs, fully aware that his eyes were still red. He heard Patton giggling from the kitchen and thought he smelled… bacon?

“This sure is working out really well Ro!! Thank you!”

Roman’s voice came out slightly muffled. “Not a problem, my sweetest love! I just wanted to do something good.”

Shit, poor Roman. I fucked things up for him, and he tried so hard.

“Do you not think the audition went well?” Logan, ever the detective. Virgil thought he heard papers being shuffled.

Roman sighed. Virgil’s anxiety got the best of him and he entered the kitchen before he could hear any more. Let’s just get this over with.

Roman was eating something, trying to talk through a mouthful of food about how good it is, Logan was reading some kind of user’s manual, and Patton…

Was cutting through a large ham. With a glowing-orange knife. Virgil stopped dead in his tracks, eyes widening, breath quickening, and tears filling his eyes.

A curl of steam came out of the chunk of meat as Patton chirped, “You’re right Roro! This works really well! I think it’ll be perfect!” Patton saw Virgil out of the corner of his eyes and smiled at him. “Oh hey Virge! Just in time!”

Virgil could only make a wounded sound in the back of his throat as the other three stared at him, expressions quickly turning into… something, Virgil couldn’t figure out what, but it wasn’t happy.
Not happy is bad, not happy is bad, they’re gonna hurt me, Patton has a knife, he has a glowing knife, it’s glowing because it’s hot, they’re gonna use it on me to get me to have sex with them, they want to fuck me, they’re going to hurt me before they fuck me!!!

Virgil fell to his knees and began crying and begging, feeling the many places the Dark Sides had burned as though it was happening in the present. “Please, please don’t! I’ll be good! I’ll be quiet! You don’t have to! I promise! I SWEAR! Please please please please…”

Patton took a step towards Virgil with his not-happy expression and Virgil became hysterical, even as Patton backed up. This is happening, this is actually happening, oh god. It’s okay, I can do this, I knew this was bound to happen eventually, I know how to do this. Goddammit Virgil, stop crying!!

Virgil calmed slightly. “Okay, okay okay okay, I’ll be good. I’ll be good. I’ll be good, I can be good, I’ll be so good for you…”

He started by shimmying out of his hoodie, about to hang it on the chair, but no, bad whores stay on the ground with their things. Can’t contaminate good peoples’ things with my things.

As he pulled his t-shirt off, Roman moved to stand up, but was stopped by Logan’s hand on his shoulder. “No Roman. I believe the stress of the audition may be causing him to experience sensory overload, which can cause clothes to be incredibly uncomfortable. Let him do what he needs to do.”

Virgil didn’t hear anything Logan said as he started untying his shoes. You’re being slow, you’d already be naked and getting fucked at this point!

Virgil sobbed. “I’m sorry I’m being slow, I’ll be so good, I swear, I’ll make up for it!”

Comprehension dawned a moment later for the Light Sides. Patton set the knife down on the stove top and covered his mouth with shaking hands, before turning and throwing up in the sink. Logan and Roman were pale, torn between giving Virgil space and getting him out of whatever headspace he was in. Roman moved first, this time not stopped by Logan’s hand. He carefully knelt in front of Virgil, who flinched violently and began sobbing harder.

“Virgil, dark love-”

“I’m sorry Roman!! I love you, I swear!! I didn’t mean to mess up your audition, I’ll make it up to you!” Virgil wailed as he kicked his shoes off.

“No, my darkest love, you don’t have to do that!”

Virgil stopped messing with his clothes and looked up at Roman, causing Roman’s heart to shatter into too many pieces to ever put back together again. His eyes were glassy and red and terrified, his face covered in tears and running eyeshadow. “R-really?”

“Cross my heart, I swear to God that you don’t have to.”

Virgil let out several more sobs. “O-okay.”

Roman was relieved until Virgil reached for his waistband.

He stumbled backwards, landing on his rear and shuffling until he was able to stand.
“No, Virgil!”

Virgil collapsed and began bawling just as hard as before. Patton put his hands on Roman’s shoulders and pulled him in, silently offering comfort as he himself shook. Logan stood and knelt several feet away from a sobbing and apologizing Virgil.

“Shhhhh, Virgil, it’s okay, I promise. Can you hear me darling?”

Virgil sobbed and nodded his head.

Logan inhaled slowly, carefully choosing his next words. *Identify the problem.* “You believe we are going to harm you?”

Virgil let out a series of cries, but nodded again.

“Oh, sweet moonlight… We will not, we won’t lay a finger on you if you don’t want it.”

“B-but I do w-w-want it!! I w-want you to feel b-better and l-less sad ab-about the aud-tion I m-m-messed up! Y-you should u-use me to relieve y-y-your stress!!”

Logan had to bite his knuckle for a moment before continuing, his own tears falling down his face. “My dear,” he swallowed down the lump in his throat, “My dear, we are *not* going to hurt you. And we are *not* upset with you.”

Virgil whimpered. “Y-you’re n-n-not?”

“No.” Logan said firmly. “And even if we were, we would never, ever, do such a thing to you.”

Virgil whimpered at the strong tone. “W-why n-n-not?” he paled further. “Oh no, did you want me to pretend to fight you? They sometimes liked that! I can do that, I’m sorry!!”

Logan interjected as quickly as he could, nausea roiling in his gut. “No. Gracious, no, never darling.”

Virgil curled into himself and sniffled. “Th-then w-w-why do you have a branding knife if you’re not going to use it on me?”

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Logan heard Roman gasp and Patton let out a sob behind him, but forced himself to stay focused on Virgil, even as his eyesight was blurring. “It was just a new kitchen appliance. That is all, I swear.”

Virgil bit his lip. “S-so you’re n-n-not going to hurt m-me?”

“No, we are not.”

Virgil’s voice was almost too quiet to hear. “‘M sorry,” he whispered.

“Shhhhh, none of that. You c-clearly have a traumatic association with hot knives and were triggered after a stressful event. Do you want me to get your clothes back on you?”

Virgil nodded, squeezing his eyes shut. Logan snapped, and Virgil was redressed, though Logan began to perspire from the effort.

“What do you need right now Virgil?”
Virgil curled into his hoodie, looking to Logan like a small, lost child. “Need to rest. C-can I go? Do you want me here?”

“Not if you would like to leave to rest. Go ahead. Do let us know if there’s any comfort we can provide.”

Virgil nodded and sank out. Logan stayed on the floor, unable to move, beginning to shake apart. He was surrounded by Patton and Roman, and he fell into them, crying.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was going to have fluff and lore, and then my beta Jasper01 told me some ideas! So it's her fault you got angst instead!

A massive portion of the section in the kitchen came from her ideas that I expanded on, and some of the dialogue is verbatim from what she said!!
Chapter 103

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There is some vague discussion of torture in this chapter, but not very much.

ALSO! I just finished going through and editing the entire fic so that the scene break lines (the tildes and slashes) are 5 characters only, so now it's more accessible for folks who use screen readers!! I can only imagine how annoying it is to have a computer say "TILDE" 20 times in a row. Also note that because of this, the lines of tildes will be shorter, so heads up on that!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Virgil appeared in the Neutral Side of the mindscape, still crying.

“Oh coffee bean, come here.”

Virgil collapsed into Remy’s arms, Saul’s winding around him a moment later.

“Shhhhhhh, baby, it’s okay, you’re safe,” Remy soothed. He brought a hand up and began gently carding it through Virgil’s hair. “Oh sugar pie.”

“You’re safe, little one,” Saul rumbled quietly. Remy and Saul looked at each other with confused expressions.

“I-I’m sorry!”

“Shhhhhhhhh, no apologizing, it’s okay. Let it out baby.”

They held Virgil for ten minutes before he began calming down. They led him to the couch and Remy conjured a throat-soothing iced tea for Virgil while Saul got him a few Kleenex. Virgil’s chest was still hitching and the occasional tear was still falling, but he was starting to calm down a little.

“There we go sweetie, there we go. Wanna tell us what happened?”

Virgil sniffled. “I th-thought the Light Sides were going to h-hurt me,” he whimpered quietly.

Remy and Saul met each other’s furious gazes, silently making a promise. “What happened baby?”

Virgil hunched in on himself. “I-I m-m-messed up Thomas’ audition,” Virgil broke off to let out a long, poorly stifled whimper and a small cry, “a-a-and I th-thought they were g-g-going to punish m-m-me.”

“Have they punished you before sugar?”

Virgil shook his head.

“Have they threatened to or implied they were going to?”

Virgil shook his head again. “No, that’s w-why I should have known better.” He whimpered
quietly. “And now I freaked out in front of them.”

“Oh baby, it’s okay. Were they mad?”

“N-no, I-I don’t th-think so. Just sad.” He sniffled loudly and Saul gave him another Kleenex. “I feel stupid. I should have known they weren’t gonna hurt me! I just didn’t sleep well last night and it was hard with the flashbacks and panic attacks and everything.”

Saul hummed. “You thought they were upset with you and that they were going to punish you for it?”

“Yes, and Patton was holding a glowing-orange knife and the Dark Sides liked using it. They,” Virgil sniffled and pressed closer to his brother, “they s-started burning me so soon. M-Malice liked doing it almost r-right away.”

Remy gasped as Saul tightened his arms around the younger Side and growled. Despite the anger coming from the muscular Side, Virgil felt safe in his arms. Saul was always careful to control his strength when holding Virgil or Remy, especially when he was upset.

Remy spoke first. “Oh baby, I’m so sorry, if we had known…”

Virgil shook his head. “It’s not your fault. I hid it and the Dark Sides hid it. You couldn’t have known.” He snuggled into Remy’s chest and closed his eyes. “You guys were the best parts of my time… before. They - the Dark Sides - would sometimes make me think you hated me or that you were in danger, but you were always so good to me when I got to see you. You got me through that. You were the best parents a brother could ask for.”

Remy had tears streaming down his face as he buried his face in Virgil’s hair. “I’m so glad to hear that baby. We did our best.”

“I know. I don’t think I would have made it without you being my parents before I was taken and being there for me afterwards. I love you guys.”

“We love you too, coffee bean!”

“Indeed we do, little one.”

They cuddled together for a few minutes on the couch before Virgil chuckled quietly.

“I never thought for long you guys were in danger. They knew better than to fuck with the Sides whose domain is the Subconscious.”

“Damn gay.”

“Don’t you mean “straight”??”

“I know what I said.”

Virgil snorted, then yawned.

“Why don’t you take a nap on our bed sugar? It sounds like you didn’t sleep well last night and had an awful day.”

“Yeah… but that would require me to walk, and I’m not people enough to do that right now.”

“My little Tumblr gremlin. Saul?”
“On it.”

Virgil barely had time to try to figure out what was happening before Saul had lifted him up. Virgil yelped and flailed before hissing menacingly at Saul. Saul just laughed and carried him to the bedroom. Virgil definitely didn’t pout and grumble the entire way there.

Saul gently laid him on the bed and ruffled his hair, earning another, albeit smaller, hiss. Virgil kicked off his shoes and crawled under the covers, his eyes already heavy. Remy laid down next to him on top of the covers and ran his hand through the smaller Side’s hair.

“Go to sleep, coffee bean. We’ll be here when you wake up.”

“What if the Light Sides want to break up with me?”

Remy thought for a moment. “I don’t think they will. They know you’ve been through hell. I think they’ll understand what happened.”

“But… but it’s a lot to deal with. What if they see how much work I am and decide I’m not worth it? That they’re better off without me?”

“They won’t see it because it’s not true. Your brain’s just being mean to you. Try to get some sleep baby.”

“Can you tell them what I told you? I just want them to know why I freaked the fuck out.”

“Of course. Is it okay if we stay with you until you fall asleep?”

“Yeah, that’s fine.”

Remy hummed some nameless tune until he sensed Virgil had fallen asleep. It had barely taken him any time at all. Poor thing.

Remy carefully got up from the bed and hugged Saul, who kissed the side of his head.

“At least we don’t have to fit “Killing the Light Sides” on our schedule today.”

Saul huffed out a laugh. “I suppose not. Shall we?”

/////  

When the Neutral Sides rose up in the Light Side, they found Roman and Logan cuddling on the couch together with Patton splayed across their laps, still crying. Remy and Saul both felt a little awkward, but the Light Sides had already seen them. Remy relayed to the Light Sides what Virgil had said, and although they were all saddened and upset Logan thanked them.

“Virgil was upset enough that it took him a minute to get to the part where he said that you didn’t hurt or threaten him,” Remy said with false amusement. “Both Saul and I are glad to hear that!”

The Light Sides nodded mutely, knowing exactly what was and wasn’t being said. Just as Logan began asking a question, Remy felt a flicker from Virgil.

“I’m going to go back to Virgil. Can you stay handle this?”

“Sure thing babe.”

Remy gave him a peck and sank out to his bedroom. He saw Virgil starting to wake up already, so
he walked over and started carding fingers through his hair. Thankfully, he didn’t sense any nightmares.

“Stay asleep sugar. You’re safe, we’re all safe. You can sleep baby.”

After a few moments, Virgil settled into a deeper stage of sleep. Remy vanished his coffee and crawled into bed next to Virgil, slowly joining the stormy Side in sleep.

/////  

Saul quietly woke Virgil up for lunch, letting Remy sleep. Virgil groggily made his way to the kitchen and accepted a mug of coffee from Saul as he started on grilled sandwiches. Saul was trying his best to learn how to cook, but he knew his limits.

Virgil was served a grilled sandwich with ham, mozzarella, avocado, tomato, onion and a little bit of basil pesto. Saul just had a microwaved chicken breast with lettuce between two slices of bread. When Virgil raised an eyebrow, Saul just said through a mouth of chicken, “It’s leg day.”

Virgil huffed as much as he dared while chewing his sandwich. Saul was trying to look at Virgil out of the corner of his eye to see how he reacted. Virgil gave him a thumbs up. He and Saul chatted idly over their sandwiches and potato chips. Once Saul was done (how the fuck did he eat a chicken breast that fucking fast?!), he turned to Virgil.

“So, uh, I know you’re probably sick of me asking, but do you feel unsafe around the Light Sides?”

Virgil sighed. Fair question, honestly. “No, I just didn’t sleep well and freaked the fuck out over nothing.”

“It doesn’t sound like nothing. That’s a trigger, right?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m sorry darling. Do you think the Light Sides would harm you?”

“No. I feel kind of bad, honestly.”

“Don’t feel bad for hurting.”

Virgil folded his arms on the counter in front of him and laid his head down. “What do I tell them? God, Saul, what do I do?”

Saul reached over and rubbed Virgil’s back. “If you feel you have to apologize, go for it, but I would expect they’d have the same reaction I did. Before you start trying to over-plan, see how they feel.”

Virgil huffed. “You know me too well.”

“I know, it’s almost like we’re related or something.”

Virgil snorted. He let Saul rub his back for a little while longer before he sat up and stretched.

“I guess I should go talk to them, huh?”

Saul saw how Virgil’s hands were shaking. “You don’t have to right now if you don’t want to. If you still need a little time, I’m sure they’d understand. You just went through something that was
really scary.”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. “Mind if I hang out with you today?”

“Not at all darling. Would you like to work out with me?”

“Sure.”

“Alright. Here,” Saul said as he pushed the cottage cheese over to Virgil. “It’s a great source of protein and it’ll help decrease soreness from working out.”

“Dope. How much should I eat?”

“Half a cup should be fine. You’ll want to eat more after your workout.”

Virgil finished up, and Saul led him to the workout room, snapping him into workout clothes. Virgil used the free weights he preferred with Saul’s help; Virgil knew he should work out more, but he just didn’t have the energy most days. After about a half hour, Saul left to go run in the Subconscious and Virgil stretched and showered in the master bathroom, careful not to wake Remy.

Virgil got back into his clothes that Saul must have banished to the bathroom and ate his cottage cheese. Just as he was finishing up, Saul returned.

Virgil wrinkled his nose. “Gross.”

“Worth it.”

Virgil chuckled. He stood up and stretched again, wincing where he could tell he was already going to be sore.

“I should probably go.”

“Are you sure?” Saul asked, carefully watching Virgil’s face.

“Yeah, I just wanna deal with it and stop putting it off, you know?”

“That certainly makes sense. And Virgil? You’re always welcome here.”


“Understandable. Good luck little one.”

“Thanks.” Virgil sent him a two finger salute as he sank out.

He appeared in his room, not wanting to accidentally startle the Light Sides. He looked around his room and winced, noticing he hadn’t put Shelly back on the desk. He picked her up and stroked her thorax and abdomen.

“Sorry old girl.”

He put her on her spot on his desk and went to the bathroom to reapply his eyeshadow. Once that was done, he looked at himself in the mirror and tried to give himself a pep talk. Less than a minute in, he remembered he was Anxiety and that was probably not a good idea. He took a deep breath, and walked out of his room. He listened closely; it seemed like everyone was downstairs in the kitchen already.
Virgil walked downstairs, his body suddenly weak and shaking and his skin cold. He moved quietly, not wanting to have them aware of his presence for some reason, and crept slowly towards the kitchen. He heard Patton lightly chastising Logan for bringing his tablet to the table again, and Roman helping Patton with a salad.

You can’t put this off forever. They deserve an explanation.

Out of time, Virgil bit his lip and opened his posture as much as he could with his anxiety, leaving him still slightly hunched in.

Logan and Roman spotted him first. They both looked at him with concern.

“It is good to see you, darling. How do you feel?” Logan asked.

He shrugged. “Better. Anxious.”

“What are you anxious about?”

Virgil focused on a loose piece of skin on his lip with his teeth. “I kinda freaked out on you guys this morning,” he mumbled.

“Please have a seat Virgil. I believe we need to talk.”

Virgil’s blood left his face as he walked over and sat in his chair. This is it, they’ve realized I’m too much work, they’re going to break up with me. Virgil felt tears prick his eyes.

Patton jumped in, recognizing the signs. “We’re not upset with you, sweetie! We just want to know what happened so we don’t trigger you again.”

Virgil breathed a sigh of relief. “Okay.”

Roman left the almost-finished garden salad on the counter and sat down, looking far more unsure of himself and apprehensive than Virgil could remember in recent history.

Patton, sensing Virgil wasn’t about to continue, decided to start. “Honey, first of all, I am so sorry I triggered you this morning! I promise I will do my best to never do that again. Remy and Saul told us a little about what might have happened, and we remember what you said, but can you tell us what triggered you?”

Virgil played with the ends of his sleeves. “I-it was the audition, I think? No, before that, I didn’t get much sleep. And then I messed up Thomas’ audition and I thought you were all really pissed at me. I blew what might have been Thomas’ big break. I thought you wanted me downstairs so you could punish me. And then I saw the knife.” Virgil had to close his eyes and swallow against the memory. “It- It was too much like what they liked to do, especially Malice for some reason. And I just… went back there.” Virgil hung his head. “‘M sorry.”

“Baby, no! It sounds like you had a lot of really stressful things kinda happen all at once! And then the knife-” he cut himself off at Virgil’s shudder.

Roman wanted to say something, but was clearly holding himself back if his averted gaze and rapidly moving eyes were any indication.

“Virgil, you mentioned that you believed you caused Thomas to mess up his audition. Why is that?” Logan inquired.
Virgil flinched and curled further into himself. “I-I caused him to say that stupid thing to Lewis.”

“What? Oh, the “you too”?"

“Yeah. And the look he got from Lewis! And then he wasn’t able to explain himself!”

“Virgil, if I may,” Roman began. He used all of his skills as a thespian to not cringe at how Virgil flinched away from him. “I believe that directors like Lewis are rather used to people being a little nervous before they audition. And love,” Roman started to reach out before he pulled his hand back. “Even if you were to cause Thomas to have a panic attack in the middle of the most crucial audition of his life, I would never, ever hurt you. You are doing your best for Thomas, and I wouldn’t.” Roman shivered, “punish you for doing your best or making a mistake. I might be upset, but I would never hurt you. No amount of mistakes could ever make me want to hurt you!”

Virgil looked at Roman from underneath his bangs. “But what if—”

“No. Not even that.”

“You didn’t let me finish.”

“I know. That’s the point.”

Virgil stared at him for a moment before huffing out a laugh. “You’re dramatic.”

“Yes, I know, thank you.”

Virgil snorted. Patton shifted a little uncomfortably.

“Baby, it’s okay if you don’t want to talk about it, but… have we ever done anything to make you think we’d hurt you?”

Virgil shook his head. “No. It’s just… sometimes when I get triggered, I start thinking like how I did back then, you know?”

“That certainly makes sense. It’s not an uncommon trauma response. Speaking of which, how are you feeling right now? I can imagine this must have been uncomfortable for you.”

Virgil took stock of himself. “I’m a little floaty, but I don’t think I’m triggered, just stressed. I’ll be fine after I do a grounding exercise. You’re not mad at me for freaking out?”

“No we are not,” Logan said firmly.

The oven pinged, causing Virgil and Patton jump. “Pizza’s done! I made a homemade pizza!”

Virgil smiled at Patton and started his grounding exercises while Roman got up to finish the salad and Patton prepped the pizza. Roman slid into the seat next to Virgil.

“Would touch help, dark angel?”

Virgil furrowed his eyebrows in thought. “Not right now. Maybe after supper once I get some food in my system? I think I’ll be good then.”

“Certainly, love. Did Saul and Remy not feed you?”

“No, they did, Saul made a pretty good sandwich, but I worked out with him a bit. He made me eat a lot of cottage cheese before and after. Is that actually a thing?”
“Oh yes!! How do you think I maintain this hot bod for you all?” Roman asked as he flexed and waggled his eyebrows at his boyfriends. Patton giggled while Logan rolled his eyes.

Virgil smirked. “By losing to the Dragon-Witch?”

Roman let out a string of offended Princey noises while Logan laughed behind his hand and Patton bit his lip to contain his giggles.

After supper, Patton proposed a movie night, which everyone agreed to. Logan beat Roman to the DVD player and put in *Blue Planet*. Roman sulked on the couch until Logan straddled his lap and began to passionately make out with him. Virgil helped Patton bring out some simple snacks and cleared his throat to separate the two hot-headed Sides. Logan got off of Roman’s lap looked quite pleased with himself, and Roman was smiling too.

Virgil snorted and sat down next to Logan, Patton claiming the spot on Virgil’s other side. Virgil snuggled against Logan’s chest with his intellectual’s arm wrapped around him. Feeling happy and secure, he decided to enjoy himself a bit more. He shifted so he was looking up at Logan.

“Hey Lo?”

Logan looked down calmly.

“Can I kiss you?” Virgil bit back laughter as Patton squealed next to him.

“You certainly may.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh as he leaned up and kissed Logan. This kiss was slower than their first, with Logan’s arm that had been around his shoulders winding around his back and steadily pulling them closer. One of Virgil’s hands was stuck between their bodies, but he used his free hand to grab the front of Logan’s shirt, not knowing what else to do with his hand. Logan used his free hand to lay it delicately on Virgil’s upper arm, just above his elbow. Virgil was captivated by the sparks that were starting at the base of his skull and going down his spine, the gentle arms around him, and the smell of lilac and lemon that was *Logan*. He let out a small sound, and a moment later the kiss ended. Virgil relaxed back, Logan’s arm still holding him snugly against his chest.

*Okay, shit, what do people say after they kiss?* “Um, thanks L.” *You thanked him. For kissing you. Are you going to send him a fucking card in the mail next?*

Logan took it in stride and smirked. “No need to thank me, my dear. I mean it when I say, anytime.”

Virgil blushed and turned so he could comfortably curl up against Logan to watch the television. Patton snuggled up to Virgil and Roman reached a hand over to scratch at the back of Virgil’s head, causing him to rumble. Logan chuckled and kept his arm around Virgil’s shoulders the entire time they watched *Blue Planet*.

Chapter End Notes

Here's the chapter you would have gotten if [Jasper01](#) didn't inspire me with angst! Fluff and lore!!

Also go check out her stories, they're fucking amazing!!!
Virgil woke the next morning mostly rested. He’d had another nightmare, but he’d been able to get back to sleep soon enough to get a decent 6 hours. He quickly showered, got his clothes and makeup on, and went downstairs. Patton was heating up a large skillet and had at least a dozen bowls of ingredients out, and Roman was still helping to chop up vegetables.

“Whatcha making?”

Patton started pouring a thin batter over the griddle. “I’m making crepes! Let me know what you want and I’ll make it for ya!”

“Anything I can do to help?”

“Just set the table and get Logan in a bit! I’ve still got to make the crepes themselves!”

“Sure thing Pat.”

Virgil quickly set the table and went upstairs to get Logan. A slightly tired but obviously caffeinated nerd in tow, they went downstairs, where Patton had a large pile of crepes stacked next to him.

“Hey cuties! What do you want for your crepe fillings?”

Virgil blushed while Roman helped slide the ingredients over to Patton.

“I’ll have a steak, mushroom, and onion crepe with ricotta!” Roman declared.

“Hmmmmm… I’ll have spinach, bacon, salsify and cream cheese.”

Virgil chewed his lip. *Don’t make it too complicated. “I’ll have, uh… blueberries and marscapone?”*

“Sure thing! Coming right up!”

Roman turned to go sit down but was stopped by Virgil.

Virgil looked up at Roman from underneath his eyelashes. “I never gave you the cuddles I promised last night. Why don’t I make up for it?” he asked lowly.

Roman’s eyebrows shot up. “You are under no obligation, my sweet.”

“I know.” Virgil smiled meaningfully up at Roman. “I want to.”

Roman smirked. “Then by all means.”
Virgil huffed out a laugh through his nose as he rested his hands on Roman’s shoulders and kissed him. Roman gently placed his hands on Virgil’s waist as he kissed back. The kiss was far less passionate than the one he had shared two nights ago with his prince, but he was still set on fire from it. It was slower and sweeter and made Virgil love Roman even more. They parted just as Patton plated up Roman’s pile of eight crepes.

“I figured you’d want a lot!”

“Thanks padre! You’re the best!”

Patton giggled and blushed as he started on Logan’s crepes, quickly followed by Virgil’s. For his own breakfast, he made two cookies and cream crepes and two strawberry and whipped cream crepes.

Breakfast flew by, each of the sides complimenting Patton on his cooking. They all helped clean up, and Virgil decided to join in on a morning tradition for the Sides.

He walked up to Patton, who was drying some dishes, and touched his upper arm. Patton looked at him and smiled.

“Hey Virge!”

“Hey Pat.” Virgil gave him a quick peck on the lips. “Thanks for breakfast. It was really good.”

Patton was blushing. “No problem kiddo!”

Virgil smiled at him and sank out to his room. He flopped on his bed and focused on Thomas. He winced; Thomas was still thinking about the “You too!” from yesterday and it was all because of Virgil. I should probably go apologize for that one.

Virgil sighed, resigned to his fate, and appeared in Thomas’ plane of existence. Thomas jumped when he saw Virgil.

“Hey buddy! What’s up?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down. “I’m sorry about yesterday.”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

Virgil sighed. “I… I was the one who made you blurt out, “You too!” at Lewis. I’m sorry.”

Virgil’s shoulders slumped.

“Oh… hey, buddy, it’s okay.”

Virgil ground his teeth. I fucked up his life, and he’s more worried about making me feel better.

“Don’t say that.”

“Why not?”

Don’t snap at him, this is about him, not you. Virgil inhaled deeply. “I fucked up your life because I freaked out. You shouldn’t be worried about making me feel better.”

Thomas laughed a little. “Virgil, I don’t think you fucked up my life. It’s something a lot of people do when they’re nervous. I bet I wasn’t even the first person to do it that day! If I don’t get a callback, it won’t be because of that.”
Virgil chewed on his lip. “I… are you sure?”

Thomas smiled at him. “I’m sure. Besides, during the actual audition I killed it!”

Virgil snorted. “I’ll have to take your word for it. I pulled back pretty far when it was Roman’s turn.”

“I’m sure Roman will say the same thing.”

“Duh.”

Thomas laughed then, a free, uplifting sound. Virgil couldn’t help but smile.

“I’ll see you around Thomas.”

Thomas’ laughter died down. “See you later!”

Virgil sent him a two finger salute and sank out, appearing back in his room. He sighed and kept a close eye on his Host while scrolling through Tumblr. He didn’t quite believe that he hadn’t fucked everything up, but he also knew that he was wrong a lot.

Lunch came and went, with the Sides eating down some leftovers. Virgil thought he was going to have a boring day until Logan stopped him.

“How are you today Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged, anxiety creeping in. Oh god, what did I do? “I’m good, you?”

“I’m glad to hear that. I’m good as well. I was wondering if you would like to go stargazing with me tonight in the Imagination?”

Virgil was surprised. “Oh, sure! Why the Imagination though? Did your telescope stop working?”

“No, it’s still functional. I thought we could go the more traditional route of stargazing by lying in a field and looking at constellations. Roman has promised no mosquitos.”

Virgil snorted. “Awesome. That sounds great L.”

“Excellent. May I stop by your room around 9 PM tonight?”

“So formal. Dork. “Sure L.”

“Wonderful. I’m looking forward to it.”

Virgil smiled and leaned up slowly to kiss Logan. It was a shorter kiss, but Virgil still felt a thrill go through him. He had to pull away before the heat in his lower abdomen became more noticeable. He looked at Logan and admired the blush he’d put on his nerd’s face.

Virgil smirked. “Me too.” And walked up to his room, leaving Logan standing there wondering when Virgil had learned how to be smooth.

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Immediately after supper, Virgil went up to his room and showered. He had showered that morning, but he was going on a date dammit. He went through his usual pre-date routine and put on lotion, brushed and flossed his teeth and used mouthwash for good measure, and used a
watermelon lip scrub that tasted too good. He decided to do a smokey eye along with his regular
eyeshadow since he had the energy.

Virgil walked over to his wardrobe and stared at the clothes he had.

*It’s going to be cold, but I still want to wear something more revealing.* After a solid five minutes
of agonizing, he chose a purple long-sleeved v-neck t-shirt, his fancy ripped jeans, and his strappy
combat boots. He looked at his jewelry, and though he wanted to wear his choker he knew that he
wouldn’t be able to handle it today, so he opted for a few rings. He tucked some lime-flavored
chapstick into his pocket after applying a layer to his lips and focused on his breathing exercises.
*He’ll like the way I look, he always seems to. I won’t fuck it up, I won’t fuck it up, I won’t fuck-
*

Three precise knocks came at his door.

*Fuck.*

Virgil pet Shelly for good luck and opened his door. Logan looked the same as he usually did,
except now he was just wearing a patterned, very cozy-looking cotton sweater.

“You look beautiful Virgil,” Logan intoned deeply, looking at him with half-lidded eyes.


“Thank you. I have such lovely inspiration,” Logan purred as he delicately took Virgil’s hand in his
own.

Virgil swallowed. “We should probably get to the field soon, right?”

Logan smirked. “Certainly. Let us depart.”

Virgil and Logan walked to Roman’s door, Logan internally going over the constellations he
definitely wanted to point out and Virgil trying to think pure thoughts. Once they went in, they
were presented with a picnic basket.

“Here you go! Patton and I made this for you!” Roman said excitedly as he held out the basket.

Logan grabbed the basket. “Thank you Roman. We’ll just use the door we discussed?”

“Indeed my handsome knights! I’ll check on you if you haven’t returned by midnight, but I’ll do
my best not to interrupt anything you might get up to,” Roman said, waggling his eyebrows
suggestively. Logan rolled his eyes while Virgil turned bright red.

“That is appreciated Roman. Virgil and I shall be taking our leave now.”

“Have fun! Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do!”

“Yeah- wait, what wouldn’t you do Princey?”

“Exactly!”

Virgil snorted as he turned towards the door Logan was opening. Virgil immediately noticed the
smell of fresh air and the sound of crickets come through. He followed Logan through the
doors, and gasped when he saw the castle lit up. He had to fight down the reminder that the
Dark Sides were in the dungeon.

*I’m safe, they can’t get out, they can’t hurt me anymore. Damn, I must be having a bad day or
Logan led Virgil to the top of a small knoll that was in between the village and the castle. Virgil could hear cheery pub music being played in the distance. Logan opened the basket and pulled out a large blue cotton blanket. He shook out the blanket and laid it on the grass. While he was doing that, Virgil opened the basket and found some blackberries, a bottle of chilled moscato, and some breath mints. Blushing at the last item, he laid them out on the blanket next to them and settled in. They ate a few blackberries and sipped some of the sweet moscato before Logan began pointing out constellations.

Virgil listened as Logan recounted the stories of Perseus, Andromeda, and Cassiopeia. Virgil was entranced by how the stars reflected in Logan’s eyes as he happily recounted the mythologies behind each constellation. They moved on to Skorpio and Orion, slowly sipping the wine and eating blackberries. They had polished off the bottle between the two of them once Logan had gotten to the Northern Crown constellation. Logan retold the story of Adriadne with passion, vehemently admonishing Theseus and praising Dionysus. Virgil moved the empty bottle and glasses into the basket and moved the blackberries to the side.

Once Logan had finished, he scooted over on the blanket. “Hey L?”

Logan looked over, seemingly surprised at how close Virgil was. “Yes darling?”

Virgil smiled, still blushing furiously whenever Logan used a pet name for him. “Wanna kiss?”

“I certainly would not be opposed.”

Virgil snorted and leaned in, tasting sweet moscato and tart blackberries on his boyfriend’s lips. His arousal from before returned with a vengeance and, feeling bold, he put his hand on the side of Logan’s face. Logan gently laid his hand on Virgil’s waist and started moving his thumb back and forth, which made Virgil flinch away.

Logan removed his hand immediately. “Are you alright Virgil?”

Virgil flushed, embarrassed. “Yeah, sorry, just kind of, ah, ticklish?”

Logan’s wide-eyed expression of concern morphed into one of amusement. “Is that so?”

Virgil felt like he was going to set the blanket on fire. “Yep.”

Logan chuckled. “My apologies, dear. I’ll try not to tickle you again.”

Virgil sent him a small smile. “Thanks Lo.” After a moment, he added, “Wanna kiss again?”

“Absolutely.”

Virgil snorted as he leaned back in, meeting Logan’s smile with his own. They parted, chuckling a little.

“May I show you something Virgil? You don’t have to if you don’t want to.”

Virgil bit his lip. *This is Logan, he won’t hurt me, stop being scared! He won’t hurt me.* “What do you want to show me?”

“Another way to kiss.”

*That* took Virgil by surprise. *It’s probably fine.* “Oh! Uh, sure.”
“If you want to stop, let me know,” Logan said seriously, staring into Virgil’s eyes.

“I will,” Virgil promised.

Logan lightly rested his hand on the side of Virgil’s head, his fingers curled around the back of his skull. The contact send goosebumps all over his body, his scalp the most affected by the touch. Logan paused for a moment, searching Virgil’s face. “May I kiss you, my sweet moonlight?”

“Fuck yeah.”

Logan huffed out a laugh before leaning in. Virgil hesitated on where to put his hand before settling on Logan’s waist. Logan moved his lips slowly. After a minute, he pulled back, let them catch their breath, and kissed Virgil again. He started moving his lips slightly faster, and Virgil did his best to keep up. The next time they parted, Virgil met Logan in the middle to continue kissing, coming together a little roughly, but neither complained. Their kisses became shorter but no less passionate, slowly growing in intensity each time. Their lips weren’t moving as much, but somehow their actions became hotter. Virgil found himself letting out little mewls and quiet, high-pitched moans, only to be met with Logan’s lower moans. His skin was heating up and he felt a blaze building inside him. He wanted more, more touch, more kissing, more something. He didn’t know what he wanted, so he let Logan take the lead, his mewling growing louder as his desire increased. Virgil had no idea how much time had passed before Logan pulled back a final time, both of them breathing heavily with darkened eyes. Logan rubbed his thumb across Virgil’s temple.

Virgil stared back at Logan and the sinful look on his face. The fact that he was touching and being touched by Logan, the intimacy they had just shared, the fire still roaring inside of him made him hypersensitive to everything. The crickets and pub music had died down, leaving the only sounds their labored breathing.

“How was that for you?” Logan asked, his voice slightly deeper.

“I… fuck, Logan, holy shit,” was all Virgil could manage.

Logan smirked. “I take it you liked it?”

“Fuck yeah. We’ve gotta do that again.”

“I’ll ensure we do.”

Virgil smiled and looked down, slightly embarrassed.

“Would you like to cuddle, my darling?”

Virgil met Logan’s eyes and nodded shyly. Logan lifted his arm up and Virgil nestled himself against Logan’s sweater-covered chest, sighing in contentment as Logan’s arm came down around him. Virgil tried to get closer, but accidentally brushed Logan’s hip with his erection.

“Shit, sorry Logan!” Virgil said as he tried to move away.

Logan tightened his arm minutely as he laughed. “No apologies are necessary, my dear. I’m quite flattered.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh and curled so he was still laying on Logan but his hips were canted away slightly. Logan used his free hand to point out constellations or standalone stars in the night sky for another hour before Virgil yawned.
“Shall we retire for the night?” Logan asked.

“Mmmmmm, you’re too warm to leave.” And it was true. Logan’s body heat combined with his thick sweater made for a very comfortable place for Virgil to rest.

Logan chuckled. “I believe we may wake up with fewer aches and pains if we were to sleep in a proper bed.”

Virgil groaned. “You’re probably right.” After another moment, he pushed himself into a sitting position. His arousal hadn’t completely vanished, but it was to the point where he could stand up without embarrassing himself. Virgil helped Logan pack up, and they left for the door in the middle of the gravel pathway. When they got into Roman’s room, they were surprised to find he wasn’t there until he found a note that said he was in Patton’s room. They elected not to disturb them and instead Logan sent the remaining blackberries to the refrigerator downstairs.

Logan walked Virgil to his door and paused in front of it.

“Thank you for tonight Virgil. I very much enjoyed it.”

Virgil smiled. “Me too.”

Logan smirked back. “Yes, I could tell.”

Virgil blushed and looked down, only to have Logan’s graceful fingers lift his chin. “Do not hide your beautiful face from me. I am only teasing.”

Virgil gave him a small half smile and stepped closer. He placed his hands on Logan’s shoulders and kissed him one more time. Logan’s hands immediately went to Virgil’s waist, eagerly reciprocating the kiss. Virgil pulled back before it got too heated.

“Night Lo.”

Logan smiled at Virgil. “Goodnight Virgil.”

Virgil smiled and went into his room, ready to take his makeup off. I’m definitely going to have to try that again.

Chapter End Notes

Everybody got kisses!! I was a lot like Virgil, in that I was eager to try different kinds of kissing when I first learned about it and was excited when someone would suggest something new. There are so many ways to kiss! (Pro tip: don't lick the teeth) And Virgil will be experiencing all of them in this fic!
I’m a bad kisser.

Virgil was laying awake in his bed and staring at his ceiling at 2 AM. It was several weeks after his and Logan’s star gazing date, and he’d made sure to try to kiss each of the Light Sides at least once per day.

I’m a bad kisser. I’m always following what they’re doing and just barely keeping up. Maybe they like me, so they’re just trying to spare my feelings. I’m a terrible boyfriend. They don’t like being with me. They’re unhappy when they’re kissing me. I’m making them miserable. Virgil teared up. He felt sick. I’m making them kiss me when they don’t want to. They’re uncomfortable when they’re with me because they don’t actually want to be there. I’m no better than the Dark Sides.

~~~~~

Thomas was laying awake in his bed and staring at his ceiling at 2 AM.

Am I a bad boyfriend? Is that why I can’t find someone? I thought I was being romantic… No, I definitely was. Thomas felt his spirit leave his body. Am I a gross kisser? Oh god! Am I bad in bed?!

“Not so fast Thomas!”

Thomas yelped and flailed in his bed sheets before sitting up and sending an expectant look towards his Creativity. Roman was still holding his usual Princey pose and didn’t look the least bit remorseful.

“What’s up Roman?”

Roman put his hands on his hips and faced Thomas. “You were questioning your romantic capabilities!! How could I not show up?!”

Thomas rubbed a hand down his face. “Sorry Roman, I don’t know why I’m having a hard time with this tonight. I just can’t seem to get it off my mind.”

“You’re not bad at kissing because I’m the greatest at kissing! And making love for that matter!” Roman said, slightly offended, gesturing widely. “What on Earth could make you think you’re a terrible romantic partner?”

Thomas sighed wearily and closed his eyes. “I don’t know Roman! I mean, I haven’t had a boyfriend, I’m past thirty, and what if I never find a husband? What if I’m just doomed to be alone forever and die miserable? What if I can never kiss someone again or have sex with them?!”

Roman tilted his head. “Are you feeling anxious about this?”
“Well yeah! Oh, you think Virgil might be worried about it?”

“That may be the case because as you can see, I am not worried in the slightest!” Roman said, raising his hands and smirking.

Thomas snorted. “Right. Should I check on Virgil? Do you think he’s gone to sleep yet?”

Roman kept his hands raised but quirked an eyebrow at his Host. “You’re feeling anxious in the wee small hours of the morning and you’re wondering if Virgil is sleeping,” he deadpanned.

Thomas chuckled sheepishly. “Sorry, stupid question.”

Roman dropped his hands and shrugged. “Eh, you’re tired, I’ll give you a pass this time. I’ll go see what’s keeping our resident stormcloud up.”

“Okay. You sure I shouldn’t check on him? He’s my Anxiety. I don’t want him to think that I don’t care about him or anything.”

Roman smiled. “Steady now, Thomas. I’m sure Virgil knows you care. You’ve had more than enough sleepovers to show that.”

“Yeah. He’s so cute when he sleeps!”

“I know! One of the many benefits of having Virgil trust you. And Thomas,” Roman continued, a lascivious smirk making its way onto his face, “if it gives you any more confidence, Virgil certainly isn’t complaining about my abilities as the Romantic Side.” He waggled his eyebrows.

Thomas’ eyes widened comically. “Wait, are you guys dating?”

Roman laughed heartily. “Oh Thomas, you’re too funny! Anyways, I’ll go see what’s keeping our stormcloud awake. Sleep well!” Roman shouted as he sank out in his Princey pose. Silly Thomas!

Thomas stared at the spot where Roman had been standing for five minutes. Was he joking? Are my Sides dating? Can Sides even do that? I mean, sure, they’ve been affectionate with each other, but that’s also because they’re Roman and Patton, and Logan doesn’t seem to mind. No, no way, they’re just facets of my personality, they can’t date!

Thomas snorted as he laid down and closed his eyes, hoping sleep would come to him.

/////Roman had kept up a brave facade, but he was worried about his little crow. He rose up directly in front of Virgil’s door and knocked. He heard swearing and shuffling from inside, a thump, more swearing, and then footsteps coming towards the door. Virgil opened the door, his hair and makeup a mess, eyes angry, and Roman had never been more in love.

Roman only realized he’d been staring when a vein in Virgil’s temple started twitching.

“I apologize my love, I was simply entranced by your beauty!”

Virgil rolled his eyes, but Roman didn’t miss the redness in his cheeks.

“What do you want Princey?”

“Oh! Well you see, Thomas was worried that his romantic performance wasn’t up to par, and
since you’re his anxiety I wanted to see if you were alright!”

By the way Virgil paled, Roman guessed he was correct.

“I… shit, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to keep Thomas up!”

Roman held himself back from reaching out. “Do not fret, my sweet raven! I’m sure he’ll be alright! I’m more worried about you!”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, but not before Roman saw his eyes becoming shiny.

“Love, what’s wrong?” he asked softly.

Virgil sniffled. “Just… do you actually like kissing me?” he ground out.

Roman was so baffled by the question that he took several seconds to respond. Of course, Virgil took those seconds to mean Roman hated kissing him. Virgil slumped his shoulders and hung his head.

“Yeah, that’s what I thought. You really don’t have to kiss me if you don’t want to. I’d,” Virgil’s voice cracked, “I’d never want you to do something with me you don’t enjoy just for my benefit,” he finished thickly, two fat tears rolling down his face.

Roman stepped forward. “No no no my sweet! I was just… surprised by the question is all! Why on Earth do you think I wouldn’t enjoy kissing you?!”

Virgil hunched in miserably. “Because I’m not good at it. I know I’m not.”

Roman flinched. “What makes you think you’re not good at kissing? I will let you know that I very much enjoy kissing you! I think you’re a marvelous kisser!”

Virgil sighed. “That’s nice of you to say, but I know I don’t have as much experience as you guys. I just try to follow what you do, but I know I don’t keep up. And I don’t have any tricks of my own.”

Roman fought the urge to pull his beloved emo into a hug. “Virgil, you do not need to perform any acrobatic stunts when you kiss. Kisses can be simple and be just as powerful. You truly needn’t concern yourself with knowing everything. And besides all of that, watching you learn how to kiss and grow to being more comfortable with it has been truly, immeasurably wonderful.”

Roman frowned. Virgil still seems unconvinced. “Virgil-”

“I think we should break up,” Virgil said before he slammed the door. Roman stared in shock at the closed door until he heard a sob from the room. He fell to his knees before the door, buried his face in his hands, and wept. His sobs grew steadily in volume until he heard the footsteps of his boyfriends approaching. The first person who laid hands on him got an armful of sobbing Roman.

“Woah, Roman! It’s okay sweetie!!” Patton said as he rubbed his back. “What happened honey?”

Roman bawled for a few more moments before he was able to compose himself enough to speak. “Virgil says he w-w-wants to break u-up!”


Logan couldn’t stop the feeling of despair welling up, though logically he knew there had to be more at play. “We should relocate. Your bedroom Roman?”
Roman just nodded miserably against Patton’s shoulder. It took a few minutes, but Logan was able to coax Roman and Patton off the floor. Both of them collapsed on Roman’s bed in tears. Logan sat on the bed next to where Roman and Patton were intertwined and placed a hand on Roman’s shoulder.

“Roman, what occurred before Virgil stated that he wanted to break up?”

Roman sniffled. “Thomas was questioning his romantic prowess, so of course I had something to say on the matter as I disagreed vehemently. We deduced that it was coming from Virgil and I went to check on h-him and h-he said-” Roman sobbed against Patton’s neck. Patton knew that there was something else going on as well, so he wasn’t as upset as Roman, but he still had tear tracks on his face.

Logan sighed, hating seeing his boyfriends so distressed. He rubbed Roman’s shoulder a few times. “What else did he say?”

“Just that he wanted to b-break u-u-up!” Roman cried.

“Forgive me Roman, I’m simply trying to get a handle on the situation. Did he give a reason?”

“Not really!” Roman paused a moment. “He was saying that he doesn’t think he’s good at kissing and that we must hate kissing him, but that’s not a reason to break up with someone!”

Logan hummed. “For Virgil, it may be. You stated that he thinks we dislike kissing him?”

“Yes! I tried to tell him otherwise, but he wouldn’t believe me!”

Logan steepled his fingers beneath his chin. “Virgil believes we are unhappy when we are physically intimate with him,” he murmured to himself. He spoke more loudly. “Darlings, although we’ll need to confirm this with Virgil, I believe it’s possible his reason for breaking up with us may be rooted in his trauma.”

“W-what do you mean?” Roman asked. Patton was watching Logan intently.

“I mean that there is a possibility that his declaration that we should “break up” is rooted in the idea that he is causing us unhappiness, particularly when we are kissing him. Considering what the Dark Sides did to him, I am not surprised that he fears doing the same to us, however unintentionally. Therefore, he may have broken up with us in an attempt to protect us.”

“B-but I love kissing Virgil!”

Logan smiled sadly at Roman. “I know you do. I do as well, and I’m sure Patton does-”

“You sure bet!”

“-However, we must speak with Virgil first to either confirm or deny these suspicions, and then work to dismantle the cognitive distortions that lead to his decision. In addition, I’d like to point out that Thomas had been worrying about this for quite a while and it is very late. That means Virgil has been worrying about it for longer and that he is tired. These factors almost certainly contributed towards his negative spiral and his likely impulsive decision.”

Roman was calming down, his hitching shoulders the only indication he was still upset.

*Thank Newton, I do dislike seeing my loved ones unhappy.*
“Wait, Virgil thinks he’s forcing us like the Dark Sides?!” Patton cried.

So close.

“That is a possibility, yes. However, it is best to hold off on assumptions until we are able to speak with him tomorrow.”

Patton whimpered. “O-okay.”

With that, Logan got Roman and Patton glasses of water and settled in behind Patton. It was a long night.

///// Breakfast was a much more somber affair than it usually was. Once Patton had nearly finished cooking, Logan took over and had Patton summon Virgil. After a second try, it seemed to work. Virgil appeared in the kitchen, red-eyed, pale, and almost no eyeshadow left on his face. His initial expression was surprise, followed quickly by sadness and guilt.

“Oh sweetie…” Patton breathed.

Virgil hung his head. “Hey.”

Logan put lids over the food and decided to take the lead. “Hello Virgil. Please do sit down. I believe we have some things to discuss.”

Virgil winced but did as he was told.

Logan adjusted his necktie. “I believe it would be best to immediately address the issue at hand. Virgil, you stated to Roman last night that you would like to break up, correct?”

Virgil bit his lip. “Kinda. I said I thought we should break up.”

Logan nodded, appreciating the distinction. “I see. Please tell us your reasons as to why you believe we should break up.”

Virgil shifted as he played with the hems of his sleeves. “You guys don’t like kissing me, right? And I don’t want to make you-”

“Falsehood.”

Virgil jumped and looked at Logan with wide eyes.

“My apologies for interrupting you. But I can confirm that I very much enjoy kissing you Virgil.”

“Me too!”

“Virgil, love, stormcloud, beautiful raven, there are few things more heavenly than doing so!”

Virgil looked at each of their faces dubiously.

Logan adjusted his necktie, then had to loosen it when it got too tight. “Moonlight,” he continued gently, “was your decision and your thought processes related to your previous trauma?”

Virgil’s eyes filled with tears and his lower lip wobbled before he could suck it between his teeth and stare down at the table. Logan’s heart shattered.
“Honey?” Patton ventured softly.

That got Virgil to talk. “I-I’m sorry,” he warbled, “but I j-just… I c-can’t be l-l-like the,” he sucked in a breath to quell the rising nausea, “the Dark Sides. I don’t want to be the Dark Sides to you!”

Virgil hid his face in his hands as he began crying.

“Virgil, you’re not!” Patton exclaimed.

Logan decided to intervene before the situation escalated. “Virgil, you believe that you are not good at kissing, therefore we are unhappy while being physically intimate with you, therefore you are like the Dark Sides, correct?”

“Y-yeah!”

“Would it be correct that the basis of this entire thought process and decision to break up with us was based on the idea that you are not good at kissing?”

“I-I guess so?”

“So, if we were to disprove that belief, would you still want to be with us?”

“Yeah, of course! I just… I don’t want to hurt you!”

Logan softened. “I know, darling. However, by not discussing the matter with us and instead making assumptions that led to you removing our autonomy, you have caused us distress. We love you and want to be with you. The idea that you wanted to break up with us is indeed hurtful and saddening. Your intention may have been to protect us, but the impact you caused was hurt. We enjoy kissing you. Please refrain from making decisions for us in the future.”

Virgil flinched. “I… shit. Fuck. I’m… I’m sorry I hurt you guys. I really didn’t mean to! I-I’ll talk to you guys before I do something stupid!”

Logan squeezed his hands to keep himself from adjusting his tie again. “I know your intention was not to harm. But the reality is you did, and this is not the first time you have made a decision on our behalf. We are adults and are perfectly capable of deciding for ourselves when we are happy and what is best for us.”

Virgil recoiled like he had been physically struck. His initial reaction was to be defensive, but he took a breath to calm himself. “Y-you’re right. I’m s-sorry.” He chewed on his lip. “I’ve got to make this right. I fucked up. “I’ll… I’ll talk to Dr. Picani about it.”

At that, Logan relaxed. “I am glad to hear it. Would you like to be back together?” he finished with a smile.

Virgil smiled back shyly. “Yeah.” He jumped. “O-only if you guys want to! I know I fucked up, and it wasn’t the first time, and-”


“I do too!” Patton chirped.

Virgil relaxed. He looked Roman in the eye. “I… you were the one I said it to. I’m sorry, Roman.”

Roman reached over and grasped Virgil’s hand. “I know love, and I appreciate it. I’ll need some time to recover, but with your love I’m sure I will.”
Virgil sent him a half-smile. “Thanks Ro. I’ll work to earn that trust back.”

Roman just smiled and squeezed his hand before withdrawing. Breakfast was a little awkward, lunch slightly less so, and the feeling in the mindscape commons was almost back to normal by the time dinner rolled around. Virgil decided to wait until at least the next day to kiss his boyfriends. They deserve it.

Chapter End Notes

Whew! We've got a lot to unpack here! It's a pretty important chapter. Kind of like and after-school special I suppose?

So, Virgil (and I) struggle with the idea that his loved ones would be better off without him, and this is manifesting through insecurities around kissing. He tries to break up with his boyfriends because of this, not asking them if they're happy, and in the process causes some harm. This isn't the first time he's tried to isolate himself either. Logan, MVP of this chapter, figures out the core of the issue through deductive reasoning and confirms it with Virgil. He also lets Virgil know that while Logan recognizes that he's hurting, it doesn't mean he can hurt other people. Virgil's initial reaction when presented with the fact that he hurt his boyfriends is defensiveness, but he recognizes this, takes a deep breath, and refocuses on who needs to be centered in the thought process. He then apologizes, takes ownership of his actions, and comes up with a way to try to prevent it from happening in the future.

And Thomas is clueless about his Sides dating.

How many of you thought it was going to be a sex talk between boyfriends? 3>:D
Chapter 106

Chapter Notes

Hi! No warnings for this chapter except for a bit of consensual steaminess after the line of forward slashes. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A few weeks later, Virgil was relaxing in the kitchen, helping Patton cook breakfast. His relationships with both the Light Sides and the Neutral Sides were back to normal, and he was freely kissing the Light Sides whenever he felt like it. Dr. Picani was helping him work through the idea that his boyfriends would be better off without him, but there was a lot to untangle with that. Virgil had at least committed to not breaking up with them again out of the blue.

Patton was working on a Finnish breakfast hash with yams, parsnips, rutabagas, potatoes, onions, some salsify, 4 easy-over eggs, and bacon while Virgil heated up some sausage and made blueberry and raspberry pancakes with berry compote. The more he learned how to cook, now that he had the energy, the more he found he had a sweet tooth.

Patton placed a hand on Virgil’s lower back. “Hot, behind you.”

Virgil let Patton pass with the cast iron skillet. The moral Side placed it on the table with a dome and helped Virgil finish up the compote and pancakes.

Once those were under a dome and he’d sent a sleepy Roman back upstairs to retrieve Logan (Thomas had pulled another all-nighter), Patton placed his hands on Virgil’s waist, meeting him for a kiss.

“Thanks for helping with breakfast, baby. I know these all-nighters are tough on you too.”

Virgil shrugged, his hands still behind Patton’s neck. “I’m more used to being sleep-deprived than those two.”

Patton gave Virgil a quick peck on the lips. “Anything we’re missing?”

Virgil furrowed his brow in thought, finding his mind hazy with Patton’s strong hands on his waist and his broad physique so close. “We’ve got the coffee ready, that’s the important thing. Should we set out the leftover pomegranate lemonade?”

“Ooooo good idea!” Patton gave him one more quick kiss and turned to get the lemonade, Virgil admiring the view for a moment before going to set the table.

Two zombies entered the kitchen, the one with a tie beating the one in a red t-shirt to the coffee maker, much to the red zombie’s irritation if the resulting groans were anything to go by.

Virgil snorted at the two Sides’ grogginess while he sipped his own coffee just a little more loudly than necessary. Once both zombies-turning-Sides were seated at the table, Patton served them up a plate. Virgil watched as Roman and Logan slowly came back to life. Once he deemed it safe, Virgil asked,
“T-shirt and shorts Princey?”

“I didn’t feel like anything else this morning.”

Virgil winced. Poor guy. “Ouch dude. You gonna try to sleep during the day today?”

Roman sighed dramatically and threw his hands into the air. “I can’t! Thomas needs me! That script we were working on last night is going to be reviewed today, and obviously he needs his Creativity!”

“And his Logic.”

Logan wasn’t doing much better. He had a few of his bangs on his forehead and his tie was loosened, which was the equivalent of Roman donning a grey tank top and plain boxer shorts. Patton rubbed Logan’s shoulder and drew his eyebrows up.

“Oh baby, you’re so tense! Can I give you a back rub?”

“After breakfast. We both need to eat.”

“You’re right Lolo!”

Logan just grunted in response. After 20 minutes, both Sides seemed more revived. Roman bid his farewell and Logan got a backrub from Patton.

“Honey, Thomas is just going to be killing time for an hour and a half before the meeting, why don’t you get some sleep? I think Roman will be napping until then.”

“That seems adequate.”

Patton kissed the top of Logan’s head and patted his shoulders. “Go to sleep baby.”

Logan sighed, stood, and sank out to his bedroom. Virgil helped gather up the dishes and clean up, Patton chattering about who they were going to talk to and what their personalities were like. Virgil paid close attention, noting the information for later. Once they were done and drying their hands, Patton turned to Virgil.

“Hey Virge! Wanna do a date night after supper, just you and I? We could watch movies in my room and relax until we fall asleep!”

Virgil smiled at the thoughtfulness. “That sounds perfect Pat.”

Patton squealed. “Yay! I’ll see you after supper!”

Virgil wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck and kissed him. “See you later,” he murmured against the taller man’s lips.

Patton giggled as Virgil pulled away and sank out.

////

Virgil knocked on Patton’s door half an hour after dinner ended.

“Come in!”

Virgil smiled and entered the room, the controlled chaos now familiar to him. Patton had a tray of
He shifted. How do I ask Patton for more? I don’t even know what I want! I just want more. I need more.

“Honey? Are you okay?”

Virgil looked up and met Patton’s concerned gaze.

“I… I don’t know, I just….” Virgil growled in frustration.

“Are you uncomfortable sweetie?” Patton asked, already pulling away.

Virgil grabbed the front of his polo. “No! I just, um…” he sucked his lower lip between his teeth and closed his eyes. “I want something more, but I don’t know what it is.”

Patton tilted his head. “Okay. Do you want more touch?” he asked in a slightly strained voice.

“I… yeah? But I don’t know how, or what, or… ugh, anything!”

Patton rubbed Virgil’s upper arm. “It’s okay baby, breathe.” He waited a moment. “There we go. Do you want to sit on my lap? Would that help?”

Virgil frowned. “Maybe? It doesn’t sound right though. I want to be touching more of you. Sorry.”

“That’s okay! You don’t have to apologize! How about you sit in between my legs? Would that work?”

Virgil blinked. “That… that sounds good. Yeah, let’s try that.” Virgil started moving but froze. “Only if you want to! Do you want to? God, shit, sorry, I shouldn’t have-”

“It’s okay honey. I wouldn’t have offered if I didn’t want to.” He sent what he hoped was an encouraging smile towards Virgil, happy when he got a smile back.

They situated themselves so Virgil was leaning back against Patton’s chest, seated between his legs. Patton was resting his cheek against Virgil’s hair and had his arms wrapped around Virgil’s waist, holding him close. Virgil, after a moment of deliberation, rested his hands on Patton’s.

“Comfy sweetie?”

Virgil had bolts of electricity racing up and down his body. He was encompassed by soft warmth, with the knowledge incredible strength laid beneath the skin of his boyfriend. “Yeah, this is perfect.”

“Good, I’m glad.” Patton nuzzled Virgil’s hair.

Virgil couldn’t pay much attention to the movie Patton had put on. He was feeling the fire of arousal dance across his skin and pool in his lower abdomen. He started shifting, still wanting more.

“You okay?”
Virgil twisted so he was looking up at Patton. “Kiss me, please,” he asked, desperate for something. Patton happily complied, bending down a little to meet Virgil’s eager kiss. Patton intentionally kept his movements slow, trying to soothe Virgil. The kiss was slow and sweet, with an undercurrent of fire. Virgil started letting out little moans.

Patton pulled away, Virgil following with a whine. “Please… Please, can I have more? Please?” he begged, growing desperate.

“Shhhhh. What do you want baby?”

Virgil whined. “More.”

Patton smiled as he rubbed a hand up and down Virgil’s forearm, still trying to calm him. “Gonna have to be more specific than that.”

Virgil felt the heat making his skin hyper-sensitive. “Touch. Wanna touch you. Want you to touch me.”

Patton felt himself becoming aroused, but held back. “Where do you want me to touch you honey?”

That gave Virgil pause. “Waist and up?” he said, unsure.

Patton smiled down at him. “Perfect. Same here sweetie.”

Virgil tried to twist his body more but his spine was only so flexible. He frowned.

“Want to straddle my legs honey?”

Virgil looked up at Patton and nodded, a dark blush making his cheeks splotchy. Patton wished Virgil knew how adorable it looked on him. Virgil moved his body to place his knees on either side of Patton’s thighs, a little nervous. *How could I mess this part up?*

Patton was relieved that Virgil was okay with the new position; he didn’t want Virgil to feel Little Patton pressing against him!

Virgil rested his hands on Patton’s shoulders, and Patton’s hands were on Virgil’s waist. Patton was moving his thumbs in small circles to try to calm his boyfriend; Virgil’s eyebrows were furrowed and he was biting his lip.

“You okay baby?” he asked.

“Yeah, I’m good.” Virgil responded, an inferno beneath his skin. “I just…” Virgil ducked his head.

Patton frowned and brought one hand up to lift Virgil’s chin. “Do you want to stop? We can always stop if you need to.”

Virgil gave a small smile at that. “I want to keep going, I just…” Virgil took a deep breath, “I don’t want to set you up yet,” he rushed out.

Patton smiled sappily. “That’s okay sweetie. That’s actually kind of cute.”

Virgil blushed harder and tried ducking his head, only for Patton to hold it up. “You don’t need to be embarrassed cutie pie. I’ll let you take the lead.”

Virgil smiled nervously, so he looked from his boyfriend’s face to where his hands were on
Patton’s strong shoulders. He moved his hands half an inch down and looked to see if it was okay. Patton smiled and nodded at him. Virgil smiled back and slowly brought his hands down to Patton’s elbows, and then back up. The fabric over thick shoulders and arms tickled his palms. He had no idea how it was so hot to touch Patton like this, but it was. He looked back at Patton.

“Can I kiss you?”

Patton nodded eagerly. Virgil chuckled and leaned in, Patton meeting him. Their second kiss had more passion, their lips moving faster against each other. Patton was clearly more experienced, but let Virgil lead the kiss. Virgil felt a surge of anxiety and pulled back, looking down.

“S-sorry, I know I’m not that good…”

Patton tightened his hands on Virgil’s waist. “Don’t talk bad about yourself or I’m going to physically fight you!” Virgil snorted at the running joke.

“And I disagree with you. I think,” Patton leaned forward, his eyes darkening and his voice dipping into a growl, “you’re doing just fine.”

Virgil’s eyes widened at the shift in Patton. He felt his breath coming quicker, but for a very good reason. Patton gently curled his fingers that were still at Virgil’s waist to urge him closer. Virgil took the hint and kissed Patton again, this time adding more pressure. Patton brought a hand up to the back of Virgil’s head and moved his fingers slightly in the dark brown hair, his thumb brushing back and forth across the side of Virgil’s head. Virgil moved his hands to Patton’s shoulder blades, then up and over Patton’s shoulders to rest hesitantly on his upper chest. Virgil decided against going lower and ran his hands over the moral Side’s clavicles, shoulders, and down to his elbows again before going back up.

Virgil pulled back from the kiss and watched Patton with intense eyes. He wanted to try something, to make Patton feel good and show him how he made Virgil feel. “Can I kiss you o-ther places?”

Patton’s mind went to the gutter and he resolutely pulled it back up by the ear. “Where were you thinking?”

“L-like, your cheek, jaw, and n-neck?”

Patton smiled. *Virgil has no idea how adorable he is.* “I’d love that.”

Virgil smiled nervously and kissed Patton again. They kissed for a few minutes and Virgil kept moving his hands in the same spots until he’d built up his courage again. Virgil pulled away a little, just enough to start planting little kisses along Patton’s cheek and trailing down to his jaw, where he began to use the tiniest amount of suction with open lips. Patton’s breath hitched as Virgil gave little kitten licks to the spots on his jaw where he kissed and moved down, pressing little kisses and more kitten licks, just a small flicker with the end of his tongue, to his neck. Patton alternated between squeezing and stroking the back of Virgil’s head, letting out small moans the entire time.

Virgil brought his head back up to reattach to Patton’s lips firmly. Patton delicately brought the hand that was in Virgil’s hair down his neck and on his shoulder, then going under his arm to place it in the middle of his back. Patton didn’t want to go too far down. He brought the hand that had been at Virgil’s waist up to his chest. Virgil gasped and jerked, and hid his face in the crook of Patton’s neck. Patton put both hands on Virgil’s back and rubbed one up and down.

“Honey? Are you okay?”
Virgil nodded against his neck. “S-sorry, just… that was a different feeling. I wasn’t expecting it.”

“No need to apologize baby! I’m sorry!”

“You don’t have to apologize either. It felt… nice.” Virgil finished in an embarrassed mumble. “Maybe… too nice? I haven’t felt that on my chest before.”

Patton could practically feel Virgil’s blush grow stronger. “Well, I’m glad you could feel it now. Do you want to stop baby?”

Virgil shook his head and pulled back, meeting Patton’s eyes from underneath his own eyelashes. “Can we keep kissing please?”

Patton smiled. “Well since you used the magic word.”

Virgil snorted and met Patton halfway. They kept kissing and touching each other, Patton avoiding Virgil’s chest. Virgil marveled at the bulk and muscle he was running his hands over, and Patton couldn’t get enough of touching his dark, handsome boyfriend. Patton would occasionally tickle his fingers against the back of Virgil’s skull, which made them both giggle into each other’s lips.

After a half hour, Virgil started getting tired, which Patton picked up on. Patton gently pulled back and brought a hand up to rub his thumb against his cherub’s cheekbone.

“Whaddya say we call it for tonight, hmm?” Patton asked.

Virgil nodded sleepily and laid his head against Patton’s shoulder. The older Side smiled.

“Want to stay here for tonight?”

Virgil nodded against his neck. Patton shifted them so they were laying down and Virgil had his head and hands on Patton’s chest. Patton pressed a kiss to the top of Virgil’s head.

“Good night my little shadowling.”

“Night,” Virgil mumbled as he nuzzled against Patton’s chest. Patton squeezed him and fell asleep with his nose in Virgil’s hair.

Chapter End Notes

Can you tell how much I love consent and negotiation and checking in? This was a rather indulgent chapter, but we did get to see how much Virgil’s grown in his comfort with the Light Sides! Plus Finnish food!
Chapter 107

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! Right at the beginning, we do have some vague discussions of Virgil's abuse and neglect at the hands of the Dark Sides, but it's not very explicit.

After the line of tildes though, we have a very explicit scene of consensual sexytimes!! My wonderful beta pointed out a few tags that were missing in regards to that, so recheck the tags and make sure it'd be okay for you to read it! It does involve some kink elements, mostly in regards to dom/sub play and a scene. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next day, Thomas had the morning off to recharge. The Light and Neutral Sides were huddled around the television in the Light Side of the mindscape watching old episodes of *Ghost Adventures*. Virgil was cuddled between Saul and Remy while Roman was between Patton and Logan. Roman had pouted about not being able to hold Virgil, until Logan and Patton sat on either side of him. He was back to wearing his usual prince outfit and Virgil was in his typical t-shirt and hoodie.

Between episodes, Virgil got up to press some buttons to pull up the next episode while Saul stood to grab some more drinks for everyone. On his way back, Saul ruffled Virgil’s hair, earning him a sought-after hiss.

“Hey short stuff.”

“I'm only two inches shorter than you.”

“Short.”

Virgil huffed until Remy pulled him back into cuddles.

Logan tapped his chin. “I do find it interesting that you’re shorter than us. All of the Sides are the exact same height as Thomas, yet you’re slightly shorter.”

Patton giggled. “Yeah, especially because Thomas has *heightened* anxiety!”

Everyone besides Patton groaned.

Logan ran a hand over his face. “Moving on-”

“Hey, that was two videos!” Patton chirped.

“pressing forward, there may be a number of reasons why Virgil’s height is less developed. Smoking, poor posture, malnutrition, lack of exercise, stress, and anxiety are common reasons. As for Sides, perhaps not enough time spent in our rooms? There could also be-”

“Logan,” Saul interrupted. Logan jumped, ready to be perturbed, until he saw how Virgil had curled into Remy. Remy had both arms wrapped around the smaller Side, and Saul had his arms around both Remy and Virgil.
Oh. Oh dear. “I… Virgil, I’m sorry, my apologies, I shouldn’t have-”

Virgil waved him off. “It’s fine L, you didn’t know.” Remy squeezed Virgil and sent a glare towards Logan. He softened a little when he saw how upset Logan was, but only a little.

Virgil shifted and grabbed a fistful of Remy’s white shirt. “I guess, to answer your question Logan…” he cleared his throat.

Remy jumped in. “Baby, you don’t have to.”

“Truly, you do not,” Logan assured.

“No, it’s fine, I kinda want to.”

Remy sighed. “Okay honey,” he said as he kissed the top of Virgil’s head.

Virgil inhaled deeply. “I… you guys know I didn’t have great nutrition. I’m lucky I’m a Side in that aspect. They’d give me water, but real food was usually once every couple of days, and that was almost always hard, stale bread. Every couple of weeks or once a month I’d get little bit more.” Roman and Saul growled. “Um, stress and anxiety, that was… yeah. Probably a factor. And I didn’t really have a room. There would just be… stations I’d be at. For a while there the Dark Side of the mindscape would try to make me a room, but the Dark Sides would always destroy it and the mindscape stopped trying after a while.” Virgil’s voice choked off and he buried his face in Remy’s shirt. “I’m sorry.”

“Shhhhh, coffee bean, you have nothing to apologize for at all,” Remy cooed, sending a pointed look towards Logan as Virgil’s shoulders began hitching.

“Virgil, I truly am sorry…”

Virgil sniffled. “I-it’s okay Lo, it really is. It’s… kinda cathartic? I don’t know, I actually feel a little better. Maybe I needed to talk about it.”

Remy hugged Virgil closer. “I’m glad you feel better sugar.”

Virgil shifted so he was less tense and had his face exposed. “Can we keep watching Ghost Adventures?”

“Of course little one,” Saul rumbled, squeezing his upper arm before grabbing the remote control and letting the episode play.

Once it was time to go back to work, Remy and Saul left after giving Virgil a hug. Logan approached Virgil.

“Virgil, are you-”

Virgil cut him off. “I’m fine, Lo, really.” He offered an easy smile.

Logan smiled back cautiously. “Would you like a hug?”

Virgil snorted. “Sure L.”

Logan held onto Virgil tightly for several long moments before pulling away. Virgil smirked and kissed him, sending his nerd another smile afterward.

“I’ll see ya later.”
Indeed.

Logan waited until Virgil had sunk out before he went to his room.

////////

Logan was just finishing storing Thomas’ projects correctly when the music and guided meditation tracks completed their download onto the thumbdrive. Although Virgil had stated he felt okay, Logan still felt terrible for triggering him and wanted to make it up to him.

Patton knocked on Logan’s door for dinner. Logan responded that he’d be down shortly and pocketed the thumbdrive. He made his way to Virgil’s room and knocked.

“I’ll be down in a minute Pat.”

“It’s Logan.”

“Oh, hey L. Tell Patton I’ll be down in a minute.”

Logan laughed to himself. “I have something to give you.”

Logan heard some shuffling, then footsteps approaching the door. Virgil opened the door, looking a little haggard.

“Hey, what’s up?”

“I have a flashdrive for you, but are you alright? You look a little…”


“I am sorry to hear that. Perhaps the contents of this thumbdrive will help you.” Logan pulled the little black and grey stick out of his pocket. “It has music that is supposed to be calming, as well as guided meditation exercises. There is a description of each song and meditation exercise in the table of contents document also located on the drive.”

Virgil took the drive and stared at it in awe. He looked up to Logan with slightly shiny eyes.

“Thank you Logan,” he breathed.

Logan offered him a soft smile. “No need to thank me, it’s quite- oof!” Logan was cut off when Virgil hugged him tightly. Logan returned the hug, albeit more gently. Virgil looked back up after a moment, definite tears in his eyes. Logan pushed down his alarm; he’d learned from Patton that tears weren’t always from sadness. A single tear trickled down Virgil’s face. Logan brought a hand up to gently wipe it away.

“This is awesome,” Virgil whispered.

“I am glad. Do let me know if you require any more songs or exercises. I would not mind compiling another list for you to have.”

“I will. See you at dinner in a few?”

“Yes.”

Virgil smiled one last time at Logan and returned to his room to put the flashdrive away and get ready for dinner. Logan smiled to himself. Although he was slightly behind on other projects, he
considered the delay worth it.

Logan had Patton on his bed playing with the Rubix cube. Patton had tried to figure out the algorithm, but after several failed attempts he just tried to make different pretty patterns. Soon enough, however, Patton set the cube on the shelf next to Logan’s bed.

“Baby, it’s getting so late. It’s almost 9:30, and you know how important it is to get enough sleep!”

Logan checked the time. It was, in fact, 9:10. As expected. He sighed. “I apologize Patton, but I simply must finish working on this before tomorrow. It is crucial to keeping Thomas on schedule.” He turned back to his tablet and got back to work. He thought Patton wouldn’t interrupt him again until his chair was moving backwards.

He let out a very undignified yelp and looked at Patton expectantly. Patton smiled.

“There! Now you’re closer to the bed than to your desk.”

Logan just waved his tablet triumphantly before continuing to organize projects. He felt Patton huff against the back of his neck. Patton’s hands moved from the chair to Logan’s shoulders and slowly started trailing down his arms, starting the scene.

“You don’t want to sleep yet?”

“No, not yet.”

“We could always do something else if you don’t want to sleep,” Patton said as he began to kiss Logan’s shoulders, starting at the base of his neck. He pressed slow, lingering kisses out onto the edge of one shoulder before going to the other, the kisses becoming more open-mouthed.

Logan shivered. He spun around suddenly and pulled Patton into a rough, slightly sloppy kiss. He felt Patton smile against his lips and growled. Setting his tablet aside, he pushed at Patton’s shoulders until Patton landed on the bed, bouncing a little. Logan wove his fingers into Patton’s hair and claimed his lips again, nipping them on the way back.

“Color?”

“Green!”

“Wonderful.”

Logan kissed Patton, open-mouthed and dirty, before leaning up and pressing on Patton’s chest. He snapped his fingers, leaving Patton nude.

“Turn over,” Logan ordered. Patton quickly complied.

Logan reached over and grabbed lubricant. He set the tube to the side and ran his hands down Patton’s back appreciatively, stopping to massage Patton’s thick ass. Patton squirmed against the bed sheets, trying to get some friction. Logan immediately dug in his fingers in warning. Patton whined but stopped moving. Logan relaxed his hand and pressed a gentle kiss against the back of Patton’s neck, earning him a shiver.

“I’m going to take my time with you, understand?”

Patton nodded quickly.
Logan chuckled. “I need words, my dear.”

“Yes! Yes, please!”

Logan smiled and went back to massaging Patton, slowly working his hands and fingers into any spots of tension he found, kissing him as he felt like it, Patton letting out moans and sighs. Finally, he reached thick, firm shoulders. Once Patton was a relaxed puddle of goo on the bed, Logan slowly moved back down his body, trailing fingers and leisurely kissing his spine. He made sure to lavish every single vertebrae with love.

When Logan got to where he really wanted to be, he blew a puff of air and paused, giving Patton a chance to tell him to stop if needed. Instead, Patton wiggled his hips back. Logan gave him a sharp nip in warning and Patton settled his hips back on the bed. Logan kissed the spot he had just bitten and flattened his tongue against Patton’s entrance. Patton moaned loudly and Logan smirked. He flicked Patton’s entrance a few more times with just the tip of his tongue before moving back up and kissing his lower back and ass.

Patton whined but managed to stay still. After a few minutes, Logan traveled back down, bypassing where Patton wanted him and instead worshiping the luscious thighs of his boyfriend. Patton squirmed on the bed, causing Logan to harshly grab his hip, press it down into the mattress, and go right up to Patton’s ear.

“Who is in charge tonight?” he growled, lips brushing the shell of Patton’s ear.

Patton shivered. “You are?”

Logan lightly bit his ear. “You don’t sound so certain.”

“You are!”

“Much better,” he purred. He kissed and licked Patton’s ear, moving to press kisses along his hairline. “Remember that.”

Logan released the grip on Patton’s hip and kissed his way back down slowly, chuckling when he accidentally hit a ticklish spot on Patton’s side. Logan worshipped Patton’s body a while longer, and since he stayed still despite the mewls and moans, Logan decided to reward him. Without warning, he went back to Patton’s entrance and speared his tongue inside. Patton cried out and his hips twitched involuntarily, but Logan decided to forgive that since it was so sudden. He twisted and moved his tongue in and out, listening to and savoring the sounds Patton was making as he became more and more desperate. He kept an eye on the time, knowing Patton tended to start to not feel good after 15 minutes of analingus. Once he passed the ten minute mark Logan decided to give Patton more of what he wanted, partially because he was still fully clothed and his zipper was becoming quite painful.

Logan poured lube on his fingers and kissed Patton’s tailbone, intertwining his clean hand with Patton’s. Patton was breathing heavily and almost constantly moaning at this point. Logan ran a soothing thumb across the back of Patton’s hand in an attempt to ground him slightly as he pushed the tip of one finger in. Patton cried out and Logan twisted slowly, the muscle already loose due to Logan’s earlier attentions. He got more lube and worked in to his second knuckle, Patton sighing in relief. Logan continued slowly working Patton open, endlessly fascinated by the reactions each movement got. Once he found Patton’s prostate, he stroked it every few passes, knowing Patton might finish earlier than he’d want to. Logan occasionally got so wrapped up in watching Patton’s body respond to different stimuli that it took a particularly pathetic whine to remind him of what he was doing. Finally, he considered Patton stretched enough.
Logan used his clean hand to snap his clothes off and braced himself on Patton’s lower back, letting out a breath of relief when his aching cock was freed. He gathered cool lube in his hand and spread it over his length, easing the heat slightly. Once he was sure he wasn’t about to climax too quickly, he leaned over Patton, only for Patton to speak up.

“Wait, Lo.”

Logan quickly pulled back and put his clean hand on one shoulder. “Yes darling?”

“Can I see you please?”

“I think that would be alright.”

Patton turned over and Logan was glad for it. Patton’s face was sweaty and red, his eyes glassy from pleasure and need, and he was smiling in adoration at the man above him. Logan stroked a hand down the beautiful face and matched his smile, meeting Patton in a sweeter kiss. Only once they had parted and Patton had nodded did Logan reposition himself and start to push in slowly.

Patton threw his head back and let out a long, high-pitched moan that had Logan’s hips stuttering. Logan paused halfway to give Patton time to adjust, but Patton just whined and pushed back. Logan just huffed out a laugh and kissed him, pushing in the rest of the way. Although Patton was shifting his hips to get Logan to move, Logan kept his hips still, not wanting to accidentally hurt Patton. He spent the next several minutes lavishing Patton’s very sensitive nipples with sucks, licks, and gentle scrapes of his teeth. He would have taken longer, but he knew Patton was already on edge and reaching his limit.

Logan leaned up and kissed Patton deeply as he slowly started to move his hips back and forth. Patton tried to speed up, but Logan pushed his hips into the mattress and enforced the slower pace he wanted. He broke the kiss to make eye contact for a moment, letting Patton use the color system if needed, but was instead kissed again by Patton, clicking their teeth a little.

Logan laughed quietly and started running teasing fingers up and down Patton’s cock for several minutes before wrapping his hand around his length properly. He moved his hand in time with his thrusts, shifting the angle to hit Patton’s prostate. Patton cried out in pleasure, and Logan sped up his thrusts, shifting his focus from teasing Patton to giving him the highest peak of pleasure possible. As expected, after just a couple more minutes Patton climaxed. Logan worked him through his orgasm until Patton squirmed and whined from overstimulation. Logan sped up his thrusts and shifted his angle once more to miss Patton’s prostate, knowing it would be too much for the larger man. Less than a minute later, Logan followed him over the edge. He shuddered and gasped before leaning on his elbows placed on either side of his boyfriend and resting his forehead on Patton’s chest, catching his breath.

Once he’d softened enough after a few minutes, he pulled out and laid next to Patton, immediately gathering the other Side in his arms. He pressed sweet kisses to his hair, murmuring how well he’d done and rubbing his back and arms soothingly. Logan knew they’d need to take a bath, but with Patton cuddles and kind words always came first. He held a drowsy Patton in his arms, both Sides happy and sated.

Chapter End Notes

We got lore, we got a lil bit of angst, we got Virgil kisses, and we got smut! I figured
our glasses gays needed a bit of fun!
Chapter 108

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! The only thing in this chapter to watch out for are some fairly vague descriptions of what Virgil went through when he was with the Dark Sides in the second half of the chapter. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“No, I don’t understand!! Why would you be ashamed of entertaining millions?!” Roman squawked.

Virgil winced. Thomas was going to be attending his grandparents’ 60th wedding anniversary, and there would be extended family there who didn’t know Thomas’ profession. Roman was offended that Thomas would be nervous to tell others about his YouTube career, Patton was trying to convince him that they wouldn’t react badly (even though other people had in the past), Logan was doing his best but could barely get a word in edgewise, and Virgil was biting his thumbnail in the corner of the stairs. His heart was pounding and he was taking deep breaths in an effort to try to stay calm.

“Now Thomas, I’m sure they’d support you! They’re your family kiddo!”

Thomas sighed, starting to bite his thumbnail. Virgil pulled his hand away from his face. You don’t want ragged fingernails for the reunion!

Thomas put his hand down, trying to preserve his fingernails. “I just… don’t want to have to deal with the drama and what if they make a scene or something? It’s already my fault whenever I get upset at someone for saying something homophobic, I can’t get upset at them for saying something awful about my career! What if they don’t take me seriously? What if-”

“Thomas, breathe,” Virgil ordered. He led Thomas through a few breathing exercises, feeling himself calm slightly along with his Host.

“Thanks Virge.” Thomas smiled gratefully at him, though it quickly faded. “This party’s going to be stressful enough, and I don’t want to add any more stress.”

Patton deflated a little. “I know son-”

“I’m not your son.”

“-but they’re your family. You’re happy, and making ends meet. Wouldn’t they just be happy for you?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. That’s not how life works.

“Things don’t always work like that, Patton,” Thomas said gently. “My close family accepts me, but a lot of these people will be total strangers.”

“Yes, but who wouldn’t want to be related to a celebrity?” Roman asked, gesturing widely. “You’re rather famous! Sure, there are more mountains to climb, more accolades to collect, more stages and
screens to perform on, but that will always be the case!” Roman raised a hand and looked up toward it. “Striving for more and more, higher and higher peaks, until…” he pulled his hand down swiftly and clenched his eyes shut. “You are unable to any more.” Then he relaxed, smiled, and flicked his hands out to the sides. “After that, it’s just downhill from there!”

Thomas frowned and nodded, rubbing his lips together. “Thanks… for that, Roman.”

“You’re welcome!”

“But wouldn’t it just be easier if I… bent the truth a little bit? Like say I own a video production company or something?”

Patton gasped. “Thomas! That’s lying, and lying is wrong! You know that! And you’re thinking about lying to your family! How could you? You’re supposed to trust your family not to keep anything from you, especially not something important like your career and passion!”

Virgil felt like he got stabbed with ice through his heart. You lied so much. To the Neutral Sides, the Light Sides, the Dark Sides, everyone! And you did it all the time!! You’re no better than Deceit. I bet he’s laughing his ass off in that dungeon cell Roman has him in. You betrayed your family, so many times, right to their faces. You worthless piece of shit. And now you’ve manipulated them into not fucking you, the one thing they could do to relieve some of the stress you cause. Maybe you really do belong with the Dark Sides. You are a liar, after all. And you haven’t even told them how much you’ve lied!

“Guys, I don’t know…”

“Objectively speaking, if you wish to decrease your anxiety after the event, then being completely truthful is going to be the most efficient way to achieve that. However, if you wish to decrease your anxiety before and during the event, either lying or not telling the whole truth is going to be the optimal strategy. Especially considering that employment is a common topic of “small talk.” So the question becomes, would you prefer to decrease your anxiety after the event or before and during?”

Thomas looked down, surprised by the question. “I… I don’t know.”

“Then perhaps that is where you should start.”

Patton looked lost and frustrated. “Thomas… I’m just, why are you so scared of what other people will think of you? As long as you know in your heart that you’re doing the right thing, isn’t that enough?” he asked, confused.

Thomas wiped a hand over his face. “Virgil, what do you think? I know you’re anxious about this whole situation, who do you think is right here?”

Virgil sucked in a breath. I have to choose between my boyfriends. I have to choose what Thomas does and whether or not he’s miserable or a good person.

Virgil met Thomas’ eyes. “I think Logan’s idea is the best. Figure out what you want to do and go from there.”

“But Virgil, lying is wrong!”

Virgil’s eyes flickered to Patton’s for a moment before he trained them on the carpet. “I know,” he said, closing his eyes. He sighed deeply. “But it might be the lesser of two evils here,” he finished.
Patton knows now, he knows, he’s smart and perceptive. What, do you actually think he doesn’t know? You’re a disgrace.

“Alright, well… you guys have definitely given me a lot to think about. I’ll let you know if I need help or,” Thomas scratched the back of his head, “once I’ve made up my mind.”

The Sides nodded, Logan content but everyone else unhappy with the outcome for different reasons. They sank out to the commons of the mindscape, ready for dinner. Except Virgil.

Virgil appeared in his room and grabbed Shelly off his desk, flopping on the bed miserably.

I’m basically Deceit at this point. I won’t be Deceit to them. They don’t know how much I lied. To survive, to hide, to make things just a little easier for me. I’m selfish. I can’t even tell them how much I have lied. They think I’m innocent in all of this. I’m not. Virgil’s eyes pricked with tears. They deserve better than me.

When Logan came upstairs to fetch Virgil for supper, he said he wasn’t feeling well after the issue with Thomas that day.

\\\\

Breakfast came and went, and Virgil was still in his room.

I’m a liar. They have no idea what I had to do in order to survive. What good is a liar in a relationship? They deserve better than me… Wait.

Virgil’s eyes widened and his blood ran cold. Oh god. He shot up in bed. I swore I wouldn’t do this to them again. I’m doing it right now!! Oh god oh god oh god…

Virgil jumped out of bed, ran his fingers through his hair, and sank out to Patton’s room. He found all three crammed together on Patton’s bed watching The Jungle Book. The three men jumped at Virgil’s appearance and paused the movie.

Patton smiled and leaned forward! “Virgil! I’m so happy to see you!! Are you feeling better honey?”

Virgil bit his lip and averted his eyes. “I… not really, but I’m… I fucked up, guys.”

He saw all three of his boyfriends (soon to be ex-boyfriends) sit up out of the corner of his eye.

“What happened baby?” Patton asked softly.

Virgil’s cheeks and eyes were burning. They deserve to know. I should probably stop lying to them at some point. “I started… isolating myself again, thinking you’d be better off without me. But once I realized what I was doing I stopped and came here!” he quickly added. Virgil hung his head and closed his eyes as a few tears escaped. “I understand if you want to break up with me. I did the thing again that I said I wasn’t going to do.”

Virgil was met with silence, confirming his fears. He let out a broken sob that he stifled as soon as he could.

“Virgil,” Logan began, “We aren’t going to break up with you for breaking out of a pattern. I understand why you might think we’d be upset, but you broke out of that cycle by coming here as
soon as you realized what you were doing. You are making progress forward.”

Virgil stood there shell-shocked for a moment. *He sounds sincere, but they still don’t know...* “I’ve lied a lot!” he blurted.

He saw Patton shift on the bed. “Okay sweetie. Do you want to tell us when you’ve lied?”

Virgil’s swallowed around the lump in his throat. “I— When I was in the Dark Side, I had to. I lied to you guys a lot so you wouldn’t know because you couldn’t! And the Neutral Sides and, god, *Thomas*. I had to pretend everything was fine. But I couldn’t… you couldn’t…” Virgil took a few moments while he started breathing more heavily and loudly from panic, guilt, and sorrow. His voice came out thick, “And with the Dark Sides,” *tell them how disgusting you are,* “I wasn’t completely innocent in that.”

*There. Now they know.*

*And now they’re going to hate you and break up with you! And tell Thomas and the Neutral Sides!*

“Beautiful angel, what’s going through that head of yours?” Roman asked.

Virgil’s breath hitched. “I lied to them. I w—would lie just to make my life a little easier, not even for big things! When I w—would be worried about blood loss or permanent damage or something, I c— couldn’t say anything about th-that, but I’d lie so I could get a few more minutes away. A— and then they’d,” Virgil sobbed, knowing this would drive his boyfriends away from him, but he knew they at least deserved to know. He could already hear Patton starting to cry with hiccuping breaths. “They’d make me act like I liked it, so I told them I did and begged them when they w—anted me to. And I asked f— for it!” Virgil slumped and let out several sobs so he could say the next words. “I’m not completely innocent. I asked for it. It’s my fault.” Virgil continued in a whisper. “It’s all my fault.”

He heard Patton muffling his crying into one of the Sides on the bed, but he dared not open his eyes.

“Virgil…” Roman breathed.

Virgil finally allowed himself to cry, disgust at himself for each time he had to act like he enjoyed his abuse and lied returning tenfold. Sobbing, he started to sink out before he was yanked back up. He turned frightened eyes to Roman. His— no, the prince’s face was red and streaked in tears. *Give him this. You’ve at least earned a good beating.*

“I’m so sorry for grabbing you like that, my love, and I swear I’m not going to hurt you!” Roman clasped his other hand on Virgil’s arm, scared he’d leave. “My sweet, we… we’d never hold that against you! You had no choice! You had to survive!! Those *curs* didn’t give you a chance. My gorgeous stormcloud, you lied to survive an impossible situation, and what those bastards forced you to do is not your fault!”

Virgil looked at Roman carefully. There were no hints of deception in his face, so Virgil looked to his other boyfriends. Patton’s face was buried in Logan’s chest, but Logan caught Virgil’s gaze.

“I share the same sentiments as Roman,” Logan assured.

Patton pulled his face out of Logan’s chest and Virgil winced. He looked as shattered as Virgil could ever remember him being.

*“I love you so much baby!! I’d never be mad at you for any of that!!”* Patton cried.
They don’t hate me, they don’t hate me, they really don’t hate me, I thought they’d be disgusted with me.

Virgil turned back to Roman, eyes wide and chest heaving, his breath coming quickly and shallowly.

“My raven, the fact that they forced you to act like you wanted to be or enjoyed being abused,” Roman snarled involuntarily, “makes me disgusted with them, not with you.”

Virgil kept panting, unable to form a cohesive sentence. They don’t hate me, they don’t hate me, they still love me...

“Love? Are you alright?”

Roman’s voice sounded like he was speaking underwater, and who’s dimming the lights? The only thing Virgil could manage was, “Huh, didn’t think-” before his knees buckled and his world went dark.

Virgil frowned and stirred. Why am I waking up? I already woke up this morning. Was that a dream? Virgil shifted and felt sheets that were distinctly not his own. Roses, cinnamon… did I fall asleep in Princey’s bed?

“Baby? Are you awake?”

Virgil jumped slightly at the unexpected voice. He turned and saw Patton leaning on his side.

“Hey Pat,” he said hoarsely. All at once, the memories from that morning rushed back.

“Oh honey! Roman, his voice-”

“On it padre.”

Virgil whipped his head to the side and saw Logan sitting on the edge of the bed by his feet and Roman in a chair next to his head.

“Do you think you can sit up, my love?”

Virgil nodded mutely, still in shock. The words registered a moment later, and he pushed himself into a sitting position. Roman handed him a glass of water and only let go once Virgil had a secure grip. Virgil slowly sipped the water until the glass was half-empty.

“Are you hungry, little bat?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “Maybe, but… you guys aren’t mad or anything?”

“Not at all my love!! I will spend the rest of my days composing sonnets and entire plays until I am able to convince you!”

Virgil held up a hand. “That’s okay Princey, I… just wasn’t expecting it, is all.”

“Oh my little chocolate chip, I wouldn’t blame you for that! Good gravy, you did what you had to!!”

Virgil smiled sadly. “But… you’re Morality…”
Patton tilted his head. “Yeah?”

“And I lied.”

“Huh? Oh! Oh sweetheart, is this about yesterday?”

Virgil looked down. “Partially, I guess.”

“That’s so different! You were in a fight for your life!”

Virgil looked back up at Patton. Maybe... “Really?”

“Of course!!”

Virgil collapsed into Patton, crying into his chest. He felt Logan get off the bed while Patton’s arms wrapped around him. Patton alternated between rubbing his back and his neck until Virgil’s cries slowed down. During that time, he heard Logan come back in the room with something rattling on metal. Virgil pulled back and smiled at Patton as Patton wiped away a few tear tracks and was promptly presented with a handkerchief. Virgil used it to clean up his face, and Patton helped him settle back onto the pillows that had been stacked up.

Logan set a tray down on Virgil’s lap. It had a sandwich, a simple salad, and some cut up chicken. Roman cuddled up next to Virgil while he ate, and Patton stayed right where he was. Logan got in on the other side of Patton, ready to be of use.

The Light Sides spent the rest of the day taking care of Virgil, reassuring a still slightly-shocked former Dark Side that he was loved, they didn’t think less of him, and it wasn’t his fault.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Virge. He was certain that hi’d lost his boyfriends and that he was about to get at least a couple bruises.

And oof, coming to terms with all the lying you have to do in order to survive those situations is... a process. Our babe just got triggered pretty badly. Luckily, his boyfriends love doting on him! He’s also getting better about not assuming other people's happiness and taking their autonomy away because of it! That comes with fighting the internal dialogue.

And we got a little insight into how the Sides help Thomas and their effects on him!
Chapter 109

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! In the second half of the chapter, we have some vague descriptions of a flashback from the victim's perspective as well as an outside witness.

And also Sarma Angel made ANOTHER fanart for this fic?? And I’m??! DyING??!!!!? It's so cute!! It's such a great scene!!! Go check it out and reblog and give it all the love!!! Find it here!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil and Roman were cuddling on Virgil’s bed, watching The Little Mermaid. They had kissed at the beginning of the date but had curled up next to each other when the movie started. Virgil was basking in the heat Roman’s body was giving off and the arousal of being held so close to him. He was acutely aware of the muscles in the arm that was around him, the strong shoulder he was resting his head on, and the firm chest he was pressed against. Roman was, of course, singing along to the movie’s soundtrack, although it was at a lower volume for the sake of Virgil’s ears.

He’s a good singer. Virgil thought that he could listen to Roman sing like this for hours, emotion and expression in his deep, resonant voice carrying through the room. He listened to the song through his prince’s chest, the music coming from the television being drowned out by the royal’s voice.

“Kiss the Girl” came on, and Virgil decided to tilt his head up. Roman continued singing as he met Virgil’s eyes, their noses brushing.

“Sha la la la la la
My oh my
Looks like the boy’s too shy
 Ain’t gonna kiss the girl.”

Fuck that. Virgil leaned up and connected their lips, Roman tightening his arm around Virgil in an attempt to pull him even closer. Virgil wrapped his arms around Roman’s neck and tried to lead the kiss, only for Roman to smirk against his lips and wrap his free hand around the back of Virgil’s head and change the angle, effectively shorting out Virgil’s brain cells. The way Roman’s fingers were caressing the back of his head and occasionally digging in was sending sparks from his scalp all the way down his spine, making him involuntarily arch his body towards Roman. This kiss was very different than the one they’d shared at the beginning of the date; the one they’d had at the beginning was sweet, tender, almost a little cautious. This kiss was pure passion, hot romance from two people coming together in a desperate clash.

Roman was making low noises from deep in his chest, and Virgil was matching him with small moans. Just as Virgil’s lungs started to burn, Roman pulled back. Virgil tried to follow with a whine, but Roman held him still and chuckled.

“Be still, my love. I am here. You seemed like you needed to breathe.”

Virgil pouted, which Roman quickly kissed off his face. He brought the hand that had been at the
back of Virgil’s head and brushed his lover’s face with it.

“We shall resume in a moment, do not worry.”

Virgil leaned his forehead against Roman’s chest. He wanted something, but had no idea what.

“Is there something you desire, dark angel?” Roman rumbled against his ear.

Virgil shivered and he felt himself harden. “I… I don’t know. I mean, I want something, but I don’t know what it is!”

“Shhhhh love, it’s alright. Do you desire more intimacy?”

Virgil blushed darkly and nodded his head.

“I am more than happy to provide that, love. Tell me what you want.”

Virgil huffed in frustration. “I’m not sure.”

“Okay, sweet crow. Would you like to lay down and kiss?”

Virgil bit his lip. That sounded nice, he’d done that with Logan and it was great, but he didn’t know how Roman wanted to lay down.

“I mean… how would we…?”

Roman brought his hand forward slightly to swipe his thumb across Virgil’s cheekbone. “However you are comfortable, love. We could lay on our sides, you could be on top of me or I on top of you-” Roman cut off as Virgil flinched. “Beautiful?”

“Y-you on top of me might not… be good right now.” Virgil winced at his word choice.

Roman just smiled. “Would you like to be on top of me?”

Virgil turned bright red and looked down. Roman tilted his chin up.

“Do not hide your face from me. It would be a sin to conceal such a marvel from the world.”

Virgil contorted his face just to prove him wrong. Roman chuckled and kissed the frown off his face. Virgil hissed and shifted slightly.

“So it won’t be… bad for you? I don’t want to hurt you…” he whispered.

Roman smiled softly at him. “I assure you love, I would greatly enjoy having you on top of me.”

Virgil’s cheeks and ears were burning. “If you’re sure…”

“I am. Would you like to try it? You are free to say no.”

Virgil cast his eyes downwards, furrowing his brow for a moment, before looking back up with a shy smile. “Yeah.”

“Very well! After you, my prince.”

Virgil curled in on himself slightly. “I-I don’t know how.”

Roman brought the hand that was around his back to rub at Virgil’s arm. “I can show you, if you’d
Virgil nodded eagerly. Roman laughed quietly and pulled them both slowly down the bed. Roman laid on his back and gently guided Virgil so his upper half was resting on top of the romantic Side. Virgil had his arm beneath him, laying on Roman’s chest, and his hips were on the bed, thankfully hiding his hard-on but unfortunately putting more pressure on it. Roman had one hand cupping Virgil’s face and the other on the middle of his back.

“Are you comfortable, dark angel?”

Virgil nodded. Roman smiled and snaked an arm around his back.

“May I kiss you, my sweet songbird?”

Virgil responded by bringing their lips together, the kiss starting out slow and sweet but quickly turning into an inferno as Roman tightened the fingers of the back of his head. Hot air was shared between them, and Virgil felt the skin all over his body heating up as his world narrowed to Roman. Roman was rubbing and gripping up and down and back with the occasional scratch, and he had no idea how Roman made it as much of a turn on as he did, but every touch was making the inferno burn hotter, making him let out all kinds of embarrassing noises. Virgil’s zipper was becoming increasingly painful and his lower half ached to do something. Virgil felt his hips stutter against the bed and that seemed to help, so he kept making small movements with his hips into the mattress while moaning. Having Roman beneath him was intoxicating; his smell, his taste, the things he did with his mouth and hands, the fact that such a strong man was willing to be below him and give and receive pleasure with Virgil was driving him into a frenzy.

Virgil felt something building in his lower abdomen as his genitals became more and more sensitive and tense. When he realized what was happening, he ceased his movements and pulled back, pressing his face into Roman’s shoulder with a gasp. Roman paused his touches, save for placing one hand on the back of Virgil’s head and one in between his shoulder blades.

“Love?”

Virgil did a few rounds of breathing exercises before he could answer, Roman patiently waiting for him to speak, only rubbing small lines on his back.

“Sorry Ro, it was really, really good, it just got a little intense for me.”

“No need to apologize! I quite enjoyed it! What do you need, dark angel?”

Virgil let out a shaky breath. “Just… gotta catch my breath, I think.”

“Alright. There is no rush. Take your time, my gorgeous raven.”

Virgil focused on breathing in his prince’s scent, though it wasn’t helping his erection fade. After a few minutes, some of the red-hot fog had receded from his mind, and he curled into Roman’s chest, slightly embarrassed. Roman wrapped both his arms around Virgil’s shoulders and rubbed a hand up and down Virgil’s arm in an attempt to soothe him.

“Feeling better, my sweet?”

“Yeah, I’m good. It was really good, it just became a lot all at once.”

“That is understandable. Would you like to resume the movie?”
Virgil shifted closer to Roman. “Sure.”

Twenty minutes later a knock came at Virgil’s door, making him jump.

“Dinner time!”

“Be down in a few minutes!” Virgil called back to Patton. Roman started getting up but Virgil resisted.

Roman chuckled. “As much as I wish to cuddle with you, my love, we really should eat.”

Virgil wanted to crawl underneath his bed and never come out. “I know, I just, uh, need a few minutes before I can get up.”

“Hm? Are you alright?”

Virgil groaned, craving death. “Yeah, it’s just… um, a situation.”

“A situation… oh! Are you a little tense?”

Virgil hid his face in the broad chest he’d been laying on. “Kill me now.”

Roman bit back laughter as best he could. “It is nothing to be embarrassed about, sweet angel. I’m quite flattered! Do let me know if you ever want help with that.”

Virgil heard his eyebrows waggle. He just groaned.

Roman huffed a laugh into his hair. “Do you want to go take care of that?”

Virgil shifted uncomfortably just as Logan crisply knocked on the door.

“You guys okay in there?” Patton’s concerned voice echoed.

“I’m fine!” Virgil yelled back.

“You sure sweetie? Dinner’s getting cold.”

Roman decided to jump in before Virgil blew a blood vessel in his eye. “We’re quite alright, just having a hard time getting up.”

Virgil slowly turned his head to glare deadpan at Roman. Roman just snickered.

“Okay, just come down when you’re ready.”

Once they heard the other two Sides walk away, Roman turned back to Virgil.

“If you want to take care of yourself in your bathroom, I won’t judge you and I can give you some privacy by going downstairs first.”

Virgil smiled at the thought. “I appreciate it Princey. I just… can’t.” Virgil looked down as humiliated tears burned his eyes.

Roman sensed a change in Virgil. “Can’t what, beautiful?”

Virgil bit his lip hard as he closed his eyes and inhaled. “I can’t… take care of myself.”

It took a second for Roman to understand, but once he did his heart broke all over again. “Virgil…”
Virgil tensed. “I know it’s weird and I’m broken and fucked up, but it’s… the flashbacks. I… I can’t.”

Roman tightened his arms around Virgil. “Shhhhhhh, it’s okay. It may take time, and if it never happens that’s okay too.”

Virgil grunted. “But I want to.”

“You seem pretty confident about the whole thing.”

“…have you met me?”

Virgil snorted. Thanks to his frustration and embarrassment, he was able to stand up a few minutes later.

/////  

After dinner, Virgil cuddled next to Logan for solitary activities done together. Logan had a book in his hands and Virgil was scrolling through Tumblr with his music playing. Virgil could feel the tension seeping out of him from being so close to Logan’s calming presence. How Logan felt both cool and warm Virgil would probably never know, but he was grateful for it. He sighed and leaned against him, Logan’s arm coming up around Virgil’s shoulders. That small action caused Virgil’s arousal from before to come back.

He twisted to look up at Logan. “Hey Logan.”

Logan looked down, their noses brushing. “Yes Virgil?”

“Wanna kiss?”

“Of course.”

Virgil snorted as he closed his eyes and let Logan kiss him. Logan’s kisses were a lingering press of the lips, head staying mostly still, lips moving in an exact pattern that was somehow different every time, with no long breaks between kisses, letting Virgil get lost in the sensation of the kiss itself, never allowing for him to open his eyes. His world became kissing Logan, the smoldering in his veins turning into fire roaring through him as he began to make louder and louder whines and moans. Virgil almost melted when Logan’s willowy fingers wrapped around the back of his head.

Fifteen minutes later, they finally parted, breathless. With the small break, Virgil’s mind wandered back to his date with Roman and how he couldn’t have Roman over him.

Fuck the Dark Sides! They’re not going to stop me! I’m gonna do it!

“Hey L?” Virgil asked, his voice deeper and rougher than before.

“Yes moonlight?”

Virgil blushed at the nickname. “Can we lay down and kiss?”

The only indication of Logan’s surprise was a twitch in his eyebrows. “I would not be opposed. How would you like to be positioned?”

Virgil’s brain needed a second to reboot at Logan’s phrasing, then he blushed and looked down.
“Can you be on top of me?” he asked shyly.

“I certainly can. Have you done this before?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, but… I wanna try it.”

Logan nodded, leaning down slightly to catch Virgil’s eyes. “We can try it, I am certainly not about to protest. However, do let me know if you become uncomfortable, alright?”

Virgil quickly nodded. Logan’s face softened and he curled his fingers that were still on the back of Virgil’s head.

“May I kiss you, my darling?”

“Please?”

Logan huffed out a laugh and kissed Virgil. They kissed sitting up for a few minutes, fire flowing through Virgil, before Logan started gently pushing them down with the barest pressure, turning down the heat in his kisses. Virgil let them lay down, despite his growing discomfort.

This is **Logan**, I trust him, why am I still getting scared? I shouldn’t be, he’s safe, I trust him, I love him, I want to give him everything, why can’t I do this? I should be able to, why am I not over this? **Come on, I can do this, I can do this…**

Virgil had a weight in his stomach from just laying down, and when Logan rested some of his body weight on Virgil, Virgil’s sympathetic nervous system kicked in. He stopped responding to the kiss as he flinched, stiffened, and whimpered. Hands from the Dark Sides started roaming his body, and the weight on top of him wasn’t Logan anymore, it was one of the Dark Sides. Virgil kept his eyes screwed shut, not wanting to see them again.

*I thought I was out of there! Why am I back, I don’t want to be back!! I want my boyfriends!! God, I just want my boyfriends back!! I miss them!! I want them, not the Dark Sides!! They’re safe, they’ll keep me safe! I don’t want to be back here, please God no, please!!!*

The weight lifted off Virgil almost instantly, and he could hear his name being called. He barely had time to try to grab onto the voice as he slipped into a flashback.

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Logan had felt the moment Virgil tensed, and leaned back up immediately, making sure to not have any of his weight on his beloved.

“Virgil, Virgil, can you hear me?” Logan’s heart shattered as he saw tears slip out of Virgil’s eyes. His face was screwed up in fear and small, frightened whimpers were leaving him.

“Virgil, please focus on my voice. Can you hear me?”

Virgil was curled in on himself, muscles taut, not responding to Logan as he began weakly crying. Logan felt sick.

*He had this reaction when we laid down. Perhaps sitting him up will help?*

“Virgil, I am going to touch you just enough to get you into a sitting position,” Logan warned before gently placing his hands on the smaller Side’s shoulders. Virgil flinched and cried out loudly and Logan yanked his hands back as though burned.
Patton and Roman came into the living room, concern growing once they saw the state Virgil was in.

“I believe he’s having a flashback. Patton, can you please fetch an ice cube? And Roman, please either summon or conjure a citrus-scented candle.”

Both Sides rushed to do as they were told. Logan kept calling Virgil’s name, to no success. Virgil lay in front of him, shivering and crying, and Logan was helpless to do anything about it.

“Please, love, open your eyes. Please Virgil. I love you so much, I swear I would let no harm come to you. Please open your eyes.”

Roman approached with a lemon candle, and Patton was back soon with an ice cube. After 20 minutes of coaxing, Virgil opened his eyes and flinched at the other Sides’ proximity. Roman and Patton backed away while Logan stayed where he was.

“Can you hear me Virgil?”

Virgil nodded, chest still hitching and tears still rolling down his face. Logan led Virgil through a grounding exercise and several breathing exercises before Virgil started calming down.

“How are you feeling Virgil?”

He hugged his middle miserably. “Not great,” he croaked.

“I am sorry to hear that. Is there anything we can do?”

Virgil shook his head. “I… um, I kinda want to see Remy and Saul?”

“You need not ask. We’d never restrict your access to such important people in your life.”

Virgil wiped at his face with his sleeve. “I know, I just… didn’t want to insult you guys or anything?”

“Nonsense. Humans require a large group of other humans in order to be happy. The idea that three people can fulfill all of your social needs is preposterous. We are not offended.”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. “O-okay. I think I’m gonna go to them?”

Logan nodded and smiled softly. “Do what is best for you.”

Virgil smiled at him and sank out. Logan collapsed back against the couch, wondering what he did wrong.

Chapter End Notes

Poor kiddos. Logan blames himself, Virgil tried to push himself because he felt bad, and it just went downhill. The desire to just "be better already!” is real, but unfortunately that's not how recovery works.

And let's also get rid of this notion that if you "trust/ love your partner enough", that can override any and all trauma and that someone "should" be able to be intimate with
them. It's an extremely harmful idea that's been floating around media that hurts victims/survivors. Trust is necessary, but it doesn't make trauma and trauma responses go away.
Hey folks!! Just a heads up, this chapter does have some discussions of sexual assault throughout, but nothing at all graphic. There's a character worried he sexually assaulted someone, but that did not occur. This character also accidentally engages in a bit of self-harm, but it's quick and he doesn't realize what he's doing even after the fact.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Virgil appeared in the Neutral Side of the mindscape with his arms wrapped around himself, shaking and pale. Saul and Remy were cuddling on the couch, watching The Bachelorette. When he appeared, they both turned to him and smiled.

“Virgil!”

“Hello darling.”

“Hey.” Virgil’s voice came out shaky. “Mind if I hang with you guys tonight?”

Saul and Remy frowned in concern. “Of course not babe. You okay?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, beginning to shake harder.

“Come here sugar,” Remy said gently. Virgil walked over as Remy and Saul moved away just enough so Virgil could sit in between them. Virgil plopped down on the couch and Remy and Saul immediately moved to hold him. Virgil closed his eyes and relaxed against his surrogate parents.

“I h-had a flashback.”

“Oh baby, I’m so sorry. You’re safe now, I promise,” Remy soothed. Saul just held him tighter.

They let Virgil cry into Remy’s shoulder quietly as he started recovering from the flashback enough to feel, just trying to make sure he felt safe and loved. Ten minutes later, Virgil had stopped crying and just had hiccupsing breaths.

Virgil sagged against Remy, exhausted. The hand rubbing his upper arm was grounding, and Saul’s large, firm presence behind and around him helped him feel safe.

“Feeling tired sugar?”

Virgil nodded.

“Okay. Want to stay with Saul tonight coffee bean? I have to go to work soon.”

Virgil wanted Remy there too, but knew Remy couldn’t just be off work because he was upset. Virgil leaned back into Saul’s embrace. Remy kept one hand on Virgil’s, gently swiping his thumb back and forth.

“It’s okay hun, I’ve got a little time before I have to go. Do you know what triggered the
Virgil grimaced. “I… yeah. I tried a different kind of kissing, and it went… not how I wanted it to go.”

“Oh sweetie, I’m so sorry. It’s okay.”

Virgil grunted. “No, it’s not okay. I want to be over this already! I’ve been working really fucking hard for over a year now, and I still can’t have someone on top of me? This is bullshit!”

“I’m so sorry my darling. I can’t imagine how frustrating that is for you.”

“It is!! And I love and trust my boyfriends, I know they won’t hurt me, god they’re so careful and they check in and shit, and I want them so bad, but I still freak the fuck out. Do I…” Virgil whimpered, “do I not love them, trust them? Maybe I don’t actually trust them…” Virgil said mostly to himself.

Saul pressed his face into the hair beneath him. “Shhhhhh, little one, I’m sure that’s not the case.”

“But I should be able to do whatever with them if I trust them! Why don’t I trust them? I thought I did!”

Remy leaned forward. “Honey, just because you trust someone doesn’t mean you’re ready to do anything with them. I was ready to fuck Saul before we even started dating, and Saul trusted me but needed some time before he was ready to have sex with me.”

That made Virgil pause. “You trusted Remy, but wanted to wait a while before you slept with him?”

“Yes,” Saul answered.

“So you trusted him, but weren’t ready to sleep with him?”

“Yes.”

Virgil relaxed back against Saul. “Huh.” He tried wrapping his brain around that and how it could apply to him before he gave up on it for now. “I’m still pissed I’m not better already.”

Saul squeezed him. “I think that’s normal, darling. From what I’ve read online, it seems to be a pretty common experience for people.”

Virgil just grumbled.

Saul chuckled. “My cranky little raccoon.”

That earned him a hiss, which only made him chuckle more. “What do you say we go to bed, darling?”

“Probably should.”

Saul gently disentangled himself from Virgil and stood. He kissed Remy goodnight and Virgil gave him a hug before Remy sank out. The two remaining Sides went to the master bedroom and bathroom to get ready for sleep. Once in bed, Saul lifted his arm and Virgil curled up and snuggled on his chest.

“Hey Saul?”
“Yes little one?”

“...can you summon Lucas for me?”

“Of course.”

A moment later, Virgil was holding his spider plushie and slowly drifting off to sleep. Saul stayed awake until his little brother was asleep on his chest, admiring the adorable Side, before he let his eyes close.

/////

Logan had just collapsed against the couch when Roman set the candle on the coffee table and sat next to his nerdy boyfriend.

“Love-”

“No Roman.”

Roman flinched, and Logan felt tears come to his eyes. I’ve just hurt two of my boyfriends. One more and I’ll have hurt all three.

“I apologize, my dear. There’s nothing that can be said that will make me feel better.”

Roman tilted his head and frowned. “Virgil will be okay, love.”

Logan’s hands clenched into fists. “I know, but he is not okay right now because of me.” His voice wavered in the last half of the sentence.

Roman carefully placed a hand on Logan’s shoulder. “I really don’t think it was your fault, my precious professor.”

Logan fought the urge to shake off Roman’s hand. I’m mad at myself, not him. “It was. We were kissing, he was ready to try something new, and then he had that horrendous flashback. I,” Logan had to stop to get his voice back under control, “I was on top of him. When I rested my weight on him, he had a flashback.” Logan bowed his head and tangled his hands in his hair. “I h-hurt him,” he said brokenly, tears breaking free and dripping onto his lap.

Patton sat next to Logan and placed his hands over Logan’s. “Baby, no. Please don’t tug on your hair.”

“I-” I deserve it. I hurt my boyfriend. I… assaulted my boyfriend. Logan loosened his fingers. Patton pulled Logan’s hands into his lap and kissed the top of his head where they’d been tangled while Roman moved his hand over to Logan’s far shoulder.

“Honey, you know he’s working through a lot. Some things might not work! He’s had a similar reaction with me when it got too intense.”

“As with me. We had to stop and relax for a little while before we could do anything else.”

Logan’s frown deepened. “Have either of those incidents resulted in fear and a re-experiencing of trauma?”

Roman shifted. “A little. He was reminded of his abuse at the hands of the Dark Sides.”

“Being reminded of something is one thing. Re-experiencing the trauma through a flashback
because of the intimate actions of your boyfriend is something else entirely.”

“Logan…”

Logan stood suddenly. “I apologize, I need some time alone.” He promptly sank out to his room.

He rose up in front of his bed, Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* emblazoned on it. It was a fluffy, particularly soft comforter he employed when he had a heavy workload. He snapped it into his hamper and manually replaced it with an old, thin, slightly scratchy plain blue blanket. He sat on it, letting his hands feel the uncomfortable texture. *I deserve this. I hurt Virgil.* He felt grief and guilt rise up from his stomach as he buried his face in his hands and sobbed. *I hurt my beloved. I love him, and I hurt him. I don’t deserve anything good. I don’t deserve my boyfriends. They’re too good, too pure for me.*

Logan allowed himself to sob for an hour before attempting to pull himself together. *I am Logic, I cannot be consumed by feelings.* Despite his best attempts, he was finding it difficult to calm down. He was agonized by the idea he’d hurt Virgil. After a fruitless two hours of trying to focus and stop crying, he recognized he needed help. *I am not being successful at calming down on my own.* He closed his eyes and sank out. He rose up in Roman’s room, thankful to find Roman wasn’t present. He stepped through the mirror leading to Dr. Picani’s office. Logan promptly went into the counseling room and sat on the couch, attempting to control his emotions as much as possible while utilizing a Kleenex tissue.

Dr. Picani walked in without fanfare, sensing how distraught Logan was. He sat down in his chair across from Logan.

“Hey Logan,” he said softly.

“Hello Dr. Picani. I apologize for my current state,” Logan sniffled.

“No need to apologize! Your feelings are real buddy. Feel free to cry as much as you’d like.”

Logan huffed. “That is the very root of the problem. I would like to stop crying. I am Logic, and I cannot be unproductive.”

“Alright. I think I might be able to help with that. Do you know why you’re crying?”

Logan had to bite the inside of his cheek for a minute before he could talk. “I hurt Virgil.”

“You care about him. The thought of hurting him hurts you.”

“Yes, I care for him very deeply.”

Dr. Picani smiled sadly. “I can tell. Let’s start by analyzing the situation. Can you tell me what happened?”

Logan took a deep breath, and let it out. “Certainly. Virgil and I were cuddling on the couch after dinner. He asked me to kiss him, which I happily did. We sat upright while kissing for 19 minutes. We were both becoming rather breathless and slightly light-headed, so I decided we needed to stop and breathe. Virgil requested we lie down and kiss. I asked for clarification, and he stated that he would like me on top of him. I agreed, but insisted he tell me if he became uncomfortable. We kissed again, and I slowly lowered us to the couch. When I rested some of my body weight on him, he became distressed, so I removed myself from him and attempted to receive a response by calling his name. When that didn’t work, I tried to help him sit up, since the change in position may have caused his flashback. That only made him make this,” Logan shuddered, “torturous sound, so I
pulled my hands back. I had Roman get a citrus-scented candle and Patton an ice cube. I called to him, but the flashback continued for another 21 minutes and 38 seconds.” Logan closed his eyes as his feelings caught back up with him. “I’m just like… just like them.”

Dr. Picani didn’t have to ask who “they” were. “I am so sorry you went through that. Seeing your loved one in pain, and feeling you caused it, is truly an awful experience. I want to back up a little and see what went on. You said you believe you hurt Virgil? Do you believe you violated his consent?”

Logan let out a sob and slapped a hand over his mouth. He gathered himself for a moment before whispering, “I assaulted him.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head, a confused frown on his face. “Did you? I’m not so sure you did. He consented, and when he became upset you got off him. I didn’t hear any part in that retelling where you crossed his boundaries. Am I missing something?”

Logan sniffled and shook his head, his hand still over his mouth to hide his expression. “He was so scared… And he was whimpering and crying… Flashbacks are the re-experiencing of events. And he had to go through that hell again. It’s not… fair! He doesn’t deserve that! It’s not his fault!”

Dr. Picani tilted his head sympathetically. He decided to take a bit of a risk. “You’re absolutely right, it’s not fair that he experienced the traumatic event in the first place, or that he has to re-experience it. It’s not his fault. It’s the fault of the people who hurt him. But those people can’t be punished any more than what they already are. Virgil’s continued suffering doesn’t have any impact on the suffering of the people who hurt him. Is that making you feel powerless?”

“Yes. Virgil shouldn’t have to suffer more! And I hurt him, I should be punished.”

Dr. Picani took a breath. “Are you wanting to punish yourself because the other people can’t be punished, and someone should be punished for hurting Virgil?”

“I… I suppose I am.”

Dr. Picani felt a small spark of hope. “Could your guilt be misplaced so you do have someone to punish?”

Logan looked down and lowered his hand. “I… could it?”

Almost. Almost there. “I didn’t hear one part of that story where you hurt Virgil.”

Logan was lost in thought for several minutes. Dr. Picani let the minutes pass, knowing Logan needed to process and think through everything.

“I suppose… that may be accurate.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “I think it’s a distinct possibility. It’s pretty common for the partners of victims/survivors of trauma to go through what you are experiencing.”

“I see.” Logan stood and extended his hand. “Thank you, I believe I need some time to think about things.”

Dr. Picani smiled, stood up, and shook Logan’s hand. “My pleasure! Let me know if you need help sorting through things in the future.”

“I will. Thank you again.” Logan nodded curtly and walked out of the room. Dr. Picani smiled. He
knew Logan had some work to do, but he was thrilled that he had been able to convince Logan he may not have harmed Virgil.

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Logan rose up outside Patton’s room and knocked on the door. A cheerful, “Come in!” sounded, and Logan went in.

Roman and Patton were cuddling on the bed in their pyjamas, looking at Logan expectantly.

Logan adjusted his glasses, slightly embarrassed. “I apologize for my recent behavior. I have spoken with Dr. Picani, and believe that I have come to an understanding of my emotions and the reasons behind them. May I stay with you tonight?”

“Of course Lolo!”

“I would love nothing more than to hold my loves in my arms.”

Logan nodded, snapped himself into his pyjamas, and curled up with his boyfriends. He still felt guilty, and he heard the other two Sides’ breathing even out while he was still wide awake. He fell asleep long after they did, unhappiness swirling in his abdomen.

Chapter End Notes

Some issues take a while to be resolved. These things don't go away so easily. It's easier to believe that you're bad and at fault and punish yourself than believe that the truly guilty monsters got away with it. Injustice in any form is one of the things that gets me off-kilter more than anything else, even to this day.
Hi folks! No warnings for this chapter, so enjoy!

Logan woke to the sound of hushed whispers.

“Okay padre, I’ll do my best.”

“Thanks Roro! I love you!”

“Love you too!”

Logan smiled to himself before remembering the events of the previous evening. He heard Patton exit the room and resolved to pretend to be asleep until Roman also left.

“I know you’re awake, nerd,” Roman said fondly.

So much for that.

Logan shifted and stretched, finding that he had moved to Roman’s chest sometime in the night. He looked up at Roman, who had begun running fingers through his hair. Roman reached over with his other hand and gave Logan his glasses.

“Thank you. And my apologies, I’m still rather… disconcerted from last night’s events.”

Roman smiled and kissed his forehead. “You won’t have to wait long to talk to Virgil. He’s already downstairs. You’ll be happy to know that he started the coffee pot.”

Logan hummed. “That is good to hear, however I do not know if he’ll appreciate my presence.”

Roman wrapped an arm around Logan and squeezed. “Love, I’m sure he doesn’t blame you.”

“He should.”

Roman breathed out, trying to soothe his frustration. We’re both too damn stubborn. “We’ve all done something to trigger him by accident in the past. Are we all at fault?”

Logan’s hand curled tightly in the silk fabric. “No, but this time-”

“Is it our fault he has trauma?” Roman interrupted.

“Well no, but I should-”

“You did as he asked and stopped the moment he wasn’t okay. I don’t think there’s anything else you could have done.”

Logan curled into Roman’s strong chest miserably. “I don’t want to remind him of the Dark Sides,” he whispered.
Roman kissed the top of his nerd’s head. “I think we would have seen it if that were true. We’ve been dating for almost 7 months now.”

Logan sighed. “I suppose that is true. I still feel… bad.”

“I think that’s normal, love. It’s not your fault that the Dark Sides are contemptuous bastards.”

Logan growled. “I wish we could kill them.”

“As do I, but…”

“We cannot,” Logan finished.

“Indeed. Virgil might actually kill us if we hurt Thomas.”

Both Logan and Roman chuckled at that. They lay in bed for a few minutes longer until they heard a few timid knocks on the door.

“Uh, hey guys? Breakfast is ready. Patton tried out some new stuff too.”

Logan froze.

“We’ll be down soon!” Roman called.

“Cool.”

Logan only relaxed his body when he heard Virgil walking away. He sat up, intending to get ready for the day, but was stopped by Roman’s hand.

“Logan, my brightest star, light of my life, sexy professor, beautiful bookworm-”

“What is it Roman?”

“-please do not blame yourself. Virgil doesn’t, I’m sure of it.”

Logan sighed. “I… will work on it.”

Roman let his hand fall away. “I will accept that.”

Logan huffed out a laugh and went to his room. His morning routine was far shorter than Roman’s, though if the expletives and occasional crash were anything to go by Roman was rushing through his. Logan, unsurprisingly, made it downstairs before Roman.

Virgil was helping Patton set everything out, and Logan headed straight for the coffee maker, desperately needing the caffeine before he attempted to see how Virgil was doing. From appearance, he appeared to be well, but Logan knew his ability to interpret emotions could use improvement.

Roman arrived, and everyone sat down for breakfast. Patton had made peach and brie tarts, as well as what looked like baked breakfast items in curled bread.

“It’s super easy! Just shove slices of potato bread into a muffin tin and put whatever you want in it!” Patton explained.

Logan appraised the selection before choosing one with eggs and bacon and another with sausage, eggs, cheese, and scallions. He kept an eye on Virgil throughout the meal, attempting to identify
any signs of distress. Although Virgil seemed tired, Logan was unable to note any indicators of emotional turmoil. *Though I always have been terrible at picking up on such cues.*

After breakfast, Thomas was working on learning some new editing software, so Logan paid attention to Thomas and opened the required instruction manual. Roman helped Virgil clean up the kitchen so Patton could work on storing the memories and information.

Just as Logan was getting comfortable and situated near the forefront of Thomas’ awareness, he felt the couch dip next to him. He looked over and raised his eyebrows in surprise when he saw Virgil. He distantly noted that they were in the exact same position as the previous day.

Virgil’s eyes widened slightly and he hunched in. “I, um, can I sit with you? I can go up to my room, do you want-”

Logan raised a hand. “It’s quite alright Virgil, I was merely surprised. You are of course welcome to sit with me.”

Virgil smiled hesitantly, but his eyes didn’t hold the same sparkle as they usually did. Logan returned to reading his manual and projected his awareness towards Thomas. He felt Virgil lean against him and help keep an eye on things.

Several hours later, Thomas took a break for lunch and Logan came back down. Virgil was still leaning against him.

Virgil cleared his throat. “Do you think he learned enough?”

“That depends. Enough for what?”

“Enough to do a good job editing.”

“For his current projects? Yes.”

“What if he makes mistakes?”

“Then we’ll fix them.”

“What if he’s confused when he tries to use it and can’t use it?”

“Then we’ll utilize the knowledge we have and the support team associated with the software.”

Virgil nodded and pressed into Logan. Logan noticed how tense his muscles were.

He studied Virgil’s face. “Breathe, dear.”

Virgil sucked in a breath and began his breathing exercises. After a few minutes, Virgil was much more relaxed. He turned up to face Logan. “Thanks L.”

Logan smiled at Virgil. “Not a problem, darling.”

Virgil returned his smile and made eye contact for several moments before asking, “Wanna kiss?”

Logan felt shock go through him like he had touched a live wire. “Do you want to?”

Virgil flinched and bit his lip, averting his eyes. “I-I mean yeah, but o-only, like, if you wanna too.” He started curling in on himself. “If you don’t w-wanna kiss me, I’d get it, I mean…” he trailed off.
Logan tilted his head down to try to make eye contact. “Virgil, I am not opposed to kissing you. It is just… unexpected, considering yesterday’s events when I,” he paused to think of the right words, “made you distressed.”

Virgil looked up at Logan out of the corner of his eye. “B-but that wasn’t your fault. Is that actually the reason?”

“Yes it was. And yes it is.”

Virgil turned to look at Logan head on, brows furrowed. “Babe, that wasn’t your fault.” Logan felt something… flutter inside his chest at the nickname. “I probably wasn’t ready. It’s not your fault the Dark Sides are fucking awful.”

Logan cursed his inability to tell if someone was lying. How do I know he’s telling the truth? He looked down at Virgil’s pale hands, aching to hold one. “I do not wish to become like a Dark Side to you.”

Virgil reeled back, eyes wide and neck extended backwards. Astonishment, Logan’s brain supplied. “I seem to have surprised you.”

Virgil stared at Logan for a moment before shaking his head. “I- yeah dude!! What the hell?! Why the fuck do you think I’d look at you like a Dark Side?!”

Logan averted his eyes as something twisted in his stomach, making him nauseous. Shame. Guilt. “I clearly frightened you yesterday,” he whispered. “I frightened you so badly you went into a long, involved flashback. Regardless of my intentions, it is the impact that matters, and my impact on you,” he swallowed thickly, “was traumatic.”

Virgil was silent for a moment before speaking. “That’s stupid.”

Logan snapped his head up. I may be many things, but stupid is not one of them! Virgil continued. “You actually think you made me have a flashback? I mean, yeah, lying down with you on top of me probably wasn’t the best idea, but that’s my fuckup. I just wanted to do something the Dark Sides took away from me, and I really shouldn’t have yet. But dude, you can’t know all my triggers, the Dark Sides made them. And I told you I’d be fine. You,” Virgil tilted his head at Logan, “do you think you hurt me or something?”

Logan’s eyes shot to the floor as his stomach clenched painfully. He heard Virgil take a breath. “Shit, Logan, I… holy shit, you’ve been thinking since yesterday that you hurt me?!”

Logan closed his eyes. “Yes.”

He was promptly tackle-hugged.

Virgil’s voice came out slightly muffled. “I know this is usually Patton’s thing, but fuck dude. You didn’t hurt me, I promise.”

Logan awkwardly brought a hand up and patted Virgil’s arm. “I… I see.”

“Do you though? I don’t want you to think I don’t feel safe around you or that you’re hurting me or anything.”

Logan sighed. “I will admit I still have… some fear of unintentionally harming you. But you have
convinced me that I did not harm you yesterday.”

Virgil squeezed Logan once more then leaned back, blushing slightly. “Good.” He smirked. “Now how ‘bout that kiss?”

Logan smiled and leaned down to connect their lips. He placed a hand on Virgil’s elbow and brushed his thumb along the side of it, earning him the expected shiver. Since the first time they had kissed, Logan had noticed the reaction and made an effort to frequently repeat the action. The kiss itself was slow, both Sides just savoring each other. The next kiss was a little faster, Logan still only having one hand on Virgil. Virgil let out a sound in the back of his throat. Before Logan could pull away to ask if he was okay, Virgil had pressed forward and twisted his hands in Logan’s polo.

They kissed for a few minutes longer before they sensed Thomas’ lunch wrapping up. Logan parted, rather displeased with his kissing of Virgil cut short. Virgil must have seen it on his face because he tapped Logan’s nose and chuckled out, “Dork.”

Logan smiled at him and reluctantly withdrew his hand. Logan picked his manual back up, sensing Thomas was going to try to figure out a feature of the software. He felt Virgil press insistently against his side, and when he looked down, he saw a pleading look. Unsure as to what Virgil wanted since they couldn’t kiss any more, he raised his arm experimentally. Sure enough, Virgil dove under it and cuddled against his chest. Logan let out a huff of laughter and returned to his reading.

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Virgil was in his room, only partially paying attention to what was going on in Thomas’ plane of existence. He had already given Thomas a little too much anxiety that morning, so he was letting some of that wear off before he did too much more.

_Goddammit, I’ve been working so fucking hard and those assholes are still hurting me!! I’m still so fucked up I can’t even be with my boyfriends like a good boyfriend would be! I’m just in their home, in their relationship, just being all fucked up while they’re so amazing and I can’t stop it. I want to be normal. I’m so tired of just being so fucking damaged I can barely function like an actual human. I’m fucking tired of being scared and having flashbacks and dissociating and shit. Goddammit!!_

Virgil nearly jumped out of his bed when someone knocked on his door.

“Hey honey! Want to help me bake macarons?”

Virgil inhaled slowly, held it, then exhaled. He smiled at the thought of Patton and macarons.

“Sounds awesome Pat, I’ll be down in a minute?”

“Okay! Love you baby!”

“Love you too.”

He heard Patton giggle and move away from the doorway, which made Virgil smile despite the frustration weighing him down. He got up from his bed, changed into the shirt with the cutout that Patton really liked, and went downstairs. Sure enough, when Patton turned around, he turned bright red and stopped in the middle of whatever he was saying.
Virgil smirked. “Like what you see?”

Patton gulped. “Yeah,” he said hoarsely.

Virgil huffed out a laugh and walked up to Patton, joining their lips together in a kiss. Virgil noticed this kiss was much sloppier than Patton’s usual kisses and how he kept his hips facing the stove.

Patton pulled back slightly abruptly. “I need a few brain cells left to make these,” he joked.

Virgil laughed quietly. “Fair enough.”

Patton led Virgil through how to make macarons, and soon enough they had four cookie sheets filled with them. They ended up making vanilla, lemon, chocolate, lavender, and peppermint macarons. While they were in the oven, Virgil sat down so he could watch them and Patton sat next to him. Patton tilted his head.

“Can I rub your back, baby?”

“Yeah, that’s fine.”

Patton rubbed Virgil’s back for a few silent moments before speaking. “What’s going on chocolate chip?”

Virgil frowned and looked at him. “What do you mean?”

Patton smiled and ruffled his hair, earning him a small hiss. “Call it dad instinct. You were a little withdrawn at lunch and you’re still not your usual self. Did something happen this morning?”

Virgil sighed and returned to looking at the macarons. They had already risen a little. “Logan told me about how bad he felt after I freaked the fuck out last night. I think I helped him feel a little better. But I’m tired of being… a fucking mess all the goddamn time!! I’ve been working my ass off for over a year and I still can’t get my shit together? What the fuck?”

Patton sighed sympathetically. “I know baby. I’m sorry you feel so stuck. But you’ve come so far, you really have!”

“Ugh, I know, thank fuck for that!! It took me so fucking long to date you, and so much longer to kiss you! Fucking finally, right?” he joked. He sobered up. “But there’s so much I still can’t do, and that sucks.”

“It does suck! I know it’s frustrating to not be able to do everything you want. But you have so much more to look forward to! Think of it like that! You can be waiting on pins and needles for all these fun and amazing things that you’ll be able to experience! You have a lot yet to experience, and I can’t wait until you do!”

_Huh. That’s a different way of thinking about it. I’m still pissed off that I’m broken, but… fuck, Patton’s using his hopeful, starry eyes. I have to at least try._ He smiled. “Thanks, I’ll try to remember that.”

Patton smiled at Virgil. “I’m glad baby. I know it’s not easy, and it’s still going to be frustrating, but I’m proud of you. You’ll get there.” Patton squeezed Virgil’s shoulder as the oven timer went off.

Once the cookies cooled, Virgil helped Patton pipe the filling onto the cookies and stack them.
Both Patton and Virgil got passionate minty kisses from Roman and sweet chocolate kisses from Logan.

Chapter End Notes

Virgil's getting so much more confident! The bois all still have stuff they need to work through, but they're working through stuff with each other and how precious is that? Nothing's magically fixed, but it's getting better.
Virgil limped into Jealousy’s room, clothed in basketball shorts and a t-shirt, and scared out of his mind. He’d been allowed an entire day of rest in the bathroom, not being forced to service anyone. He’d even been given more than water and stale, moldy bread! The only demand was that he shower repeatedly. Virgil had followed the orders, making sure that he was squeaky clean. As much as he appreciated the reprieve, the dread of what was to come made the break not worth it.

Virgil noticed candles set up as he limped in, his toes in constant pain and his lower half still protesting from Deceit’s “training.” Virgil distantly noted that there were posters of Evanescence handing on Jealousy’s walls; Thomas’ friend had been able to go to their concert while 15-year-old Thomas hadn’t. The lights were dimmed and there was some strong perfume floating through the air. It was sickly sweet and made Virgil want to gag as it suffocated him.

Jealousy emerged from a shadowed corner of the room, clad in only a short green bathrobe. He was smiling a full, soft smile that Virgil knew from experience was more fragile than a wine glass.

Jealousy strode up to Virgil, ran his hands down Virgil’s arms, and kissed him. Virgil opened his mouth, not wanting to anger the older Side. Jealousy swiped his tongue over every inch of Virgil’s mouth as his hands trailed lower and lower. Finally, they found what they were looking for and started fondling Virgil. After a few moments, Jealousy pulled back, the corners of his lips turned down.

“Am I not good enough for you?” Jealousy asked dangerously.

Virgil scrambled to respond. “N-no sir! You’re v-very good to m-me! I’m just… nervous! I w-want to m-make you feel good t-too!”

Jealousy stared at Virgil unwaveringly. Virgil was about to collapse when Jealousy finally smiled.

“Good. I’m glad to hear it. Come on, let’s go to bed, hm?”

“Yes sir.”

Jealousy tightened his grip on Virgil’s arm painfully and pulled him forward. “Call me Jealousy,” he hissed.

“Yes Jealousy.”

Jealousy smiled that soft smile again. “Good boy.”

Virgil shivered; he’d just had his 10th “birthday”, and he hated being reminded how much younger and smaller he was compared to the other Sides. He dutifully sat on the bed, noting the
sheets had been freshly laundered.

“We’re going to savor our time together. We only have 5 days. Let’s make the most of it.”

Jealousy laid down and gestured Virgil over. Virgil wasn’t exactly sure what Jealousy wanted, so he crawled up and put his legs on either side of Jealousy’s hips, guessing by the tenting fabric he was expected to get Jealousy off sooner rather than later.

Jealousy ran his hands up and down Virgil’s sides and back, before moving to his front, apparently trying to touch every inch of him.

“Kiss me,” he ordered. Virgil wasted no time in leaning down and pressing his lips to Jealousy’s. He opened his mouth when Jealousy ran his tongue on the seam of his lips. Suddenly, Jealousy bucked up, rubbing and grinding himself against Virgil. That, Virgil was used to; the tongue running over every surface of his mouth and nearly making him dry-heave was something he knew he’d never get used to. ‘At least they trained out my gag reflex early on,’ he thought dully.

Jealousy spent a half hour kissing and touching Virgil, ordering Virgil how to touch him.

Jealousy pulled back. “Let’s get this party started, shall we?”

“Yes s-Jealousy.”

“Stand up.”

Virgil quickly stood by the bed, hands behind his back, head down.

“Take off your clothes. Slowly. And look at me! We’re lovers, you’re supposed to be in love with me!”

Virgil snapped his head up and met Jealousy’s seafoam green eyes. He started by slowly pulling off his shirt. By the way Jealousy’s eyes hungrily raked over his form, he figured he was doing an okay job.

He slowly pushed his shorts down and stepped out of them, the small amount of hardness Jealousy had managed to achieve in Virgil quickly slipping away.

“Turn around, bend over, and show me what you want to give me.”

Virgil felt strangely nauseous as he did as he was told.

“Beg me for it.”

Virgil swallowed and started saying the things he knew Jealousy liked. Jealousy talked right back, filth spewing from his mouth, telling him how desperate Virgil was for his cock and how good he made Virgil feel.

“Turn around.”

Virgil slowly turned to face him and meet his eyes. Jealousy stared at Virgil for a few moments longer before laying back.

“Undress me.”

Virgil walked over and straddled Jealousy’s legs again, undoing the tie in the robe and exposing Jealousy’s red, weeping cock. He met Jealousy’s eyes, waiting for his next instruction.
Jealousy sighed happily. “You’re such a good boyfriend, baby. No one will ever treat you like I do, remember that. Get on all fours, on the bed.”

Virgil moved into position as Jealousy got up behind him. Virgil heard the cap of something be opened and had to stop himself from jumping when he felt Jealousy spread him apart to look at him.

“God, that looks so tight,” he murmured. “Still red and bleeding a little, but I’ll be gentle. I love you so much Virgil.”

“I love you too,” Virgil echoed back.

Virgil was confused when he felt something wet and cold touch his still-injured hole, but he forced himself to stay still. Jealousy kept his finger there for a moment before pushing the entire digit in. Virgil expertly remained unmoving; he’d had worse. Jealousy took his time, wriggling his finger around and thrusting it in and out. After a few minutes, he pushed a second finger in. Virgil was more unfamiliar with this act, but he knew better than to voice his confusion.

He felt Jealousy adjust his angle and move his fingers in a strange way until he hit Virgil’s prostate. Virgil felt tears spring to his eyes; no matter how many times they did it, he always hated it when they forced him to get hard and use his own body against him.

Jealousy was relentless in attacking Virgil’s prostate; within a few minutes he had Virgil to half-hardness. Jealousy removed his fingers and Virgil relaxed, thinking that part was over. He jumped when Jealousy plunged three fingers in.

Jealousy just chuckled. “Sorry Virgil, I guess I should have given you more warning.” He worked in his pinky finger, and Virgil just tried to survive the experience. He had no idea how much time passed before Jealousy withdrew his fingers, Virgil’s own cock almost completely hard.

Jealousy moved him to the side while he laid back down. “Ride me. I know you want it so bad, I’ll give it to you. I’m not going to come until you do. I stretched and lubed you, so it won’t hurt.”

Virgil bit the inside of his mouth to stop from sobbing. As much as he hated being forced to get hard, he hated being forced to come more. As he sunk down, he was unsurprised at the massive amount of pain he felt, although it was admittedly less than if he hadn’t been stretched and lubed.

By the end of the first hour, Jealousy had kept his promise. By the end of the five days, after many different positions, Virgil knew he’d never be able to truly make love with anyone.

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Virgil woke up with a gasp. He felt someone next to him and almost started crying.

I’m back, I’m back, how did they get me back? Are the Light Sides okay?! Oh god, what happened?! The Light Sides got hurt because of me. I deserve this. I deserve to be used. I deserve to be hurt and fucked. I’m disgusting. I’m so gross. I never should have gone to the Light Sides. I should be hidden away in the Dark, available for anyone who wants to use me.

Virgil’s night vision slowly came into focus, and he was able to make out a comforter with the pattern of Vincent Van Gogh’s *Starry Night*. Virgil’s mind spun as he tried to remember which Dark Side had that on his bed when he decided to risk a glance at the sleeping form next to him.

Logan.
Virgil felt tears well up in his eyes for a new reason. They ran down his face as the tension in his chest released. He could still feel someone pounding into him from behind, hands running over him, a thick tongue in his mouth, a stomach and chest moving over his back…

Virgil hugged himself and shivered as he tried to do his breathing exercises. He felt himself getting more and more worked up as time went on, however.

He looked at Logan’s motionless head nervously. He said I can wake him up any time if I need him. But won’t he be pissed if I interrupt his sleep schedule? I shouldn’t wake him up. I’m not going to do that to him. He deserves better.

Virgil kept trying to calm himself down, but the flashback wouldn’t leave.

I’m going to wake him up one way or another. May as well try to make this less sudden. Virgil placed a hand on Logan’s shoulder and started gently shaking him. His breath started hitching more and more the longer it seemed Logan wouldn’t wake up. Just when he was about to give up, Logan sucked in a breath and furrowed his brow. Virgil removed his hand and curled into himself as Logan shifted, waking up. He tried to get his breathing under control, but he knew he sounded pathetic.

Logan groaned and opened his eyes. “Wha… Virgil? Somethin’ wrong?”

“I… um, I think I had a flashback?”

Logan was awake in a second. “Oh darling, may I turn the lights on?”

Virgil nodded his head before realizing Logan couldn’t see him. “Please?”

“Of course.”

Logan waved his hand and the room was filled with bright light. They both squinted their eyes at the sudden change, with Logan looking over to Virgil.

“What do you need, darling?”

“I-I don’t know.”

“Okay. Can we try a grounding exercise?”

Virgil nodded. Logan led him through a grounding exercise and a breathing exercise. “How are you feeling now?”

“M still feeling them a little? I’m sorry.”

“Do not apologize. I am so sorry you’re experiencing that. Can we try a few more grounding exercises?”

“Yeah.”

Logan helped Virgil through 4 more grounding exercises until he felt more present.

“Thank you Logan,” Virgil said, voice still thick. I’ll never be able to be with them. Not really. God, I want to so bad, but I can’t. I was so scared, it hurt so bad, it felt so bad and so gross and I’m gross. I don’t deserve him. I can’t give him what he needs. I can’t even let him use me the way I’m meant to be used. He doesn’t even get any stress relief out of it. Poor Logan. I’m so sorry
“No need to thank me. I am merely happy to be able to help. Would you like to cuddle or would you like space?”

Virgil let out a sob. “Please hold me.”

Logan pulled Virgil against his chest and held him tightly. “Is this good?” he whispered.

Virgil nodded against his chest. He whimpered. *I’m still so scared and upset and hurt, why? It’s not happening anymore, it’s not happening anymore…*

“Tell me I’m safe,” Virgil said against his will.

Logan brought a hand up to the back of Virgil’s head and started rubbing it. “You’re safe, sweet moonlight, I promise you are. We will keep you safe, you’re safe with us. We love you so much.”

Logan kept repeated reassurances into Virgil’s hair as he started crying in earnest, apologizing for waking up Logan in the first place, to which Logan insisted he need not apologize and instead praised him for. After a half hour, Virgil finally calmed down enough to where he wasn’t crying anymore.

Logan kissed the top of his head. “How are you feeling now, my moon?”

Virgil blushed at the nickname. “I’m better. Th-thanks L. I’m sorry.”

“My dear, you’ve nothing to apologize for. You just re-experienced a horrific trauma. I am so proud of you that you were able to identify you needed help, formulated a plan to get that help, and carried out that plan.”

*Well, shit, when you put it like that… “I-I guess.”*

Logan just kissed the top of his head again. “I love you so much Virgil.”

Virgil tilted his head up. He studied Logan’s sharp features, his deep espresso eyes, the strong line to his jaw. *This isn’t Jealousy. This is Logan.* “I love you too L,” he whispered.

Logan smiled down at him, and Virgil turned his head back down into a more comfortable position. Logan squeezed him and massaged the back of his head, causing a rumble to emanate deep from Virgil’s chest. Virgil felt a breath on the top of his head from a poorly-muffled laugh, though he couldn’t find it in himself to care. He curled up a little more, getting comfortable, as he felt Logan start to slowly drift off. He wasn’t able to fall back asleep, too frightened and upset still, so he just enjoyed the feeling of warmth, comfort, and safety he found in Logan’s arms.

Chapter End Notes

Having a flashback nightmare sucks. It can be hard to wake up someone if they’re around, but it’s okay. They would rather have you wake them up and let them help you.
Hi folks! We have a bit of dissociation in this chapter, but that's about it for warnings!

Virgil felt Logan shift as he awoke. He just watched as his boyfriend slowly woke up, his eyes moving behind his eyelids, his face scrunching up slightly, the little grunts that came from him. Virgil’s heart melted when Logan hugged him tighter as he woke up.

Logan snuffled a few times before opening his eyes and looking blearily down at Virgil. “You awake already?” he mumbled, voice still gravely from sleep.

Virgil hummed. “Yeah, I didn’t end up going back to sleep,” he said quietly, not wanting to break the tranquility.

Logan frowned slightly. “Love, you could have woken me up.”

“It’s fine, it probably wouldn’t have made much of a difference. I usually can’t get back to sleep after one of those anyways.”

Logan’s frown deepened. “Hmmmm, I wonder if there’s a way to help ensure sleep. Sleep is both the best preventative health measure and treatment.”

“I’ll be fine L. I’m still getting more sleep that I’m used to.”

“I am glad to hear that.” Logan tightened his arms around Virgil and kissed the top of his head. They lay there in the peace and quiet until they heard Roman’s hairdryer turn on.

“I suppose we should head downstairs for breakfast?” Logan asked.

Virgil moaned quietly and gripped Logan’s shirt. Too warm and safe. Want to stay. Logan huffed out a laugh.

“I am sorry my dear, but we should get ready for the day.”

Virgil groaned but pushed himself up. Logan leaned up with Virgil. He smiled softly, completely unguarded, at Virgil and rubbed his back, studying his face. Virgil returned the smile, sharing a quiet, intimate moment together. After a few more seconds, Logan had to break the spell they were under in order to go to his bathroom. Virgil watched him leave, then got up, stretched, and went to his own room.

Once he was cleaned and dressed for the day, he went downstairs, feeling a little foggy. I hope Logan figures something out. I’m tired of being tired all the damn time.

Patton was whipping up a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes. Virgil walked in and smiled.

“Hey Pat. Smells great. Want any help?”
Patton beamed at Virgil. “Sure! Can you hand me some chocolate chips, chocolate chip?”

Virgil snorted and blushed at the nickname and handed Patton the bag, who set it on the counter next to him. Virgil raised an eyebrow.

“Did you say that just for the pun?”

“Maaaaayyyybe.”

Virgil chuckled and grabbed a cup of coffee. He ended up taking over the eggs and covering the completed pancakes, feeling strangely disconnected from his actions, just as Roman burst into the kitchen.

“HELLO, LOVELY LORDS!”

Virgil jumped. “Jesus Christ Princey, what?!”

Roman just smiled. “It is wonderful to see you, for we were apart for so long!”

“...it was like, 10 hours.”

“Exactly! I nearly perished!”

Virgil rolled his eyes fondly and leaned up to plant a quick kiss on Roman’s lips. He had to pull away before he got too distracted by the royal’s passion.

“Feel better?” he asked bemused, slightly red in the face.

Roman smirked. “Very much so,” he rumbled.

Virgil felt his face and ears turn hot as he turned back to face the stove. Logan came down the stairs soon after and grabbed a mug of coffee for himself.

Virgil got a plate for himself and was feeling numb and foggy. He filled his own plate, grabbed some silverware, and sat down before he realized what he’d done.

*I only grabbed stuff for myself. I didn’t actually set the table.*

Virgil stood up and looked around. The other Sides were grabbing their own utensils and plates, seemingly undisturbed by Virgil’s forgetfulness. Virgil took a few deep breaths to steady himself and sat back down, looking at his food. His appetite had decreased somewhat, from the combination of the flashback nightmare, lack of sleep, and his anxiety, but he forced himself to clear off most of his plate. As he pushed around the last few bites of food, he realized what was wrong.

*Oh. I depersonalized.*

Virgil observed his hands; they looked like they didn’t belong to him, like he was in a video game. He felt like he was floating and leaning to the side. *Fuck. How long will it take to go away this time?*

Virgil did his best to pay attention to the other Sides, but he was fading in and out of conversation. One second they were talking, the next they were cleaning up plates.

“Baby? Are you okay?”
Virgil looked over at Patton, who was watching him with a concerned expression.

Virgil smiled. “Yeah Pat, I’m fine. Just a little out of it.”

“Do you want to do a grounding exercise?”

Virgil shook his head. “Nah, it’s not that bad, it’ll go away soon. I’m just gonna hang out in my room for a bit.”

Patton nodded, clearly still concerned. “Okay honey, just let us know if you need anything.”

“I will.”

And with that, Virgil smiled again at Patton and sank out to his room. He grabbed Shelly and flopped on the bed, putting the plastic spider on his chest. He waved his hand to put on some Avril Lavigne and pulled up Tumblr on his phone. Ever since Logan had fixed the Tumblr app so it actually fucking worked, he found himself enjoying Tumblr a lot more. He’d been on the app for an hour when his phone beeped with a message. He jumped and read it.

*Coffee Bitch: Hey gurl!! Wanna hang out today???!?! <3 <3*

Virgil bit his lip and texted back, worry swirling in his gut.

*Sor...
reached 5 spots forward, which just so happened to be where Logan’s piece was. He paused, his own purple piece hovering just behind Logan’s blue piece, before he flicked his wrist and knocked it over. He watched as Logan’s spirit left his body.

“I had almost won.”

“I know.”

Logan just stared at Virgil as he moved his own piece back to the start. Virgil had another piece in play that wouldn’t have knocked anyone off the board, but where’s the fun in that? Besides everyone had a piece knocked off the board at some point during the night (except Patton, because he’s Patton).

It came down to a race between Roman and Virgil, in which Virgil won at the last second and Roman pouted. Patton wrapped his arms around Roman and peppered his face with kisses, which seemed to cheer him up. Since it was their fifth game, with everyone having won at least once, they decided to wind down with a movie. Logan got to the DVD player first and put in an episode of *Cosmos*. While Logan got that started, Roman and Patton carried the empty pizza boxes to the kitchen and Virgil helped carry out some popcorn. They sat together on the sofa, with Roman and Virgil in the middle. Roman had his arm wrapped around Virgil and was holding him against his chest and shoulder while Patton leaned against Roman’s other side. Logan sat down next to Virgil and started massaging the back of his neck, earning a deep, contented rumble from Virgil. The spent the episode cuddling, Roman and Patton stealing kisses from one another.

At the end of the episode, Logan declared it was time for them to go to sleep. Everyone reluctantly detangled themselves from each other and got up, stretching and helping clean up the food. They wandered upstairs and bid Patton goodnight first, everyone giving him a quick kiss. They made it to Virgil’s room next, but Virgil kept walking.

He looked behind him expectantly, as the two Light Sides were stopped in front of his door confused. “What are you waiting for?” he smirked.

Roman and Logan jerked forward and followed Virgil, who stopped in front of Roman’s door. The two Light Sides nearly crashed into him.

“I was thinking I’d stay with Roman tonight?” Virgil asked, suddenly shy about his previous boldness.

Logan just smiled gently. “I am not offended Virgil.”

Virgil smiled back and leaned up to kiss him. “Thanks L. I’ll see you tomorrow. Night.”

“Goodnight Virgil.” Logan leaned over and kissed Roman. “Goodnight, my prince.”

Roman puffed out his chest at the nickname. Logan chuckled as he walked away. Virgil waved at him and turned back to Roman.

Roman put on an overly-confident smile and waggled his eyebrows. “Shall we, my love?”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah.”

Roman led them into his room, Virgil a little nervous about his plan.

“Uh, hey Ro?”
Roman smiled softly. “Yes my love?” He seemed to note Virgil’s nervousness a moment later. He stepped forward and cupped Virgil’s cheek in his hand. “Are you alright? We will not do anything you’re not comfortable with.”

Virgil smiled at Roman. “I know. I’m just… not used to being so…”

“Forward?”

Virgil nodded his head, earning an endeared smile from the more-experienced Side.

“I can assure you, my sweet, that you are doing quite well. I’m quite enjoying your advances.”

Virgil blushed slightly. “Wanna get on the bed?”

“I do.”

Virgil leaned up and kissed Roman, letting Roman lead the kiss until it was fiery. They pulled apart for breath and Virgil stepped out of the embrace. He raised his hand, hoped his practice would pay off, and snapped into a purple v-neck t-shirt and tight black skinny jeans. Roman’s eyes widened and his mouth opened, gaze unashamedly looking Virgil up and down, drinking in the sight. Feeling more confident, though still a little embarrassed, he smiled and walked backward until he reached the head of the bed, and climbed on. Roman was in a daze, and it took himself a second longer to shake himself out of it to follow Virgil.

Roman crawled up next to Virgil. Virgil wound his arms around Roman’s neck and kissed him again, this time leading, doing his best to make the kiss hot and heavy. He knew he still wasn’t ready for tongue or to have someone over him, but there was one thing he had in mind.

Virgil pulled back, Roman letting out a small moan. Virgil huffed a laugh against his prince’s lips. “Can I straddle you?” he asked, trying not to hide his face immediately after.

“I would love that!” Roman enthusiastically acclaimed.

Virgil chuckled and pushed at Roman’s shoulders until he was laying back against the bed. Virgil swung his leg over Roman’s hip hesitantly and stopped. Roman had a blush going across his cheekbones, highlighting the faint freckles there. His eyes were sparkling and he was panting slightly.

Maybe I’d like being on top.

Virgil shook the sudden thought from his head and brushed a hand through soft brown hair. “This okay?” he asked.

Roman nodded eagerly. Virgil snorted and lowered himself to kiss Roman. They took turns leading the kiss, the expected fire and passion there tenfold. Virgil was running his hands through Roman’s hair, rubbing at some parts and causing moans to leave the larger man. Roman was letting his hands wander Virgil’s body, never going lower than his waist. Large, strong hands were rubbing and gripping everywhere and Virgil was helpless against the pleasure that was washing over him. He could only let out increasingly louder and higher-pitched sounds and try to put what he was feeling into his kisses with Roman. He felt like he couldn’t catch his breath, and he never wanted to. His skin was buzzing, mind clouded with arousal, and it was all he could do to reciprocate the thrill he was receiving from the man below him. Every touch seemed to set his smouldering skin on fire where Roman’s hands touched and Virgil couldn’t get enough.
Virgil pushed against Roman and felt an answering arousal. Not wanting to ruin the moment, he canted his hips away and settled for lowering the rest of his body on Roman’s, knowing he could support the weight. Roman moaned in delight and pulled Virgil closer. They were lost in each other, feeling consumed by an inferno, when Virgil pulled back and started placing little open-mouthed kisses and kitten licks along the strong jawline. Roman moaned loudly and gently placed a hand on the back of Virgil’s head, using his other to keep touching the rest of his body.

When Virgil got to Roman’s neck, Roman arched and whined. He felt Virgil smile against his neck and attack it mercilessly, kissing and licking up and down the side of his neck with the barest scrape of teeth. Virgil kept his touches light, but to Roman every touch was like being struck by lightning; having a handsome, courageous, drop-dead sexy man lavish him with such affection was making him grow embarrassingly hard without a single touch. Virgil reconnected their lips, and the heat changed from an out-of-control forest fire to a warm campfire. They continued to kiss for several more minutes, slowing the movements of their hands and lips, until they parted.

Virgil peered down at Roman through half-lidded eyes. Roman’s eyes were also half-lidded. His hair was sticking up everywhere, messy from where Virgil had been running his hands through it. His cheeks were tinted red, and his lips looked almost bruised. Virgil was certain he looked similar to Roman.

Roman ran a hand through Virgil’s hair and moved it to rest on his check. “Shall we retire for the night?”

Virgil nodded and yawned.

Roman laughed quietly. “Allow me some time in the bathroom. Feel free to borrow some sweatpants from the dresser.”

Virgil nodded, quickly kissed Roman one more time, and swung his leg over so Roman could stand. Virgil caught sight of the tent in Roman’s pants as he made his way to the opulent bathroom. Once the door had closed, Virgil hopped off the bed and walked over to the dresser, his own arousal rather painfully apparent. He got out of his clothes as quickly as he could and changed into sweatpants, hurrying back to the bed and under the covers so Roman wouldn’t have to see his little problem. Virgil rested against the plush pillows and closed his eyes, waiting for his boyfriend to emerge from the bathroom. He’d almost fallen asleep when the bathroom door finally opened, revealing a suspiciously put-together Roman.

Roman crawled in beside Virgil and lifted his arm, Virgil quickly snuggled and curled up against his chest. Roman wrapped both arms around the thin figure and kissed the top of his head. Virgil sighed, feeling safe and protected.

“Good night, my darkest angel.”

“Night Ro.”

Chapter End Notes

Dissociative brain fog is soreal

Remy is how good friends respond when you say you're not feeling well. No guilt-tripping, no making yourself the center of attention. He responded wonderfully.
I hope you enjoyed!! For a shameless self-plug, you can find me here on Tumblr!
Chapter 114

Chapter Notes

Hey folks, we've got a rough chapter ahead. There's a section contained by lines of tildes that's not italicized where a flashback is discussed in detail, and also includes a character becoming nauseous. Outside of that, there are implications of sexual assault, as well as a character witnessing a flashback. Please take care of yourselves! <3

Logan had just reached the bottom of the stairs when he made eye contact with Virgil. He'd been struggling to balance Thomas’ social needs with his work all morning, but his handsome boyfriend sending him a soft smile released the tension from his shoulders and back.

Virgil pulled his headphones down and rested them on his shoulders. He walked up to Logan, frowning at his chest.

“Hey L, your tie’s a little crooked. Let me fix that for you.”

Logan’s eyebrows twitched, surprised, but he agreed. Virgil took several steps closer, staring at him from underneath his eyelashes, barely an inch away. Logan longed to close the distance, but he was frozen in place by Virgil’s enchanting gaze. Without breaking eye contact, Virgil slowly brought his hand up and under the tie, brushing against Logan’s chest as he did so. He moved the tie back and forth a little, obviously not focused on correcting it at all. The movement of Virgil’s fingers back and forth was light, almost ticklish, but made Logan feel like he’d been hit with jumper cables at every point of contact, the stare making heat pool in his lower abdomen.

Pressure was slowly rising from his hips up to his chest, making Logan feel flushed, almost feverish. Virgil dragged his hands up Logan’s chest to adjust his collar, then slowly dragged his fingertips over Logan’s clavicle and rested open hands on his shoulders. He leaned up for a kiss, and Logan closed his eyes, relaxing his lips.

Then, Virgil was gone.

Logan almost stumbled forward when he opened his eyes. Virgil was back on the couch, scrolling through Tumblr. Patton walked out of the kitchen, sweating slightly. When Patton turned to smile at Logan, Virgil sent him a wicked smirk.

“Hey guys!! I’m making pasty dough! We’re gonna be having Finnish mining pasties tonight!”

“That sounds so cool! So we’ll be eating like miners?”

“Yep! Except the miners ate the pasty from one corner while holding the other corner in one hand. Then, they threw away the corner for the mine gremlins to eat, or else they’d get sick! They thought it was angry mine gremlins cursing them, but there was actually arsenic in the mine dirt and their hands were dirty, so by throwing away that one corner they were keeping themselves safe! Although no throwing pasty bread away!”

“Not even at Roman?”
Patton crossed his arms and looked at Virgil over his glasses.

“Ugh, fine.”

Logan wasn’t able to contribute, too destabilized to think of any words.

“Wanna help me make lunch sweetie?”

“Sure Pat, I’m free.”

Virgil walked into the kitchen as Patton turned to Logan. He frowned and tilted his head.

“Your tie’s crooked. You okay baby?”

////////

Logan had moved into the kitchen and summoned his tablet to continue working. Throughout the preparation of lunch, Patton and Virgil casually shared small kisses, one or both of them giggling. Despite his own attempts to silently request a kiss from Virgil, Virgil either hadn’t noticed or hadn’t wanted to. Which was fine, it really was! Logan just couldn’t help a nagging little voice in the back of his mind saying that Virgil was upset with Logan for some reason. He’d had no problem kissing Patton, and when Roman had entered the kitchen Virgil had given him a rather passionate kiss. Logan knew it was illogical, as most feelings were, but he couldn’t help a sinking feeling in his chest as the voice in the back of his head became louder.

What if he doesn’t love me as much as the others? I’m cold, terrible at reading emotions, not as good at helping Virgil as Roman and Patton, I’m certainly less attractive. Has he realized he does not want to be in a relationship with me any more? I could hardly blame him. And-

He was jolted out of his thoughts by a hand on his shoulder. By the black nail polish, he identified it as Virgil’s.

“You okay Lo?” Virgil asked with a frown.

Logan cleared his throat. “I’m quite alright Virgil.”

“You don’t look alright.”

Logan looked down, gathering his thoughts. “I am simply experiencing illogical thoughts that are causing me to feel rather insecure.”

“Hey, that’s my job,” Virgil joked as Patton made concerned noises.

“Apologies. I am just feeling… less than adequate.”

Virgil’s frown deepened. “In what way?”

Logan sighed through his nose. “The voice is telling me that I’m not as attractive or desirable as a partner.”

Virgil was frozen for a moment before he put a hand on the back of Logan’s head and pulled him into a searing kiss. Logan was left slightly breathless.

“I will physically fight your brain if I have to,” Virgil said seriously.

Logan smiled and huffed out a laugh. “I appreciate it.”
“You’re an amazing boyfriend Lo.”

“I love you so much!!!”

“I can assure you, you are very desirable, my gorgeous genius.”

Logan’s small smile grew. “Thank you, I am feeling better now.”

“Good,” Virgil said as he booped Logan’s nose, causing an error screen to pop up. Logan managed to restart his systems when a plate with a grilled sandwich was set in front of him. After lunch, Roman pulled Logan into a long, hot kiss, and Patton took him upstairs to show him just how attractive he found Logan.

\\\\

Virgil was biting his thumb nail, pacing in his room. He knew the others were downstairs, Logan and Patton in the kitchen as Logan experimented with different macaron flavors, and Roman writing in his journal, trying to parse down a script.

He knew Roman wouldn’t do anything that he didn’t want, but that wasn’t the problem. No, Virgil was worried his own response would deter Roman from approaching him. He hadn’t missed how cautious Roman had gotten over the past few weeks.

Come on, this is the normal progression of relationships. You’re not asking him to fuck you, you’re just going to learn how to kiss with tongue. It’s not that big of a deal.

Then why am I scared? I do want this, but I’m scared.

Because you’re a pathetic little bitch?

Shut up.

Hey, I’m not the one about to cry from the thought of kissing my boyfriend.

Shut up!

Awwwww, what’s the matter, is the little baby gonna cry?

Fuck off!!

You had a couple of bad experiences with the Dark Sides using you how you’re supposed to be used, and now you can’t be a proper boyfriend for them? What the fuck is wrong with you? You know, besides every damn thing?

Virgil bit his lip and dug his nails into his palm. He wanted to kiss his boyfriends in that way, but every time he thought about it he was reminded of when the Dark Sides would force their way into his mouth, the morning when the Light Sides and Thomas discovered the truth, when Deceit-

Virgil shook himself. That is so not helping right now. He grabbed a nail clipper, cut off the ragged nail end, and went downstairs, playing with the cuffs of his hoodie.

Roman was laying on the couch, his head laying on the arm and the hook on his collar unclasped.

Virgil shuffled over. When Roman lowered his notebook and smiled at him, the icy fear in Virgil’s chest melted a little.
“Hey Ro.”

“Hello yourself.”

Virgil blushed and smiled shyly. “I, um, was wondering if we could kiss?”

Roman closed his notebook and carelessly tossed it on the coffee table. “Gladly,” he said as he got into a sitting position.

Virgil snorted and sat next to Roman, adrenaline coursing through his veins.

Roman noticed. “Love? We don’t have to,” he assured. He gently rubbed Virgil’s upper arm.

Virgil smiled genuinely. “I know. I’m just a little nervous. I kinda… want to try something new? And I wanna be good at it for you.”

Roman returned Virgil’s smile sweetly. “I love you, Virgil. As much as I enjoy kissing you and love watching you experience new things, it is far more important to me that you feel ready and safe before you do anything.”

Virgil scooted closer and rested the side of his head against Roman’s shoulder, breathing in his scent to ground himself as Roman wrapped his arm around Virgil’s shoulders. “I know,” he said quietly, “I think I’m ready. It’s just a new thing, so I’ve got some nerves, you know?”

“I do,” Roman responded playfully. “Are they good nerves or bad nerves?”

Virgil bit his lip. “I think they’re normal? I really do want to try.”

Roman pressed a kiss to the top of Virgil’s head. “We can try. Just tell me if you want to stop at any time, okay?”

Virgil nodded. “I will.”

“Then I am ready when you are, my beautiful raven.”

Virgil pulled back, his face hot. Roman was smiling down at him patiently, letting Virgil make the first move. Virgil had something to ask first though.

“Can we try kissing w-with tongue?”

Roman’s smile grew sappy. “Of course, my sweet. Would you like to use it first or shall I?”

Virgil made a confused sound and tilted his head.

Roman lifted a hand and cupped Virgil’s cheek. *My sweet little kitten.* “Would you like me to initiate or would you?”

“Oh! Um, I guess I should?”

“There are no should’s here, little crow. Which would you prefer?”

Virgil’s cheeks burned. “Can I?”

“Of course.”

Virgil’s lips twitched and he closed his eyes, leaning in to kiss Roman. Roman met his lips,
copying what Virgil was doing. The first few kisses were slow and sweet, Virgil working up his courage. He started making them more heated, bringing his hands up to twist in the white and gold fabric. He started making small noises into the kiss and pressed forward, which turned Roman on enough to start moaning lowly.

After several more minutes, Virgil decided that it was time. He poked his tongue out and gently touched Roman’s lips with it. The contact ignited every nerve ending to make him feel like he was on fire, until Roman’s tongue poked out as well.

The second Virgil felt Roman’s tongue, he pulled back with a gasp and hid his face in his prince’s chest with a whimper. Roman immediately moved his hands to rest lightly on Virgil’s back as the younger Side started to cry.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, it just hurts so bad!”

Logan and Patton entered the room at Virgil’s cry while Roman’s heart shattered. “Shhhhhhh little bat, you’re safe. Are you having a flashback?”

Virgil nodded. “It hurts, it hurts!!”

Roman felt sick. He buried his face in the soft brown hair beneath him. “Can you find five things in the room that-”

He was cut off when Virgil shook his head and whined, pressing closer to Roman. “I don’t want it to hurt, I don’t like it! I didn’t like it when Deceit hurt me, I swear! It hurt, it hurt so bad!”

Logan and Patton had moved in front of the couch. Logan’s face was still but his eyes were blazing with fury, and Patton had tears streaming down his face.

“I believe you, my sweet. It’s okay, I believe you. You’re safe here with us. I swear to God I’ll protect you.”

Roman stayed still as Virgil moved his face into Roman’s neck. He breathed deeply.

“You smell like cinnamon, a-and roses, and fresh air.” He let out a sob. “You’re my prince, and y-you’re nothing like Deceit.”

Roman held him more tightly. My gorgeous dark angel, if I could take that flashback from you and go through it instead of you, I would in a heartbeat.

Roman remained still but loosened his arms as Virgil pulled back, his face tear-streaked and his eyes red and watery. Virgil brought his hands up and trailed his fingertips along Roman’s face, slowly touching different areas. Roman wanted to close the distance between them, kiss Virgil’s forehead and tell him that everything would be alright, but he knew Virgil needed this. He dared not break the spell they were under. The room was silent as Virgil’s breath hitched and new tears made their way down his face.

After several minutes, the feather-light touches ended as Virgil placed his hands on Roman’s shoulders. Roman brought his hands up and gently wiped away the tears on his beloved’s face. Virgil curled against Roman’s chest and grabbed a fistful of fabric. Roman wound his arms around his smaller boyfriend and chastely kissed the top of his head.

“C-can I tell you about it?”

“Only if you want to, my love. You do not have to if you don’t want to.”
Virgil shifted. “I want to.”

“Very well.”

Virgil stayed in the royal’s embrace, silently soaking up the comfort for several minutes, before he spoke.

“It was Deceit.”

Roman barely held back a growl.

“H-he… it was the n-night before that video f-for the member Q&A. They… they’d force me to go t-to them almost every n-night.” Roman tightened his arms minutely. “That night they-” Virgil cut off in a sob and began crying. Roman held onto Virgil, rubbing his back and making sure he knew he was with Roman. Saul and Remy rose up, intending only to come by for the movie Patton had invited them to. Remy started to move towards Virgil when Logan put out a hand and shook his head. Remy was about to start posturing when Saul gently laid a hand on his shoulder. Remy deflated and leaned into Saul.

After several minutes, Virgil calmed down. Roman kissed the top of his head. “You do not have to continue if you don’t want to.”

“I want to.”

“Alright.”

Virgil pressed against Roman, trying to get even closer. Roman tightened his arms, hoping that would help.

“I-I didn’t like the chalkboard.”

Roman frowned in confusion but held Virgil closer nonetheless.

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“They r-rolled out the chalkboard at the b-beginning of the… um, night. They wanted to s-see how m-many times I-I could…” Virgil hid his face against Roman’s chest. “Th-they only used m-my m-mouth. They wanted…” Virgil sucked in a breath. He whispered, “They w-w-wanted to s-see how m-many times I c-c-could s-swallow.”

Roman snarled and cupped the back of Virgil’s head. Furious and heartbroken sounds echoed around them. “My sweet love, I am so sorry.”

“They c-counted. Making m-marks on the ch-chalkboard. Th-that’s why I d-didn’t like it. Th-they always used it f-for that or something s-s-similar.” Virgil paused as he breathed in Roman’s scent for a moment. “They b-broke the record th-that n-n-night. T-twenty-five.”

Roman saw out of the corner of his eye Logan and Remy catch Patton as his knees buckled. He looked more at Patton, and saw the signs of emotional exhaustion, but he was still conscious.

“S-since they were t-trying to get a n-new record, they… they, um, h-hung me f-from the c-ceiling and let Rage beat th-the shit out of m-me since it w-would… um, help h-him get b-back t-... to working on the r-record.”

Roman growled. Virgil shifted against him, nuzzling him a bit.
“Th-the next morning- I mean, b-before they s-started, I k-kinda talked b-back a little. I m-mentioned the v-video the next day and that you guys m-might notice s-something, but I shouldn’t have, that was bad. S-so the next morning after they f-finished with me, D-Deceit dropped me o-on the f-floor in m-my room and p-punished me. He,” Virgil let out a sob. “I g-guess he w-w-was t-tired of using my m-mouth.”

Roman growled again, vowing to himself to forever keep Virgil safe.

“I-it hurt so bad. It… they didn’t u-use me like th-that all n-night, although they did the n-night before so it fucking hurt. And h-he has t-two, so it hurt m-more!”

It took a second to understand what Virgil meant by two, but once the other Sides did their hearts broke into a million tiny pieces.

“A-and then h-he-” Virgil was cut off by sobs. Roman kissed the top of his head and wondered what on Earth else Deceit had done to his love.

“H-he s-stabbed m-m-me,” Virgil sobbed.

Logan’s eyes widened and his face paled. “The laceration…” he breathed. Virgil nodded. Logan slapped a hand over his mouth and swallowed, trying not to throw up.

Virgil sobbed into Roman’s chest. “A-and then…” Virgil trailed off to cry more.

Roman felt tears slip down his face. Dear god, there’s more?!

“D-during the l-lunch break, th-the one I w-was late c-coming back f-from, h-he c-came into m-my room and p-punished me again b-because I w-wasn’t able t-to pretend th-that everything was f-fine. A-And he d-did the s-same thing kind of, except without the kn-knife. And h-he pretended to be n-nice and s-stuff, he w-went slow, and he m-made me kiss him back, a-and he n-never did that b-before! I s-swear I didn’t w-want to and I d-didn’t like it!”

“I know, my love, I believe you,” Roman said thickly. I will murder that two-faced bastard.

“A-and then he b-bit down so h-h-hard o-on my tongue, and he- the o-others w-would sometimes k-kiss me like that, b-but they wouldn’t m-make me kiss back! And th-then he said all these awful th-things and made me participate, and I a-always hated that. A-and then I h-had to get cleaned up f-for the video.” Virgil dissolved into heart-wrenching sobs.

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Roman pressed his face against Virgil’s head. What on Earth do I say? “My sweet love, I am so furious they forced you to go through that. I believe you, and I am so sorry. I love you so much. We all do. We will keep you safe, I promise.”

Virgil’s only response was to cry harder. Roman held him and rocked them both from side to side slightly, murmuring reassurances into his hair. When Roman looked up, he found there wasn’t a dry eye in sight. Logan’s shaking hands were clutching Patton and staring at him with tear-filled eyes; Patton himself was horribly pale and trembling. Remy was holding a plastic cup of ice to Patton’s forehead, and both Remy and Saul were silently shaking with sobs. Roman made eye contact with Saul and Remy, and they nodded.

“R-ro?”

Roman turned back to Virgil. “Yes my love?”
Virgil sniffled. “I’m tired. Can w-we go to your room?”

“Of course, sweet angel.” Roman gently picked up Virgil and sank out to his room, knowing Patton would be taken care of. He needed to care for his other boyfriend.

Chapter End Notes

Hi folks! I'm glad you made it to the end! Poor Virge tried, he wanted to, but sometimes things don’t go as planned.
Chapter 115

Chapter Notes

There's more art of this fic!!! WHAT?!!?! Check out Patton's art here!!! It's so funny and cute and amazing!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman rose up in his room, still holding Virgil.

“I can make it to the bed Ro, you don’t have to carry me if you don’t want to.”

“Nonsense! Every moment holding my beautiful boyfriend is paradise!”

“Also gives you a chance to show off your muscles.”

“Are you complaining?”

“...shut up.”

Roman laughed and pressed a kiss to Virgil’s temple before setting him down on the bed. “Can I get you anything?” he asked quietly.

Virgil relaxed into the mattress and pillows, letting his eyes drift shut. “I just wanna sleep. ’M tired.”

“May I at least get you a glass of water, dark angel?”

“Yeah, that’s fine.”

Roman lifted Virgil’s hand and kissed the back of it before he went into his bathroom. He grabbed a glass and had his hand on the faucet lever when he realized how much his hands were shaking. He gingerly set the glass down on the countertop and allowed himself a few silent sobs before he pulled himself back together. Virgil needs me, I have to be strong. I can’t break down. Not right now. He filled the glass with cold water and headed back to the bed. Virgil’s breath was already slow, making Roman wince. My poor, sweet little emo.

Roman gently carded fingers through Virgil’s hair. “Virgil, love, I have your water.”

Virgil groaned and turned his head away.

“I know you must be exhausted, but can you try to drink a little water, my sweet?”

Virgil grunted, but pushed himself up, eyes mostly closed. He fumbled for the glass before he was able to grab it, but was eventually able to get a grip on it. He slowly drank the entire glass in small sips. Once he was done, he laid back down and curled the sheets and quilt around himself. Roman banished the glass to the downstairs sink and got into bed next to Virgil.

“Love? Would you like me to hold you or would you like space?”

Virgil answered by crawling over and resting on Roman’s chest. Roman wrapped his arms around
Virgil and held him securely, kissing the top of his head.

“Goodnight, Virgil. I love you.”

“Love you too Ro.”

It only took a few minutes for Virgil to slip completely into sleep.

////////

Logan looked at his pale, sweet boyfriend trembling in his arms. He felt a spike of pain go through his chest.

“Saul, would you mind carrying Patton to his room? I’m afraid I am not strong enough.”

“Of course, no problem.”

Logan kissed Patton’s cheek. “Saul’s going to pick you up so we can move you to your room, darling.”

Patton let out a shaky whine. “Don’t leave me Lo,” he whimpered wetly.

_Oh dear._ “I’ll be right here the entire time. Do you want me to hold your hand while we move?”

Patton whimpered and nodded, a few tears escaping. Logan brushed them away with a smile.

“Shhhhhhh, it’s okay my dear. I love you so much. You’re so perfect for me, you know that?” he said in a hushed tone.

Patton smiled timidly. “Love you too Lolo.”

Once Remy removed the cup of ice and stepped away, Logan kissed Patton’s forehead. “Saul’s going to pick you up now, okay?”

“Hold my hand?”

“I will,” Logan said as he wrapped one hand around Patton’s.

Patton nodded, and whined as Logan’s presence was replaced with Saul’s. Saul looked to Logan, who was still holding onto Patton’s hand.

“Let’s just sink out to his room.” Logan decided. The two Neutral Sides nodded, and all four Sides sank out. They rose up in Patton’s room, and Logan motioned to Saul to lay Patton down on the unmade bed. As soon as he was able, Logan crawled in next to Patton and pulled him against his chest. Patton curled into the lean chest and grabbed a fistful of polo fabric.

Logan looked back up at the two Neutral Sides, who were shifting in place slightly. “Can you bring in some water, gatorade, a banana, and some granola bars please?”

They both nodded and quickly sank out. Logan gently removed both his and Patton’s glasses and set them on the nightstand.

“I’m sorry Logan.”

Logan frowned, tilted his head down but unable to see his sweetheart’s face. “Whatever for?”
Patton sniffled. “For being like this. I didn’t mean to, I just wasn’t expecting it.”

Logan ran his hand up and down Patton’s arm soothingly. “You did nothing wrong, darling. It is easier to deal with if we’re able to brace ourselves, but we can’t always do that. I love you so much.”

“I love you too Lolo. I don’t mean to be so clingy.”

“Shhhhh darling, I know it happens sometimes with emotional exhaustion. I certainly don’t mind being able to hold my extraordinarily alluring boyfriend.”

Patton giggled and pressed his face into Logan’s chest, trying to hide his blush. The Neutral Sides came back in with the requested items.

“Do you babes need anything else?” Remy asked quietly.

Logan shook his head. “Not at this time, thank you.”

Saul nodded. “Of course, let us know if we can help.”

“We will. Thank you.”

The two Neutral Sides sank out and Logan focused on comforting his boyfriend until they both slipped into sleep.

/////  

Roman woke up when he felt something moving on his chest. He blearily blinked his eyes open, and the next moment was wide awake. Virgil was whimpering quietly and squirming on Roman’s chest, eyes screwed shut and tears leaking out.


Virgil gasped and his eyes shot open. He pushed against Roman’s chest to get away, which knocked the wind out of Roman slightly. Roman waved a hand to brighten the room a little. Virgil was curled on the bed a few feet away from Roman, eyes wide, panting, and quaking violently. Roman raised himself up on an arm and opened his palms. He tried not to show how much Virgil’s fear of him stung.

“I won’t harm you, I swear. It’s me, Roman. Do you know where you are, love?”

Virgil just blinked at him and curled into himself.

Roman sent him what he hoped was an encouraging smile. “It’s alright. You’re in the Light Side, in my room specifically. Can you name five things in the room that are red, angel?”

Virgil looked around. “The curtains around the bed, your pyjamas, the rose over on the dresser, the candles, and it looks like there’s a feather over there?”
“Perfect, you did wonderfully. How about four things you can hear?”

Roman led Virgil through the rest of the grounding exercise, noticing how his eyes became clearer and clearer the longer they went. Finally,

“And name one good thing about yourself.”

Virgil smiled apologetically. “I can help out in the kitchen.”

“Good. You did perfectly, my little crow. How are you feeling?”

Virgil curled into the blankets, casting his eyes down. “Better. Not freaking out any more.”

“I am glad to hear it. Would you like some space or would you like to cuddle?”

Virgil looked at Roman briefly before looking away. “C-can we cuddle? I’m sorry for freaking out on you earlier.”

“No need to apologize. Of course we can cuddle.”

Since Virgil didn’t look like he was moving, Roman moved over to him. He laid down next to Virgil and raised his arm, Virgil nestling against him. Roman pressed a kiss to the top of his head and wrapped his arms around him, one cradling the back of Virgil’s head and gently kneading the skin there. Virgil let out a rumble of appreciation.

“Do you think you’ll be able to go back to sleep, raven?”

Virgil sighed and nuzzled Roman’s chest. “I think so. Just gotta calm down a little first.”


He felt Virgil smiled against his chest. “I’m fine Princey, I just moved out of the warm spot on the bed. I’ll warm up.”

Roman pulled Virgil closer and rubbed his back with his free hand. Virgil snorted.

“I’m not dying of hypothermia or some shit.”

“I know, but you deserve every comfort.”

Virgil flushed as he hid his face in Roman’s chest. Roman chuckled.

“Good night, my wonderful love.”

“Night Roman.”

///// 

Morning found Logan waking to a somewhat familiar alarm. When he glanced over and saw he was in Patton’s room, he remembered the events of last night. He closed his eyes and swallowed thickly, remembering everything Virgil had told them.

*That was horrific. Was that a normal day and night for Virgil? Oh Virgil, what other horrors have you experienced?*

He leaned over and turned off the alarm as Patton began to stir. Logan gently rubbed Patton’s arm
and kissed his head as Patton slowly rose from sleep. Patton blinked sleepily up at Logan. *He is too adorable.* Logan smiled and kissed his forehead.

“Good morning Patton. How are you feeling?”


“That is understandable. Do you think you have enough strength to brush your teeth?”

“Maybe?”

“Alright. If not, we can just sit here and eat. Does that sound okay?”

“Mhm!”

Logan sat up, Patton shaking from the effort as he followed Logan. Logan got out of bed first, and was able to help Patton. Logan supported him to the bathroom and they both brushed their teeth. They made their way back to the bed, Logan helping Patton walk, and got back in. Logan stacked up pillows behind Patton before giving him the gatorade and banana.

“See if you can manage these, darling. You’ll feel better if you can eat something.”

A sappy smile grew on Patton’s face. “I love you so much Logan. You’re so sweet and thoughtful,” he said, eyes sparkling.

Logan felt his cheekbones heat up. “I love you as well.”

Patton leaned over to give him a quick kiss and started in on his light breakfast.

///// 

Roman awoke, almost instantly noticing the lack of a body next to him. He shot up in bed, looking around for his beloved, until his hearing kicked in and he heard water running in his bathroom. He breathed deeply a few times before going over to his closet to decide on what to wear. He eventually landed on his Prince uniform; although Virgil had seen him in other outfits, he thought Virgil might appreciate as much familiarity as possible.

He had his clothes folded over his arm and was coming out of his closet *(heh, Thomas did that years ago!)* when Virgil emerged from the bathroom, looking more put-together. He raised an eyebrow at Roman.

“Trying something new today Princey?”

Roman frowned in confusion and looked down. “No, I’m actually just wearing my prince uniform. Why, does something look different?”

“Nah, I’m just messing with you.”

Roman smiled. *My dark knight made a joke!* “Ah! Yes, I see now!”

Virgil laughed quietly. “I’m gonna go make breakfast, you want any?”

“Certainly! Once I finish my morning routine, of course.”

“So I can take a while, good to know.”
Roman scoffed playfully while Virgil bit his lip to keep from laughing. They walked by each other, Roman giving Virgil an exaggerated look up and down. He caught sight of a blush.

When Roman went downstairs, he saw that Virgil had only started the coffee maker and set out a few boxes of Poptarts and was bobbing his head to something on his phone.

“Good morning, my handsome lover!”

Virgil jumped and flushed bright red. “Morning Ro. I thought since it’s just the two of us, we could have Poptarts?”

“That sounds lovely, my love!”

Virgil snorted and grabbed a packet of strawberry Poptarts for himself, while Roman picked out a packet of cherry and a packet of birthday cake. They chatted idly over breakfast, Roman taking up most of the space by talking about his new ideas for videos.

Virgil cleared his throat during a lull in conversation. “So, uh, did you see how Remy and Saul were doing?”

Roman studied Virgil, who was staring at his plate of Poptarts. “I did before you and I went to my room.”

Virgil nodded, still keeping his eyes down. “Right. Were they… how did they look?”

Roman knew he had to choose his next words carefully. “They were very saddened by… your distress, and were helping Patton and Logan. They did not appear to hold any animosity towards you.”

Virgil chewed on his lip and drank some water before asking another question. “Did they seem grossed out?”

Roman reeled back. “No! Of course not, never by you! What the Dark Sides did to you has no bearing on your worth or value.”

Virgil nodded, then sent a small half-smile towards his prince. “Cool. Thanks Roman.”

“Anytime.”

Roman and Virgil ate the rest of their breakfast in silence. Once they finished, they cleaned up and Virgil poured a mug of coffee for Logan. They made their way back upstairs and knocked on Patton’s door. After a cheerful, “Come in!”, they entered.

Patton was propped up against the back of the bed and against Logan. The paternal trait brightened when Virgil and Roman walked in.

“Heya cuties! Come ‘round here often?”

Roman chuckled while Virgil blushed. Patton held his hands out, and Virgil climbed in next to Patton after giving Logan his much needed coffee, with Roman on Virgil’s other side. Virgil snuggled into Patton, preparing for several hours of cuddling.

“Wanna watch a movie? We could invite Remy and Saul up!”

“Sounds great Pat.”
“Yay! We’ll get it set up!”

Roman shifted. “I’d like to speak with Thomas, if that’s alright.”

“Sure thing buttercup!”

Roman smiled kissed Patton over Virgil. Virgil leaned over to kiss Patton while Roman stood and sank out to Thomas’ realm.

Roman rose up by the breakfast table, where Thomas was hunched over a cup of coffee. He smiled weakly at Roman.

“Hey buddy, what’s up?”

“Greetings Thomas! I wanted to see how you were doing, good sir!”

Thomas sighed and shrugged. “I’ve been better. Just feeling drained today.”

Roman winced. “I’m not surprised. Virgil had a flashback last night and we learned more about… his abuse at the hands of the Dark Sides.”

Thomas straightened his back. “Is Virge okay?”

Roman smiled sadly. “He will be. He’s already feeling better. Patton’s experiencing some emotional exhaustion. We’re planning on recuperating this morning. Do you have anything you need to get to?”

Thomas frowned. “I’m not sure… My head’s kinda foggy.”

Roman hummed. “Let me get Logan up here.”

Roman raised his hand in a gentle summon, letting Logan rise up in his own time. A few seconds later, he appeared.

“How may I be of assistance?”

“I-” Thomas began.

“We’re trying to figure out if Thomas can take the morning off to rest. Is it in the schedule, Sir Secretary?”

Logan scratched his chin. “You’ll need to eliminate one social outing this week to make up for the editing time lost, but other than that I foresee no problems.”

“Thanks Log-”

“Wonderful news! Fare thee well Thomas, I must attend to your other handsome facets!” Roman exclaimed with a waggle of his eyebrows towards Logan. Logan rolled his eyes as he and Roman sank out.

_That was weird. I guess Roman is my romantic Side, makes sense he’d flirt a lot._ Thomas shook his head, laughing at himself for thinking his _Sides_ could actually _date_ each other.

Chapter End Notes
Why do I make character!Thomas oblivious? Because he didn't know Virgil was a Dark Side previously, despite literally every sign screaming at him in his face.

I also finally got to expand on Patton's emotional exhaustion!! You may have noticed that it hit him a lot faster than in previous chapters (15 and 70), but that's because he was able to prepare himself and, in 70's case, rest in between emotional exertion. In the previous chapter, it was a lot all at once and Patton wasn't able to brace himself before hand.
Chapter 116

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! No warnings for this chapter, so enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Remy and Saul rose up in the Neutral Side, with Remy rubbing his temples.

“I forgot how loud that bitch is when he sings,” Remy groaned.

Saul chuckled and wrapped his arms around his boyfriend’s waist from behind. “I’d offer to get you coffee, but…”

Remy sighed and relaxed back into Saul. “Har har. You’re so funny.” The smile dropped from his face as tears gathered in his eyes. Saul sensed the change in Remy and squeezed him lightly.

“Our poor baby,” Remy whimpered. Saul moved to face Remy. He brushed away the tears that had already fallen with his thumbs. Remy collapsed into Saul’s chest, with Saul wrapping his arms around his lover and trying to rub his back soothingly.

“He… h-he… he went through so m-much!! My baby!!”


Remy was full-on crying into Saul’s shoulder at this point. “H-he said that th-they would do those th-things to him! A-and that fucking ch-chalkboard! Those bastards!!”

Saul could only squeeze Remy and sway them back and forth. What response can I possibly give?

“God, and what Deceit d-did to h-him that day? What they all did to him the n-night before?”

Remy dissolved into incoherent ramblings and sobs.

Saul knew that tone. “We couldn’t have known, beautiful. There was nothing we could have done.”

“W-we can still cut their dicks off.”

“I’ll hold them down for you love.”

“You’d do that for me baby?”

Saul hummed an affirmative and was heartened to hear a watery laugh from his boyfriend. His heart still ached, but he focused on how happy and content Virgil looked.

“Did you see how Virgil looked when he kissed Patton?”

Remy relaxed and raised his head from Saul’s shoulder. “Yeah. Those Light Sides are good for him.”
Remy sighed. They stayed standing there, Saul gently swaying them. Remy shifted.

“Did you hear Logan mention a laceration?”

“Yeah.”

“They saw him right after, right?”

“As I understand it, yes. Why?”

Remy frowned. “They know more about what happened to our baby than we do. And why didn’t the nerd call it a stab wound? Isn’t a laceration a cut? Logan’s all about clarity.”

“I don’t know, dear.”

Remy sighed in frustration and Saul just held him more tightly. “Why hasn’t Virgie told us? Doesn’t my little coffee bean trust us? Did we do something wrong? Is this-”

“Shhhhh, darling, you’re starting to sound like him.”

“Am I wrong?”

Saul reached up and brushed some hair off Remy’s forehead. “I think maybe. We won’t know until we ask him. Besides, you said it yourself; they saw him right after. It makes sense they’d know more. And Virgil has never been one to frequently share difficult things with others, even when he was a toddler.”

Remy smiled, his eyes unfocused behind his glasses. “We were barely kids ourselves, trying not to burn the mac ‘n’ cheese, trying to help Virgil learn things. Remember when he outgrew his potty chair? He was so proud!”

Saul leaned up slightly to kiss Remy’s forehead. “We did a good job. Virgil’s alive because of us.”

Remy rested his weight against Saul, who easily supported it. “Why do I want to know about Virgil’s time with the Dark Sides? Why do I feel like this?”

“I don’t know. I know Virgil and sometimes the Light Sides see a figment called Dr. Picani. Maybe he could help you as well?”

Remy smiled mischievously. “A trip into Roman’s realm? Tempting.”

Saul chuckled and kissed Remy. “Think about it, darling. Sleep first though, I think.”

“Ugh, I hate it when you’re right.”

“I love you too.”

///// Patton was just about to finish cleaning up dinner when he felt a presence rise up behind him. He turned and was surprised to see Remy.

“Remy! What can I do for you?”
Remy smirked. “Besides let me tap that?” Patton blushed and Remy sighed. “I’m actually here about Virgil.”

“Oh! Well sit down, make yourself comfy! I’d offer you a drink, but…” Patton trailed off. Remy smiled and shook his plastic cup of iced coffee.

“I’m all set babes. You want anything?”

“I’m good! I’m still full from dinner!”

“Cool. So Virgie, has he…” Remy stared at his cup and twisted it in his hands. “Has he ever said that he was uncomfortable around Saul or I?”

Patton’s eyes widened and he jerked his head back slightly. “No! Gosh, he seems to really like you guys a whole lot!” He frowned and tilted his head. “Why? Did he say something like that?”

“You think he’d actually tell me to my face?”

Patton smiled and chuckled. “No, I guess not. But why would you think he didn’t feel comfortable around you?”

Remy clenched his jaw. “You guys… know more about what happened to him than we do.”

“Hm? What makes you say that?”

“Logan mentioned a laceration last night. God, my poor baby.” Remy shook his head slightly. “We knew he’d been stabbed, but Logan didn’t say stab wound. He said laceration. And none of you looked surprised.”

Patton sighed, looking down. “We saw him afterwards. We didn’t know anything after he’d passed out, except that a group of people would be after us and that they had something to do with Virgil’s injuries. Logan told us what Virgil’s injuries were so we could be prepared for whoever was targeting us, since they hurt Virgil so badly.”

“Is that the only reason you know more than us?” Remy’s voice wobbled.

Patton looked at Remy. Remy’s face was carefully neutral. “Virgil does trust you. He’ll sometimes tell us what happened in a flashback or nightmare once he’s out of it, and he’s around us more. Maybe that’s why? And,” Patton sucked in a breath, knowing he’d need to choose his next words carefully, “I think we’d be okay telling you guys what we know if Virgil agreed to it. If you want to know, though, ask Virgil if it’s okay. Then we can tell you more. But Remy,” Patton took a risk, covering Remy’s hand with his own, causing Remy’s eyes to shoot to Patton’s, “He does trust you, and he sees you and Saul as safe. I promise.” He sent Remy an encouraging smile and saw the ghost of one before Remy stood.

“’Preciate it sweetie. I’ve gotta go find my own boo. Later!” Remy turned, and was gone. Patton smiled sadly.

Virgil was focusing on his breathing. He’d just told Dr. Picani about his stations, and he was feeling a little off-kilter. Like something bad would happen now that he’d finally told someone. Instead, he felt lighter, like a tightness he’d never noticed before had released from his chest.

“You did very well in telling me about that Virgil,” Dr. Picani said gently. “Is there anything else
you’d like to talk about today, or would you like to talk about *Phineas and Ferb*?”

Virgil sent the doctor a half smile. “I think I’m good.” Virgil bit his lip. *Do I really want to talk to a doctor about this? It’s just kissing, isn’t that wasting his time? “I actually- is there stuff that isn’t worth your time?”*

“I doubt it! Hit me with it!”

Virgil suppressed a snort. “I’m uh… having some trouble with… my boyfriends.” *Good job Virgil, that was so specific. Really lets the doctor know what’s going on. You’re not wasting his time at all.*

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “I’m sorry to hear that Virgil. What’s going on?”

Virgil stopped chewing on his lip, trying to get one scabbed patch on it to finally heal. “I can’t… kiss them properly. I want to! I just… last time I tried, I had an awful flashback.”

Dr. Picani winced in sympathy. “That must have been terrible. Just to make sure I’m understanding correctly, you’ve kissed Roman, Patton, and Logan before, haven’t you?”

“Yeah, but not,” Virgil sucked in a breath. “Not with… tongue,” he finished quietly.

“Ah, I see. You want to kiss your boyfriends with tongue, but when you tried you had a flashback.”

“Yeah.”

“Got it. And you want to know how to be able to kiss your boyfriends with tongue.”

Virgil flushed red and picked at the cuffs of his hoodie, not having a comfort item to squeeze. “Yeah. I wanna make out with them, but preferably not get sent into a flashback.”

“Makes sense! It sounds like the main part of the issue here is that there’s a connection to trauma. Do you feel up to processing a memory today?”

Virgil quickly shook his head. “No, and it’s several memories. Is there anything else I can do in the meantime?”

“Yes! You can start separating the act from the experience. Do you know how you might do that?”

Virgil slumped, looking defeated. “No idea doc.”

“That’s okay! Let’s start tearing this apart. What was the exact moment when the flashback got triggered for you?”

“When, um, I felt Roman’s tongue. God, poor Roman.”

Dr. Picani smiled sympathetically. “I’m sure he understands. He won’t hold it against you. Did you use tongue before you felt his?”

“Yeah, a little.”

“And how was that?”

Virgil’s blush turned dark and covered his face. “It was really good. I… I liked it. A lot.”

“That’s good! So it sounds like the trauma is around someone else’s tongue. Maybe instead of
“starting at your lips, they could use their tongue other places, like your neck or shoulders?”

“I… that could work?”

Dr. Picani nodded. “If you feel comfortable, you can ask your boyfriends to help. You might even be able to come up with something yourself! Just make sure you feel comfortable.”

Virgil smiled and nodded. “You mentioned *Phineas and Ferb*?”

///// 

Patton was in his pyjamas getting ready for bed and not secretly waiting for everyone else to go to sleep so he could watch *Parks and Rec*. He heard a few tentative knocks on the door and smiled. *Virgil!!*

He opened his door to see a shy emo.

“Hey Pat.”

“Hey yourself! What’s up?”

“I was wondering if we… could watch *Parks and Rec together*?” he rushed out at the end.

Patton raised his eyebrows. “Is that what you wanted to ask me?”

Virgil sighed and looked down as his shoulders fell. “No…”

“Okay then. What do you *really* want to ask me?”

Virgil was chewing on his lip and looked up through his eyelashes. “Wanna kiss?”

Patton smiled. “Well sure! Why did you feel the need to lie though?”

Virgil swallowed, his eyes becoming fearful. Patton softened his gaze.

“I kinda… wanted to try something new?”

Patton held back a coo at the splotchy blush covering Virgil’s face. “Well I sure wouldn’t be opposed! Come on in!”

Virgil walked in and past Patton sitting on the bed. Patton sat next to him, a few inches away. He saw how Virgil was hunched in slightly and moving his eyes rapidly.

Patton gently grasped Virgil’s hand. “We won’t do anything you don’t want baby. I promise!”

Virgil smiled up at Patton. “I know Pat. I’m just a little nervous.”

Patton moved his thumb back and forth. “Nervous or scared?”

Virgil shuffled over to Patton and rested his head on a thick shoulder. “Nervous.”

“Okay honey. I’ll let you take the lead.”

“Actually, that’s the thing. I want you to,” Virgil closed his eyes. “Like, use your tongue or something? Not on my lips!” he hurriedly added. “Other places, you know.”

Patton saw a dark blush on his adorable boyfriend’s face. “I can do that. Is there any place you
don’t want me to lick?”

Virgil groaned and turned his face into Patton’s shoulder. *Oh my goodness he’s so adorable!!!* Patton giggled and brought his arm up around Virgil’s shoulders to pull him closer. “You don’t have to be embarrassed baby, we’re just talking about limits is all.”

Virgil shifted against Patton. “Nothing lower than my neck? Like, I don’t want my shoulders… yeah.”

“Okay sweetie. Why don’t you start kissing and we’ll go from there?”

Virgil nodded and breathed deeply a few times. Patton waited patiently, not wanting to rush his anxious boyfriend.

Virgil breathed in the warm vanilla scent of Patton. *Patton won’t hurt me, he’ll make sure I feel good. I can trust Patton with this. He’ll be slow and sweet.* With that, he tilted his head up and kissed Patton, electricity immediately springing from his lips and jumping throughout the rest of his body. Patton brought the hand that had been holding Virgil’s up to cup his face. Patton was clearly following Virgil’s lead on the kiss, not moving any faster or changing the angles at all. The hand that was on Virgil’s upper arm started delicately rubbing and squeezing and Patton’s arm around his shoulders stayed gentle but firm, making Virgil feel warm and protected.

Virgil decided to move things along. *I’ve waited long enough.* He pressed against Patton and started moving his lips faster, in a way he knew Patton liked. The resulting surprised moan did things to Virgil, namely things his sweatpants wouldn’t be able to hide well. *I should have chosen something else to wear.*

After several minutes of sparks being sent down his spine, Patton disconnected their lips and started placing slow, open-mouthed kisses along Virgil’s jawline, moving the hand that had been on Virgil’s face down to his waist and pulling him forward slightly. Virgil gasped and tilted his head up to allow more access. He felt Patton smile against his jaw before placing a tiny peck just underneath it. Virgil let out a loud, embarrassing, high-pitched moan, almost a squeak, at that. He felt Patton huff against his neck, which made his half-hard penis twitch.

Patton placed several more soft, slow, closed-mouth kisses trailing from under his jaw to the side of his neck, Virgil mewling softly the entire time. Once Patton got to the side of his neck underneath his ear, he licked an inch-long stripe there and lightly scraped his teeth against it, before flicking the same spot with the end of his tongue and pressing his lips to Virgil’s skin in a gentle, barely-there kiss. He moved a centimeter away to another spot and did it all over again, spurred on by the delicious sounds Virgil was making. Virgil brought one of his hands up to cradle the back of Patton’s head and tried not to grab Patton’s forearm too tightly with his other hand. Patton kept licking, biting, and tenderly caressing until he was almost at the juncture of Virgil’s shoulder before he licked and kissed a line to the front of Virgil’s neck and nimbly worked his way up.

By this time, Virgil was whining and moaning, shifting his hips on the bed and grasping at Patton’s arms and shoulders almost frantically, his vision and mind hazy with arousal, the pressure in his lower abdomen demanding he do *something*. Patton moved the hand that was at Virgil’s waist to rub his upper arm slowly, trying to bring him back to Earth a little. Once he got to Virgil’s chin, having kissed and marked the underside of it, he flicked it with his tongue and pulled back, causing them both to giggle. Virgil smashed their lips together, his kissing more open-mouthed than before. Patton felt the desperation and neediness, and knew Virgil wasn’t ready for more. He slowed the kissing gradually, and eventually pulled away, both Sides breathless.
“Shhhhhh baby, catch your breath.”

Virgil leaned into Patton who wrapped both arms around him in a hug. He kissed the top of Virgil’s head.

“You did so well baby, I’m so proud of you. You’re so amazing,” he said quietly, still trying to soothe Virgil. Virgil pressed into Patton, breathing deeply and grounding himself.

He looked up, his vision clearer. “Hey Pat.”

“Hey yourself.”

Both Sides laughed lightly at that. “Wanna go to bed now?”

Patton kissed Virgil’s temple. “I think that’s a great plan baby. Do you want Lucas?”

“Yeah.”

Patton summoned Lucas from Virgil’s room and gave it to him before they shifted down the bed and laid down, with Virgil cuddling on top of Patton. Patton didn’t mention the obvious tent in Virgil’s sweatpant or the one in his own sleep pants.

“Night baby.”


“Anytime honey.”

Chapter End Notes

We got a bit of plot development, we got Picani, we got cuteness, we got a bit o’ moxiety steaminess, we got a lot! I hope you liked it!
Chapter 117

Over the next several weeks, Virgil asked each of the Light Sides to help him several times in the way Patton had. Each of the Sides was eager to be helpful. Virgil had noticed that he was getting harder more often when he was with each of his boyfriends, even though he still hadn’t gotten off. Deciding he was ready for another try, he bided his time until he was having a good day and he could find a Side alone (he knew he wouldn’t have a good outcome with more than one Side on him).

A few days later Virgil was descending the stairs, ready to burn time in the commons until dinner, when he saw Logan lounging on the couch, reading a book to no doubt review information Thomas had learned. Virgil checked in with himself. Okay, I’m feeling good, no flashbacks right now, I got enough sleep last night… Let’s do it. He pulled his shoulders back and sat down on the couch next to Logan. Logan looked up from his book and smiled at Virgil.

“Greetings Virgil. Are you planning on listening to music?” Logan asked, nodding at Virgil’s headphones.

Virgil smirked in what he hoped was a seductive manner. “I was going to, but then I saw you sitting here, and how could I resist?”

Judging by Logan’s blush and wide-eyed expression, Virgil figured he was doing a decent job.

“I… well, I don’t suppose you could,” Logan stammered.

“Damn right. Wanna make out?”

“Absolutely.”

Virgil snorted as Logan set his book aside hurriedly and Virgil raised himself up on his knees. Once the book was safe, Virgil decided to take another risk. He twisted his fingers in Logan’s hair and kissed him roughly, their joined lips bruising just slightly. Logan brought one hand to run along Virgil’s hoodie-clad back and used the other to grab at and rub Virgil’s shoulders and neck. Virgil moaned into the kiss, Logan’s hands on him causing his arousal to flare brightly and set fire to his blood. Having a sexy, intelligent man writhing beneath him made a primal part of him come to life.

Virgil regretfully pulled away, his arousal demanding more but his clouded mind insisting he try making out with Logan. Logan let Virgil lean back with no resistance, though he let out a pitiful whine. Virgil admired the view; his normally very formal and put-together lover was red-faced and panting, his eyes glazed over, lips bruised, glasses crooked, and hair in complete disarray. He looked wrecked.
Virgil unconsciously licked his lips. He didn’t miss how Logan’s eyes followed the motion before darting back up to Virgil’s gaze, still breathing heavily. Virgil ran a hand through Logan’s mussed hair in a vain attempt to put it back into place.

“Can… can we try using tongue?” Virgil asked breathlessly. Logan’s eyebrows shot up.

“If you want to, I would certainly not be opposed.”

Virgil smiled and joined their lips again, only slightly less violently this time. He put all of his desperation and urgency into the kiss, beginning to open his own mouth more. He had read online that sucking a little on a partner’s lips was generally appreciated. He tried a few times to get the right angle without success; it kind of felt like he was trying to eat Logan’s face, which was decidedly not hot. He was feeling discouraged until Logan brought his hand up to gently touch Virgil’s face, tilted his head, and opened his own mouth and okay, that makes more sense holy shit-

It wasn’t so much suction as it was moving their lips together, opening and closing around one another, lips tingling and sparks going all over their bodies, leaving goosebumps in their wake. Logan had his head tilted more, so Virgil’s lips were mostly closing over Logan’s bottom lip instead of trying to get both. Logan was moving over Virgil’s top lip, making him whimper, mewl, and arch forward, bolts of lightning making his both his nipples and cock erect. Logan slowed the kiss down considerably, letting Virgil learn the new movements. Once he felt more confident, Virgil took over, feeling Logan’s soft lips move between his. He groaned, savoring the feeling of a smooth, warm, slightly wet mouth moving against him and his own moving against Logan’s, the intimacy making him move a hand to grab at the front of Logan’s polo. Virgil let out small moans and whines with each pass, each Side pulling back slightly to kiss before coming back together at a different angle. Virgil knew he’d never get enough of kissing his boyfriends.

Virgil leaned over Logan and rejoined their lips, before slowly extending his tongue and licking along Logan’s lower lip, asking permission, making sure he was okay with what was happening. With the speed Logan parted his lips more, Virgil decided Logan was just fine with it. He tentatively touched Logan’s tongue with his own and moaned wantonly into Logan’s mouth from the sheer desire his entire being was overcome by. The tongue sliding against his own in small movements before pulling back, coming together a moment later and kissing again, and then just barely brushing tongues was rapidly making him lose whatever awareness he had left. Logan moved his tongue forward more slightly, but Virgil pushed his tongue over Logan’s, hoping he’d get the hint. He knew someone else’s tongue in his own mouth would end badly.

Logan did seem to catch on and let Virgil lead, gently guiding him where he could. Heat began building between them again, and within a few minutes the urgency had returned, the kisses lasting longer and their tongues sliding together hotly. Virgil pulled back and started placing small nips and licks along Logan’s jaw and neck while tightening the fingers that were in Logan’s hair, making his brainiac gasp and groan.

Virgil gently pushed at Logan’s shoulders, and Logan laid down easily, their legs slotting together. Virgil kissed Logan’s jaw a few times, giving him space to tell Virgil if he wanted to stop, before he leaned up and kissed Logan’s swollen lips. Their mouths joined securely, Virgil kept one hand in Logan’s hair, moving and tugging, while the other ran down his chest and abdomen and back up again, feeling lean and firm muscles rippling below the smooth fabric of his shirt. Logan had one hand still on the back of Virgil’s neck, occasionally brushing over slender shoulders and used his free hand to run up and down Virgil’s back. The places where Logan’s hand trailed along his back left a residual heat, like a comet trail. Virgil was almost fully hard at this point, and having Logan’s hip pressing into him and stimulating him wasn’t helping matters. He felt an answering hardness
against him, and instead of frightening him it fed his excitement. He found his hips unconsciously rocking against Logan’s, who pressed his hand against the smaller Side’s lower back, sending lightning licking up his spine and coursing through his body.

They continued making out, the lewd sounds and intense sensations from Logan thrilling him and increasing his arousal. Moans and whimpers filled the air around them as Virgil relished the taste and feel of Logan. Virgil started losing himself, his hip movements becoming more erratic and Logan’s hardness becoming larger and larger, until he heard someone clear their throat behind him.

Virgil yelped and jumped, whipping his head around to see a blushing Patton and smirking Roman.

“Although it is incredibly hot to see you two making out - congratulations by the way Virgil! - I’d rather you not have sex on the couch,” Roman quipped.

Virgil groaned and hid his face in Logan’s shoulder. Logan just wrapped his arms around Virgil.

“Not to worry, I wasn’t about to let it get that far. Virgil is quite gifted, I must say.”

With Virgil’s whine of embarrassment, Patton gently pulled Roman into the kitchen.

“Hey L?”

“Yes dear?”

“Is it possible to strangle myself with my hoodie strings?”

“I do not believe so. I would prefer you not try.”

“Dammit.”

Logan just laughed. “There is no need to be embarrassed, darling. You did quite well, especially considering this was your first time.”

“Just… Roman and Patton walked in on us.”

“Yes, that may happen if we decide to be intimate in a public area.”

“…I probably should have chosen a better spot.”

Logan gently threaded his fingers into Virgil’s hair. “I would not have changed a thing about what just happened. It was wonderful. I enjoyed myself, as you can tell.”

Virgil groaned and pressed his red face harder into Logan’s shoulder, who only chuckled.

“How about we lay together until dinner?”

“Sounds good.”

They rearranged their bodies so Virgil was lying on his side, in between Logan and the back of the couch, and they were curled around each other. Logan kissed Virgil’s head before waving his hand and turning on Animal Planet. They absently watched a show about meerkats while intermittently kissing, albeit less passionately than before. After a few hours, Patton announced that dinner was ready, and Virgil was relieved that he could stand without embarrassing himself further.

As Virgil and Logan walked into the kitchen Patton turned and smiled at them.
“Hey cuties! Did ya have a good time?”

Virgil sat down and put his head in his arms.

“Kill me now,” he groaned. He heard Patton giggle. *Traitor.*

Roman rubbed Virgil’s back. “Alright, alright, we’ll ease up on you. We wouldn’t want to *make you out* to be someone you’re not.”

“That doesn’t even make sense—”

“Statistically speaking, those who kiss their partners every day live longer on average. Scientists have yet to study the influence of tongue on that data.”

“I hate all of you.”

The three Light Sides laughed and stopped teasing Virgil as dinner was served. Patton had made chicken breasts marinated in garlic and balsamic vinegar, topped with a garlic-white wine-mace cream sauce that was cooked with finely chopped Roma tomatoes and yellow onions, garnished with fresh basil.

Roman, of course, spoke with his mouth full.

“Logan, going back to that study you mentioned earlier—”

“You’re on thin fucking ice Princey.”

“-I realize I haven’t kissed any of my loves today!”

Patton grinned. “I’ll kiss you later baby! Looks like I’ll just have to *stroke* the Ego!”

“...*PATTON.*”

///// Roman and Patton zipped off once the kitchen was clean, and Logan and Virgil bid each other good night. Virgil had very much enjoyed kissing Logan, but he knew he might have a flashback if he had too many intense makeout sessions in one day. He quickly got ready for bed and laid down, Lucas against his chest and Shelly next to his pillow. He got more than a little hard thinking about his time with Logan that day, but knew better than to push his luck. He closed his eyes, and eventually slipped into sleep.

~~~~~

Virgil was *cuffed to the table in the Room and blindfolded*. *They’d been using a cattle prod to shock different areas of his body, the blindfold making the timing or location of the next electrocution impossible to predict.*

“Ughhhhhhh, we’ve been doing this for like 3 hours now, can we do something else?” Malice whined while Virgil sobbed and desperately tried to breathe in enough air but he *breathe*, his *lungs weren’t working, air was going in but he couldn’t breathe...*

“I’m fine to keep doing this,” Apathy shrugged.

“Of course you are.”
“Whatever.”

“Gentlemen - and Malice - I’m sure we can resolve this in a civilized way. Now, give me one moment to pick out something… aha! How about these items? Would everyone be amenable to switching to these?”

“...can I keep using the cattle prod on top of that?”

“I don’t see why not.”

Five voices echoed their agreement. Deceit cleared his throat.

“Then it’s settled. Malice, since you brought it up, would you like to do the honors?”

“Yessir!!”

Virgil felt the now-familiar sensation of a cock ring being attached to him. A tube was put over his penis, his momentary confusion gone once a mechanism inside started to move up and down. The intense sensations on his flaccid genitals made him want to squirm despite knowing the punishment he’d get if he didn’t hold still, so instead he pressed his hips into the metal beneath him. He nearly jumped when he heard a vibrator turn on.

“Awwwww, I wanted to fuck him!”

Virgil’s confusion returned; each Dark Side had already used him twice, and usually Greed had a slower refractory time than the other Dark Sides.

“Go ahead. As a matter of fact, I think we could all use another round.”

Virgil ground his teeth as he was used by them again, fighting to stay limp as required. When Deceit pulled back, the pain blinding, Virgil was disgusted at both the fluids in and on him and the fact that, despite the horror he’d been put through, his body had betrayed him.

The vibrator was shoved into him, and with the dual sensations of the fleshlight and vibrator he came. As expected, they left both toys on. Virgil’s sobs started back up again and only intensified as the cattle prod was brought back in to use.

After an amount of time that was impossible to know, the blindfold was ripped off and both toys abruptly pulled off and out of him. Deceit waved the fleshlight in front of Virgil’s face.

“This is all you are. This is the only thing you’re good for. We’ve had you for seven years, I’d hope you’d have learned that by now. No one but a whore comes from this.”

“Yes sir,” Virgil rasped out.

“Excellent. Excuse us for a moment.”

Deceit walked away and handed the toys to Jealousy. Malice leaned over Virgil, elbows resting on the table, and stared at the cock ring still in place. He started batting Virgil like a cat, the pain causing him to uncontrollably jerk and cry out.

Virgil was surprised that Malice wasn’t calling out his movements until, without warning, the older Dark Side turned his hand into a fist and brought it down on Virgil. Virgil screamed and blacked out.

/////
When he came to, he was surrounded by Dark Sides.

Deceit tsked. “All these years of consistent training, and you still can’t manage the basics? Disappointing. You’ll need to learn someday. Rage, Jealousy?”

Rage and Jealousy unhooked Virgil from the table and quickly grabbed him. It wouldn’t have made a difference; Virgil was far too weak to do anything but be led to wherever they were taking him. He was dragged over to one of the spots where restraints hung from the ceiling and he was quickly suspended, wrists bound and arms extended over his head, his body limp from pain and exhaustion.

He arched when the bullwhip landed on his back.

“Useless! Don’t fucking move!” Rage roared.

He only got a break when one or more of the Dark Sides wanted to fuck him. His awareness narrowed down into being whipped and fucked, until his vision started to darken at the edges.

~~~

Virgil woke with a gasp and immediately vomited over the edge of the bed. Once he had emptied his stomach, he fell against his mattress and sobbed. He instinctively curled his legs to protect his most vulnerable areas, even though he knew the Dark Sides were locked up in Roman’s realm.

Virgil grabbed Shelly and let her bear witness to his cries.

I’m disgusting. I’m useless. Just a whore. Just a sleeve. I’m not going to wake anyone up for my worthless ass. I can’t even give them my body as payment. I can deal with this. I’ve dealt with worse. I deserve worse. I deserve to be used. The Dark Sides were doing the right thing when they hurt me.

Virgil lay curled up in a ball as he sobbed the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

Virgil made out with Logan! Yay! And then it got sad! Oh no!
Chapter 118

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! We do have a few warnings for this chapter. There are some vague mentions and discussions, including internal monologues, of sexual assault, but nothing too graphic. There's also a character vomiting right at the beginning. He's not inducing himself to vomit, but he's not exactly doing anything to stop it either, so stay safe with that if needed. There's also 2 sentences of unconscious "self-harm" that doesn't do anything, as well as a brief mention of relapse. Finally, there is a character who witnesses another character in a flashback. Stay safe folks!! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil jumped when his door was knocked on. He’d been intermittently vomiting, trying to expel the contamination from his body. He’d cleaned up his carpet during one of his trips to the bathroom. Otherwise, he was curled up on his bed, frightened and horrified. He’d given up on trying to stop crying at 3 AM, four hours after he’d woken from his nightmare.

Virgil called back, in as steady a voice he could manage, that he’d be down in a few minutes. Once he heard the footsteps move away, he stood on shaky legs and walked to his bathroom. He washed his face, threw some hairspray in his hair, and put on eyeshadow, a bit of eyeliner, and some mascara. Deeming his appearance as good as it was going to get, he put Shelly in her spot on his desk and trudged downstairs. He heard cheerful voices downstairs; his stomach clenched from both the happiness he was about to ruin and the strong smell of eggs baking.

Sure enough, as soon as he walked into the kitchen, his boyfriends turned to him, the smiles on their faces quickly dimming.

“What’s wrong baby?” Patton asked, his brow furrowed.

Virgil shrugged and looked down. “Couldn’t sleep well last night,” he mumbled.

“I’m sorry to hear that, my love. Would a hug help?”

Roman took a step forward and opened his arms. Virgil flashed back to the cattle prod, being hung from the ceiling, the pain, the disgust at himself. He flinched away and whimpered, closing his eyes and stiffening his body.

Roman stumbled back a few steps and raised his hands. “Oh no, Virgil, I swear I won’t touch you if you don’t want me to!”

“P-promise?” Virgil whimpered.

Roman was ready to swear up and down in as many ways as possible, that he’d die before hurting Virgil, but he couldn’t get any words past the lump in his throat. Logan stepped in.

“We all promise, darling. As for Roman, he’s currently unable to speak because of how upsetting the idea of hurting you would be. I’m sure he’d rather fall on his own sword than lay a finger on you against your will.” Logan peered at Virgil’s eyes as he opened them. “Your eyes are so red.”
Virgil tried to smile, though it came out more as a grimace. “Yeah. Bad dream.”

None of the Light Sides had to ask. “Honey…” Patton breathed.

Logan watched as Virgil’s eyes darted to the floor. He didn’t miss how Virgil was swaying slightly and shaking.

He placed a hand on Roman’s trembling shoulder. “Come, my dear. I believe you’ll feel better once you are fed and hydrated.”

Roman nodded and sat in his chair, slumping dejectedly. Virgil schlepped over to his chair and flopped in it, crossing his arms on the table and laying his head down on it.

*Fucking slut, bringing your previously happy boyfriends’ moods down. Worthless burden.*

Virgil didn’t realize he was scratching at his hoodie sleeve until Logan gently called his name. Virgil stopped immediately, not wanting to relapse. Patton silently served up a quiche, saddened by seeing two of his boyfriends in such obvious distress. Logan rubbed Roman’s back, silently supportive.

Virgil the instant the quiche was in front of him. The smell of the egg bake nearly made him dry heave. *Good thing I have so much experience repressing that,* he thought dryly. He lifted his head and blinked scratchy eyes at it, realizing there was no way he’d be able to eat a heavy quiche.

He smiled apologetically at Patton. “Sorry Pat, it looks good, I’m just not feeling so hot right now.”

“That’s okay baby! Want some yogurt?”

Virgil’s body jerked at the imagery. “Um, maybe some toast or something? Wait, no, I can make it, you already made a huge quiche you don’t have to-”

“Don’t worry about it chocolate chip! I like taking care of my boyfriends!”

Virgil smiled and relaxed, putting his head back down in his arms. The egg was taken away, *thank God,* and it was quickly replaced by plain toast with a bit of butter and cinnamon sugar.

“Thanks Pat.”

“Anytime sweetie! Want me to rub your back?”

Virgil bit his lip. “N-not right now P-Pat, sorry. I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to apologize honey! I’m always open for cuddles if you change your mind!”

Virgil huffed out a laugh and nibbled on his toast. He noticed Patton also gave him black tea instead of coffee. He managed to get halfway through one slice and almost drain his mug of tea before he had to call it quits.

“Sorry guys, I think I’ve gotta go back to my room. I feel like shit.”

“It’s quite alright Virgil. Let us know if there’s anything we can do.”

Virgil nodded and sank out tiredly, appearing in his room a moment later. He flopped on his bed, determined to try to get some rest so he’d be less of an asshole to his boyfriends.
Useless whore.


Shut the fuck up, cock sleeve. You’ve already made it so they won’t fuck you to relieve their stress, which is the only useful thing you bring into their life, by the way. You gross, disgusting, used-up, good-for-nothing sheath.

They don’t treat me like I’m any of that at all.

That’s because they’re better than you. They’re too good for you.

Virgil’s mind sent him images, sounds, and sensations of every time he’d been tainted by the Dark Sides. Virgil did what he could to fight off the flashbacks, but he eventually succumbed, reliving the horrors that plagued most of his life. He was technically on his bed, silent tears going down his face as his body quaked violently, but he was truly back in the Dark Side.

///// The Light Sides returned to their room, Roman’s head hung low as he strode through his double doors, unhappiness and guilt weighing on him like a physical presence. He raised his head to the vaulted ceiling, staring at the engravings, before looking around and seeing his room setup.

I deserve none of this. I am no prince. I am… lower than any common criminal. I don’t deserve my title.

With a thought, Roman’s prince uniform went into his hamper and was replaced by a plain white t-shirt and cutoff jean shorts. He didn’t bother replacing his shoes, deciding to be barefoot and falling to his knees.

This is more accurate.

Roman put his hands over his face and began crying.

Virgil believes that I would… sexually assault him. That I would dare touch a hair on his head against his will. He doesn’t react to the other Light or Neutral Sides like that. He’s tried to offer his body to me, believing he would be in pain and receive no pleasure, but that I would still want it. Never. Never.

But you obviously did something to make him think that.

I know! I must have pushed him or hurt him in some way! I don’t know how, but I did! I hurt my dark angel! My beautiful raven!

Roman’s sobs intensified. He curled up on his floor and wept.

///// Thomas rubbed his temples, trying to concentrate. He was trying to edit, but he was having a hard time focusing, he felt almost no inspiration besides making everything sad and angsty for some reason, his anxiety was just barely under control, and not even the thought of his friends made him feel better!

Okay, let’s figure this out one at a time. Thomas raised his hand to summon Virgil, a little pissed that right now of all times Virgil decided to overwork himself. His anger faded as soon as he saw
the state Virgil was in, however. Virgil’s knees buckled almost as soon as he was in Thomas’ living room, shaking, tear tracks on his face and eyes glazed over. Thomas ran over to Virgil and just barely caught him in time before he face-planted. He turned Virgil’s face toward his own and started wiping away the tears, trying to get Virgil back into reality.

“Virge, it’s okay, come on, come on, you’re safe, wake up buddy.”

Virgil’s eyes remained staring eerily at the ceiling, unresponsive to anything Thomas was doing as his breath hitched, responding to some horror unseen to Thomas.

*Shitshitshit, okay, what do I do if Virgil’s having a flashback? Ice cube! And smells, I think? Ice cube anyways!*

Thomas brushed some hair off Virgil’s forehead before bolting to his kitchen to grab an ice cube. Two fell out into his hand, but he didn’t particularly care; he just wanted to get back to Virgil. He placed an ice cube in Virgil’s hand, closing his own hand around Virgil’s to make sure he was feeling as much of the ice cube as possible. In a moment of shock, Thomas realized Virgil’s hitched breaths and jerky body movements were rhythmic.

*Oh my god Virgil, I’m so fucking sorry.*

Thomas reached over, grabbed a candle, and held it under Virgil’s nose. The combination of the scent and the cold seemed to bring him back to the present. Virgil gasped as his eyes refocused. He pushed up on his hands and scrambled backwards, watching Thomas with wide, fearful eyes. Thomas held his hands up.

“Well, Virgil, it’s okay! It’s just me, I promise!”

Thomas saw the moment when Virgil realized what had happened. His eyes filled with tears and strength drained from him.

“Virge, buddy, can you tell me what happened?”

Virgil whimpered and shook his head, fresh tears joining the others on his face. Once he whimpered, he couldn’t seem to stop, the only other sounds coming from him being stifled cries.

“I’m so sorry Virgil. Can I do anything?”

Virgil shook his head. He pulled his legs up, wrapped his arms around them, and buried his face in his knees. Thomas let him cry, knowing that the poor man needed it. Twenty-five minutes later, Virgil’s quiet sobs slowed down, and he hesitantly lowered his legs.

Thomas smiled at him. “There you are. Feeling better buddy?”

Virgil sent him a shaky half-smile and nodded. Thomas beamed.

“Good! Can I get you some water or gatorade?”

“Gatorade would be good,” Virgil said, his voice gravelly.

“Okay! Why don’t you sit on the couch while I get that for you?”

“It’s fine, I can-” he shut up when Thomas levelled a very Patton-like Dad Look(™) at him. Virgil obediently went to the couch and sat on the farthest cushion. Thomas soon returned with the promised gatorade and sat down next to Virgil, grabbing the remote control.
“Don’t you have to edit today?”

“Eh, I wasn’t getting anywhere anyways.”

Virgil raised an eyebrow, imagining the fit Logan would be throwing later, but opted not to argue with his Host.

“*Parks and Rec*?” Thomas asked.

“What else?”

Thomas laughed, a contagious, jubilant sound that danced on air. Virgil found himself smiling despite his earlier distress. Virgil slowly relaxed into the couch cushions, comfortably lounging after a few episodes. When the third episode ended, a loud yawn escaped him.

“Sorry Thomas, didn’t get a lot of sleep last night.”

“Don’t worry, that’s okay! Want to cuddle and nap together? I could probably use a nap myself.”

Virgil bit his lip. “I don’t know… can we just try cuddling first and see how that goes?”

“Sure!”

Thomas lifted his arm up, and Virgil slowly leaned against Thomas. As soon as he was resting his body weight against his loving Host, he realized how badly he needed safe touch.

Oh. This is nice.

Thomas wrapped his arm securely around Virgil and pulled him flush against his own body. The way he felt the tension leave Virgil told Thomas he was in desperate need of cuddles. Virgil slowly laid his head on his Host’s shoulder and sighed.

Just one more episode later, and Virgil was starting to doze off. Thomas gently squeezed his shoulder.

“Hey buddy, wanna lay down on the couch and cuddle? I think we could both use some sleep.”

“Mhm.”

Thomas laughed quietly at his sleepy Side and gently lowered them until they were both sprawled across the couch, Virgil curled against Thomas’ chest. Thomas smiled at the top of Virgil’s head, running his fingers through soft brown hair. Virgil grabbed handful of Thomas’ shirt and curled in more, sighing and falling deeper into sleep. Thomas wished he could coo at Virgil without making him uncomfortable. *He’s just so darn cute!!!* Thomas thought with amusement that he knew where *that* particular thought came from. He and Virgil fell asleep like that, Netflix pulled up, and cuddled together on the couch.

Chapter End Notes

Hello! I've got an exciting announcement! I've uploaded both the bois and their Mindscape (at least in this fic as I see it) to Origin via The Sims 4!! It took many many MANY hours, but I'm really happy with it!! The Light and Neutral Sides are under
"Healing Broken Wings Boys" and the mindscape for HBW is under "Mindscape of HBW". Don't pay attention to the outside of the house, it looks a little wonky. But, I figure things aren't exactly straight-forward in someone's brain. This is just how I see the inside of the HBW mindscape. Included in the house is the Light Side commons, their rooms (holy shit Roman you are too much)(this also includes Logan's secret lab shhhhh), the Neutral Side including their commons and bedroom, as well as Virgil's old bedroom before he was abducted by the Dark Sides. The curtain hanging where the door used to be can give you a hint as to who the primary guilty party is in that.
Chapter 119

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There are some pretty frank discussions of sexual assault throughout this chapter, but nothing terribly graphic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman was still on the floor of his room. His eyes were swollen, his throat was sore, and he was tired. He’d remembered when Virgil had woken up from that nightmare and thought they were going to take turns raping him. Nausea crept up his throat as his heart shattered, grief from both what Virgil had been through and the fact he thought the Light Sides would repeat that. He was so out of his mind with fright Logan had to tranquilize him! I made him that scared!

Roman whimpered and wiped his now-raw face with his hands. Roman had hated holding Virgil still while he thrashed and cried and begged them not to hurt him, saying he wasn’t a slut, that he didn’t want it. A few sobs tore their way out of Roman’s painful throat. I’d never hurt you, my sweet, beautiful love!

Roman remembered how Virgil’s weak, frail, injured body had squirmed in his hold, trying to get away. The smell of sweat was there, and Roman swore he could still smell the blood from when Virgil was in the bathtub. Roman nearly gagged at the memory.

Roman had sensed chaos in his realm, just after he thought he’d dispatched the nightmare. When he looked into it, he was shocked to sense the disruption in his castle, and is that Virgil? Roman had risen up and had to catch Virgil as he ran into the prince. Roman hardly had to put any effort in to keeping them both upright; despite Virgil’s frenzied state, he was still alarmingly light. Virgil’s eyes were wild and red, his panic making him do anything to alleviate it, to do what his frightened mind told him. When the terrified Side, his beautiful Virgil with deep, dark eyes, fell to his knees, Roman had hoped he was calming down. Instead, Virgil tried to do what he thought Roman wanted.

Roman pressed the heels of his hands into his eyes as he cried, his throat feeling cracked like a desert. Never, angel. I would only ever want you to enjoy the experience as much, if not more, than I. I’d never want you to hurt yourself, and not for my benefit. Roman felt like his chest was being torn in half from the agony and self-hatred crushing it.

Roman pulled his hands away when starbursts flashed behind his eyes. Another memory came to him, unbidden. Virgil offering his body to Roman, saying he knew Roman probably would make it hurt less. Roman had thought he’d processed that memory with Dr. Picani, that Virgil had indeed trusted Roman to help him experience something that wasn’t forced, but that combined with the knowledge of what Virgil had been through made his heart shatter into even smaller pieces than they already were. Oh my sweet, how can I put you back together? You deserve happiness. Roman let out a few excruciating wails as his heart was torn in two. But you obviously can’t get that from me.

Roman had wanted to give something to Patton. He was so proud of his gift idea, and Patton loved it!
And then Virgil had seen it.

And thought they were going to use it on him.

Virgil had only tried to placate Roman, not the others, by offering release in his body. Again. And this morning, so long after the previous incidents, he’d seemed surprised Roman wasn’t about to force himself on Virgil.

Roman didn’t bother trying to pull himself together when he felt someone rise up in his room.

“Roman! Virgil and Thomas- oh baby, what happened?!”

Patton rushed over to Roman and touched his shoulder, flattening his hand against it when Roman didn’t resist. He frowned when his cries only increased in volume.

“Are you hurt sweetie?”

Roman shook his head. “N-no, I’m…” he sobbed. “I d-don’t think V-Virgil will f-f-find happiness in m-me.”

Patton was taken aback. “What are you talking about? Virgil loves you!! He’s so happy with you!!”

“H-he thinks I’m going t-to f-f-force myself on h-him!!” Roman cried.

Oh goodness, this morning! “Baby, I don’t think so. He had a really bad night, that’s all.”

“But it’s m-m-more than that! H-he… In m-my castle, h-he tried to offer his b-body. And Logan had t-to drug him o-once! And th-then the knife, he o-only tried to s-s-satisfy me w-with sex!”

Patton sighed. “Honey, with the knife, you were closest to him. I don’t think it had anything to do with you. And he was panicking, and tired, and feeling terrible about himself in the castle. That’s not your fault.”

Roman sniffled. “B-but he thinks I w-would be satisfied f-from hurting him!”

Patton wanted desperately to pull Roman into a hug, but he knew Roman wouldn’t want that right now. “I think he was confused baby. He didn’t realize that sex is different from… what he experienced.”

Roman cried into his hands, though his tense posture began to loosen. “My sweet, gorgeous raven! How dare anyone hurt him! I’d never hurt him!!”

“I know sweetie. And he knows too. He trusts us, even more now than he used to. Remember when he told us he didn’t want to be touched this morning? That was so good of him!”

“I… I suppose you’re right,” Roman admitted, his breath hitching.

“And he’s been so good other times about telling us what his boundaries are, even on dates! He’d have to trust us a whole lot to tell us that!”

“Yes, I- that makes sense.”

“You know how he looks at you, Roman. He loves you and trusts you so much.”

Roman cracked a small smile. “He said he felt safe when I held him in my arms.”
Patton mushed his hands against his face. “Awwww that’s so cute!!!”

Roman let out a watery laugh and relaxed his body further. Patton rewarded him by running fingers through his prince’s soft hair. Roman closed his eyes and pushed his head against Patton’s hand.

Patton smiled. “Why don’t we go to bed honey? Thomas and Virgil are taking a nap right now, and you look so tired. Plus then I get to cuddle with a hottie! I’m so lucky!”

Roman’s cheekbones flushed as he chuckled. “I’m the lucky one, sunshine.”

Patton giggled and blushed as Roman sat up slowly. Patton brought his hands up to gently wipe away tear tracks on his handsome boyfriend’s face. He was careful once he saw how red Roman’s face was. He leaned forward and pressed a sweet, chaste kiss to the royal’s lips.

“Come on baby, let’s go to bed.”

“Let’s.”

Roman and Patton got on the bed, with Patton pulling Roman onto his chest as soon as he could. Roman laughed quietly but acquiesced and snuggled against the soft body.

Patton tenderly kissed the top of Roman’s head. “Goodnight, my prince.”

“Goodnight, my heart.”

////////

Half an hour earlier, Patton had risen up in Thomas’ plane of existence to see what was going on with his sleep and emotions. Once he had seen Virgil curled up on Thomas’ chest however, all of his focus went into not squealing loud enough to wake them. Thomas stirred and blinked blearily at Patton, having been only dozing and sensing one of his Sides in his realm.

“Hey Patt’n.”

“Oh my God he’s like a teeny tiny kitten!!!” Patton whisper-screamed.

Thomas looked down at Virgil, only seeing brown hair and slowly rising and falling shoulders, but smiling nonetheless.

“He is,” Thomas replied quietly.

Patton felt like a lightbulb went on over his head. “One sec, I’ll be right back!” He sank out quickly and was gone for less than a minute when he reappeared holding Lucas.

Patton walked over and placed it on Thomas’ chest near Virgil’s hands, just in case Virgil woke up and decided that he wanted to cuddle a stuffed spider. What neither of them expected was for Virgil to feel the soft fur on his hands and reach out in his sleep for Lucas, pull it against his chest, and nuzzle it while making sleepy little grunts.

He sighed contently and relaxed his body. Once Thomas and Patton were sure he was asleep, Thomas looked up as Patton took a prolonged inhale of breath.

“Oh my goodness he’s so adorable!!!” Patton squealed as loudly as he dared.

Thomas huffed out a laugh. “He is. God, he was so tired! Do you know why Patton?”
Patton’s face fell. “He had a flashback nightmare last night and couldn’t get back to sleep.”

Thomas held Virgil more tightly and breathed in the scent of his oud and lavender shampoo. “Poor guy.”

Patton hummed in agreement. “I’m glad he’s got you,” Patton whispered with a smile.

Thomas smiled back. “Same to you buddy.”

Patton’s eyes filled with tears at the statement. He took one last look at his Host and his boyfriend, and sank out to Roman’s room to tell him how incredibly adorable Virgil and Thomas were being.

///// Roman woke up surrounded by thick, warm arms on a comfortable chest. He turned his head up, and his shifting caused Patton to wake up.

“Hey baby.”

“Good morning, my sweetest love.”

Patton giggled sleepily and kissed Roman’s forehead. “It’s still the same day, silly. How’re you feelin’?”

“I’m feeling… better. I still hate that Virgil thinks I’d ever hurt him, but I don’t feel like tearing my eyes out of their sockets.”

Patton squeezed Roman. “It’s not you honey, it’s his trauma. It’s not your fault, it’s the Dark Sides’.”

Roman clenched his hand tightly in Patton’s polo. “I want to kill them for what they’ve done to Virgil,” Roman growled.

Patton buried his face in Roman’s hair and smelled his hair products. “I know baby, I know.”

“It’s not fair!!”

“I know it’s not, honey. I’m so sorry.”

“He thinks I’d hurt him,” Roman whimpered. Patton was about to jump in when Roman spoke again. “I have to know what I’ve done to make him think I’d derive any pleasure from hurting him.”

Patton pulled Roman against his chest. “I think talking to him is a great idea, baby.”

Roman hiccuped. “I think so. I’ll ask him when I can.”

“You do that sweetie. You’ll do great, I know it.”

Roman just cuddled into Patton. Patton kissed the top of his head, knowing Roman would ask Virgil once they were alone.

///// Virgil appeared in his room holding Lucas, still slightly embarrassed but feeling better after his nap. From how energized Thomas was, it seemed his Host was feeling better too. Virgil hugged
Lucas tightly in the privacy of his own room before setting him down on his bed.

Virgil stretched and went to his bathroom to clean up his makeup a little. As he idly swiped his face, he remembered the events of the morning and winced.

*Dammit, I probably made Princey feel like shit. Fuck.*

Resolving to apologize to Roman in person, Virgil set out and was soon standing in front of the grand double doors. He knocked with very little hesitancy, knowing Roman was usually glad to see him. When Roman opened the door, however, Virgil felt guilt slam into him like a semi-truck. Roman’s eyes were swollen and bloodshot, and his face and nose matched the red of his eyes.

Virgil opened his mouth to apologize. “Holy shit dude, what the fuck happened to you?”

*Can someone, like, please kill me now? Thanks.*

Roman just smiled sadly and opened his door further. “Would you like to come in, my lovely shadow?”

Virgil swallowed and walked into the room, already terrified and tears springing to his eyes. *He’s going to break up with my useless, awful, stressful, worthless self, I know he is. Oh god, Roman, I love you so much. I wish I could make you happy. You deserve it. Virgil’s throat started closing up and his chest twisted painfully.*

The door closed behind them with a final click. “Virgil, I love you so much.”

Virgil sniffled, still not facing Roman. “I love you too, Ro,” he said thickly.

Roman rushed over to Virgil, hearing the tears in his voice. “Oh my sweet, what’s wrong? Do you feel unsafe?”

Virgil sucked in a noisy breath, high-pitched and the beginning of a sob. “No, I’m just sad.”

Roman gently brushed his hand against Virgil’s face. “Why are you sad, love? Tell me, I can fix it!”

Virgil shook his head. “I don’t kn-know if you can, or should.” He did one breathing exercise to calm himself enough to talk. “W-what did you w-want to t-talk about?”

Roman tenderly wiped away the tears on his love’s face, battling the own forming in his eyes. “I love you so much, my sweet crow. I’d never want to hurt you. And I’d never receive pleasure from doing so.” Roman bit his lip as a lump formed in his throat. “May I ask… what was it that made you think that I would hurt you?”

*What? That’s what you wanted to ask me?*

Roman looked down and scratched the back of his head. “Yes. I apologize if it should be obvious but,” Virgil flinched as a tear escaped Roman’s eye and his voice grew thick, “I can’t seem to figure out where I went wrong, and I never want you to feel unsafe around me or think I-I’d derive pleasure from doing something you didn’t want, and I understand if y-you want to leave me, and-ooof!”

Roman’s speech was cut off as Virgil crashed into him and wrapped him in a tight hug. Roman automatically wrapped his arms around his shorter boyfriend, confused.
“You don’t make me feel unsafe Ro. Why would you think that?”

Roman soaked up every detail of holding Virgil, knowing this might be his last chance to do so. The feel of soft warmth from the hoodie, the smell of lavender and oud, the electricity between them. “You’ve offered me release in your body when you didn’t want it and didn’t expect any pleasure more often than you’ve offered your body to Logan and Patton.” Roman wanted to stop when he felt Virgil flinch in his arms, but he wanted Virgil to be able to make an informed decision about whether or not he should stay with Roman. “You’ve thought I’d cross your boundaries, and that I would derive pleasure from doing so. I’d _never_, Virgil. I swear on Thomas.”

Virgil sniffled. “I’m sorry Ro,” he said tearfully.

Roman couldn’t stop the sobs that escaped, even as Virgil held him more tightly. _This was an outcome I knew was possible. I just wish that it didn’t come to pass._ When he spoke, his voice was shaking with tears. “You don’t have to apologize, my beautiful raven. It’s not your fault. I’ve clearly done something to make you think these things. If you wish to continue dating Logan and Patton, I would not stop you or resent you at all. You deserve to be happy.”

Virgil pulled back, shock and horror on his face as tears rapidly filled his eyes. “Are you breaking up with me?” he whispered.

It was Roman’s turn to be surprised. “No love, I thought you were breaking up with me?”

Virgil stared at Roman, unmoving, until he rested his forehead on Roman’s shoulder and laughed, somewhat hysterically. “God, we’re a fucking pair, aren’t we?”

Roman was trying to figure out what on earth Virgil was talking about. “Love… Virgil?”

Virgil laughed again. “Babe, I’m not breaking up with you—”

“Oh Thank God.” Roman sagged against Virgil.

Virgil snorted and kissed the side of his jaw as Roman’s breath began hitching more intensely. “You didn’t do anything wrong. I’m not more scared of you or anything. My brain’s just fucked up because of the Dark Sides and what they did to me.”

Roman wanted to respond, he really did, but he couldn’t make his vocal cords work. Virgil placed another kiss to the joint of his lower jaw and started pulling him towards the bed. They climbed on, and Virgil quickly placed himself on Roman’s chest, where he knew Roman liked holding him. Sure enough, Roman pulled him tight to his body and breathed in Virgil’s scent.

“I thought I was going to lose you,” Roman admitted tearfully.

“God, Ro…”

“May I hold you for a while?”

“Yeah, of course.”

Roman held Virgil, the man he loved, who he thought he’d nearly lost. _I’ll never take you for granted, beautiful._

“Me neither.”

Roman sniffled. “Did I say that out loud?”
Virgil chuckled. “Yeah, you did.”

Roman huffed a laugh into Virgil’s hair. After an hour of silent cuddling, Roman felt Thomas give him a nudge.

“My love, my sweet, gorgeous angel, handsome-”

“What is it Princey?”

“Would you mind terribly if I worked? I can still hold you with one arm and write with the other.”

Virgil laughed. “That’s fine. I’ll probably keep an eye on Thomas.”

Roman summoned his notebook and feather quill, kissed Virgil’s head, and got to work. They spent the rest of the day like that, cuddled against each other and silently reaffirming that they weren’t going anywhere any time soon.

Chapter End Notes

As my beta put it, "Roman and Virgil are lucky they're cute because they haven't got a brain cell between them."
Chapter 120

Virgil noticed several things over the next few days. One, Roman was a little extra clingy. He wasn’t hanging off Virgil, but he was almost always in the same room as him. Two, Virgil was pretty sure Roman’s hesitance to touch Virgil over the past two months was from what Roman had expressed to Virgil.

And three, Virgil is too gay to have three hot boyfriends.

He hadn’t worked up the courage to make out with any of them again, partially due to the fact that he didn’t know how good a kisser he was when tongue was involved, and partially due to the fact that, looking back, he might have come in his pants like a teenager while he was making out with Logan, and that would have been mortifying. He might have died, on the spot, from sheer embarrassment. If Sims can do it, I can do it too. Hopefully I can, at least if I come in my pants in front of them. I don’t think I could live through the embarrassment.

That didn’t change the fact that he turned into a flustered mess whenever one of them acknowledged him, or that he’d had to adjust himself more often than not lately. He wanted to do so much with them, but he also knew that would probably end badly.

And to top it all off, he still couldn’t get off. Thankfully, lately it was more just spontaneously losing arousal than a flashback happening, but that didn’t ease his sexual frustration any. He wanted to know what a wanted orgasm felt like to see if it felt different than the ones the Dark Sides had forced him to have, but his body seemed hell-bent on not letting that happen.

After a particularly frustrating dinner, where Roman kissed him before they sat down to eat and Logan trailed lithe fingers down his spine, Virgil found himself back in his bathroom, staring at his half-hard cock.

Listen here, you little shit. If you won’t let me get off at least you have to stop complaining. Deal?

Virgil didn’t get a response, not that he was expecting one. He put a little lotion in his hand and started gently touching himself. He’d learned the hard way - or not-so-hard way, as it were - that trying to get off quick and rough wouldn’t end well for him. Virgil closed his eyes and ran fingers down the length of his cock, feeling cautiously optimistic when it jumped and hardened slightly. He tried to imagine Logan’s firm, certain movements while his intense, espresso eyes studied Virgil’s reactions. Patton would be sweetly kissing him and be playful, occasionally running his fingers across Virgil’s lower abdomen to tickle and tease him a little. Roman would be hot, passionate, rocking their bodies together, pulling sounds from Virgil and himself, making Virgil fall so deep into fire he wouldn’t realize he’d come until after the fact, while Roman was holding
him and kissing him.

Virgil sped up his movements as his cock hardened. He tightened his fist and played with the head a little, trying to build up gradually and not overwhelm himself so much he’d soften. He felt a coil in his gut that told him he was nearing climax, so he focused more and more on the head, only touching the rest of himself every once in a while. Patton was in the forefront of his mind, holding him and watching him while he got closer and closer, making sure he was still feeling good and grounded. He’d be kissing Virgil’s face sweetly, telling him how good he was doing, how beautiful he looked. Patton’s thick, firm body would be hovering over him, working over his cock, trying to bring him to climax, trying to share the experience of ecstasy. Virgil kept his fist tight as his cock began to soften.

No!! Dammit!!! Come on, I was so close this time!! Do you not want this to happen?! He glared at his softening penis. This is your fault, you know. I hope you know that.

Virgil straightened his pants and washed his hands. Frustrated tears pricked at his eyes. I just want to get rid of this heaviness. I’m trying, dammit! Why can’t I? What’s wrong with me? Am I so broken I can’t have an orgasm like normal people? I just want to come so I can stop feeling so goddamn pent up!! It’s so annoying!!

Virgil angrily wiped at his eyes and sniffled. He trudged over to his bed and allowed himself to feel sad for a few minutes. He slumped, let his hands fall to his lap, and cried weakly.

I just want to feel normal. I just want to be normal. I just want to get off. Why could I only come from the Dark Sides and not by myself? Am I really so f*cked up I have to be sexually assaulted in order to come? Virgil laughed humorlessly. Maybe the Dark Sides were right. I belong with them and to them. Only a disgusting whore, a jizz-soaked toy like me would come from that.

Virgil curled up and started crying in earnest. He jumped when someone knocked on his door.

“Sweetie? You okay in there?”

“We heard crying,” Logan explained.

Oh great. Two of them.

“I’m… not feeling so great. You can come in if you want.”

The door opened and Logan and Patton were through it in an instant.

“Can we sit down honey?”

Virgil nodded, and his boyfriends sat down on either side of him.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Virgil leaned his head against Patton’s shoulder to keep from looking at either of his normal, functional boyfriends. Patton wrapped an arm around Virgil’s shoulders.

“It’s kind of embarrassing,” he mumbled.

“I can assure you, we will not judge you. What is on your mind?”

Virgil sniffled miserably and hiccuped as he turned his head so his face was hiding in Patton’s shoulder. Do I really want to tell them? It’s weird, maybe I shouldn’t. Is it too much information?

Logan started rubbing Virgil’s back. “Whatever hesitations you’re feeling right now, my dear,
Virgil laughed dryly. “Speaking of hesitations…” Am I really about to do this?

Let them know how useless of a boyfriend you are? May as well tell them now, you’ve kept it a secret long enough.

Fuck off. “I can’t…” Virgil swallowed. They’re gonna judge me, they’re gonna hate me, they should hate me, I hate myself, it’s so weird.

“Darling? What is it you can’t do?”

Virgil pressed himself against Patton and breathed in his warm, vanilla scent. Might be the last chance you get to creep on this sweet, pure man, you filthy slut. “I can’t come,” he whimpered out.

Virgil expected revulsion, mockery, confusion, or even rejection. Instead, Patton wrapped his other arm around Virgil and hugged him.

“Oh my sweet baby. I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry you haven’t been able to feel that!”

Virgil was surprised at how sad Patton sounded.

“May I also hug you, my moon?”

“Y-yeah.”

Virgil felt Logan come up behind him and also wrap his arms around him, resting his head on Virgil’s neck. The sensation was sending sparks down his spine, but he elected to keep that to himself.

“Darling, I echo Patton’s sentiments. I can’t begin to imagine what that must be like for you, to have never experienced such pleasure.

Oh great, now I’ve made them feel bad. “I mean, I kinda did before? With the Dark Sides? They sometimes force me to…” Virgil gestured vaguely. “You know. And it wasn’t ever good, and it hurt and they made it hurt and I didn’t want it and-”

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“Breathe baby.”

Virgil focused on his breathing exercises while his boyfriends silently supported him.

“Sorry ‘bout that guys,” Virgil offered meekly.

“You don’t have to apologize sweetie! It’s not your fault! Those Dark Sides…”

Virgil was shocked at the growl that came from Patton.

Logan kissed the back of Virgil’s head. “I can assure you it is nothing like that. Do you know what’s stopping you from reaching climax?”

“I mean, sometimes it’s flashbacks,” both sets of arms tightened around Virgil with a whimper from Patton. “And other times I just… lose it.”

“You lose your erection?”
Virgil groaned. “Yeah…”

“You need not be embarrassed, love. That’s quite common amongst trauma survivors.”

Virgil lifted his head to look at Logan curiously. “How do you know?”

Logan fought the urge to adjust his glasses. “I’ve done a fair amount of research pertaining to your experiences once I learned of them in order to best support you.”

“Awwwwww Logan!!! That’s so sweet!!!” Patton squealed.

Virgil smiled. “Yeah L, that’s… really thoughtful. You’re a really thoughtful person.”

Logan’s cheekbones turned a pretty pink color as he cleared his throat. “I… yes, well, thank you, I do endeavor-”

Logan’s face was close enough to his, so Virgil stopped his nervous ramblings with a sweet kiss. Logan was stunned for a moment, but quickly reciprocated. The kiss didn’t last long, but Virgil made sure to let Logan know how much he was appreciated. Virgil pulled back when he felt Logan stiffen.

“My apologies, dears, Thomas is summoning me. Will you be alright Virgil?”

“I’ll be fine. Go see what he needs.”

Logan pulled him in for one more quick kiss before standing and sinking out. Virgil turned back to Patton.

“Your turn?”

Patton nodded eagerly. Virgil huffed out a laugh and kissed him, this one turning more intense than the kiss he’d shared with Logan. He opened his mouth slightly, not intending to use tongue but wanting to try out the type of kissing he’d already experienced with Logan. Patton copied Virgil, and soon they were sharing soft, open-mouthed kisses with each other that somehow spoke of intense desire. Virgil pulled back before his lower half got any ideas.

“Wanna go to your room to hang out?” Virgil asked huskily.

“Sure!” Patton chirped.

Virgil smiled and gave him a quick peck. “I’ve gotta grab a few things real quick and then I’ll be by.”

“Okay sweetie! I’ll see you in a minute!”

Patton booped Virgil’s nose and left to go to his room. Virgil brushed his teeth and otherwise got ready for bed, including getting into sweatpants, knowing he’d likely stay over in Patton’s room that night. He padded over to Patton’s room in thick, soft, cotton socks. The door was slightly ajar, so he just knocked as he opened it. Patton looked up and beamed.

“Hey good-lookin’! Come ‘round here often?”

Virgil snorted as he closed the door behind him. Patton had a small plate of cookies with some milk on the end table and an episode of Parks and Rec queued up on the television. Virgil quickly snuggled up against Patton - with a few kisses of course - and cuddled with him while the episode opened on Aubrey Plaza. Once the episode was nearing its end, Virgil looked up at Patton and
noticed how close their faces were. He didn’t want to kiss Patton again, but he did want to try something else.

“Hey Pat?”

“Yeah honey?”

“Can we try something?”

“Sure! What did you have in mind?”

Virgil curled in on himself, anxiety spiking. “It’s kinda weird, I dunno if you’ll actually like it or think I’m weird…”

Patton’s face softened as he started gently rubbing Virgil’s arm. “It’s okay sweetie. I won’t judge you. If it’s not something I want to do, I’ll tell you.”

Virgil bit his lip, fussing with a small scab there. “But if you don’t want to, isn’t it weird?”

“Not at all baby! Roman and Logan and I all have different things we like doing. For example-”

“I’ll believe you!” Virgil cut Patton off.

Patton giggled. “Now what is it you wanted to try, chocolate chip?”

Virgil pressed against Patton and breathed in vanilla and home. “Can we try, um, you above me?”

Patton smiled and brought his other hand up to brush bangs out of Virgil’s face. “We can do that. Do you want to be doing anything while I’m above you?”

“I don’t want kissing,” Virgil replied immediately. He thought about his next answer. “And I think I’m okay with touching?”

“Okay! Where do you want me to touch you?”

“Um… can it just be my head for now? I’m sorry,” Virgil offered timidly.

“No apologies sweetie! Boundaries are important! I’m okay with you touching me wherever you want. Would you like to try now?”

Virgil studied Patton’s face. “Are you sure you’re okay with it? Me touching you more places than I’m letting you touch me?” Virgil lowered his head. “God, I’m so selfish, I’m sorry, I shouldn’t-”

“Honey, it’s okay to have different boundaries, I promise,” Patton soothed.

“But I get to touch more of you…” Virgil protested.

“And I’m okay with that. I’m just happy to be here!”

Virgil offered a small smile. Patton brushed the tip of his nose over Virgil’s, making them both giggle.

“Want to try sweetie?”

Virgil smiled and shyly nodded. He shifted so he wasn’t being propped up by the pillows and laid down. Patton slowly, oh-so-slowly, moved down with Virgil and supported himself on one arm,
not yet over Virgil but still higher up than him. Watching Virgil’s face carefully, he moved his other arm over Virgil and gradually shifted more of his weight to that arm, keeping both of his legs on one side of Virgil’s body and his hips against the mattress.

Virgil smiled and reached up, running his fingertips down the side of Patton’s face, maintaining eye contact with Patton. Patton smiled down at Virgil, not moving to touch him yet. Virgil started touching different parts of Patton’s head with more of his hand, running his fingers through soft hair and feeling the scalp beneath, brushing a thumb over soft cheekbones, feeling his jawline with the backs of his fingers.

“You can touch me now if you want,” Virgil said quietly, not wanting to break the trance they were both in.

Patton brought a hand up and moved more bangs out of Virgil’s eyes. He held himself back from kissing his sweet little shadowling’s forehead, instead just cupping a cheek with one hand.

Virgil was surrounded by Patton, his warmth, his safety, his presence, his scent. The body above him and arms around him didn’t feel constricting or forceful or threatening; it felt like safety, like protection, like family. Virgil was in the same position he’d been in so many times before, but this was gentle and sweet; they were sharing an experience of vulnerability and intimacy together, instead of Virgil being forced and hurt. He was opening up to Patton, he felt safe doing so, and Patton was treating Virgil’s openness with the utmost care and respect.

Virgil studied Patton. Patton was watching his face, smiling at him like he was indescribably valuable, the most precious thing Patton had ever seen. He was hovering above Virgil with so much love and care, and Virgil felt safe and loved. So many feelings were bubbling up in his chest that he couldn’t begin to process any of them. He knew he felt love for Patton though, that wasn’t a question. He felt like his chest was cracking open, but it didn’t hurt. It was the exchange of trust, knowing the other person wouldn’t hurt them, knowing the other person loved them, knowing the other person was so happy to be there. All made more real by the scent of vanilla.

Virgil felt his throat close up and his chest tighten as he took in Patton’s loving face. He saw Patton’s eyes widen.

“Are you okay honey? Do you want to stop?” Patton asked quickly. Virgil shook his head.

“I’m okay, I just… have a lot of feelings,” he chuckled wetly.

Patton smiled down at him and wiped away a fallen tear. “I’m so happy baby. You deserve to feel good. I love you so much.”

“I know. I love you too,” Virgil responded thickly.

Patton just scritched Virgil’s scalp, relaxing the man beneath him. “Want to cuddle now baby?” he asked, not wanting Virgil to get too overwhelmed.

“Yeah.”

Patton laid down, and kissed the top of Virgil’s head chastely as Virgil curled into his chest.

“Night honey.”

“Night Pat.”
Hi folks!! I hope you enjoyed the moxiety!! They're so cute together! <3

Since this ending A/N is short, here's a link to my Tumblr! I'm working on posting a tour of the Sims 4 HBW Mindscape soon and I love chatting with folks! LilfellasBlog
Virgil intended to help Patton with lunch, he really did. But then Logan walked by his room and smiled just as Virgil was stepping out, so really, it wasn’t his fault he made out with Logan in the nerd’s room instead. This makeout session wasn’t as intense as the first one, but both Sides still needed to catch their breath for a few minutes and fix their hair afterwards before they went down for lunch. They must have still been obvious about what they were doing before lunch though, since Roman took one look at the two of them and smirked knowingly.

Patton had made pollo bianco along with pasta and a white sauce that was infused with tomato, parmesan cheese, fresh basil, and minced garlic. Virgil quickly devoured two chicken thighs and a helping of pasta, along with some leftover roasted veggies Patton had reheated.

Once lunch was over, Roman walked up to Virgil and stood just a little closer than strictly necessary. Not that Virgil was complaining.

“How are you feeling today, my love?”

Virgil blushed slightly and shrugged, still a little turned on from making out with Logan earlier. “Pretty good, you?”

“I’m doing quite well, my dark angel. May I ask you out on a date tonight?”

Virgil smiled. “Sounds great. Where at?”

“Would you like to be in my realm? Last time I had tea with the dragon witch, she asked how you were doing, and she makes the most delicious sandwiches and pastries.”

“That sounds awesome. Before or after supper?”

“Perhaps before? That way we can spend as much time with her and in my realm as you’d like before we retire to bed.”

Virgil smirked and stepped closer, pressing their bodies together from chest to hip. “I’m looking forward to it.” Roman placed a hand on Virgil’s waist when he leaned up slightly and whispered in Roman’s ear, “Can’t wait to make out with you. On your bed in the castle.”

Roman shivered. He used his other hand to lightly graze fingertips along the shorter Side’s jaw. “May I kiss you my sweet?”

Virgil replied by pressing their lips together for a slow, heated kiss. He placed a single open-mouthed kiss on Roman’s lips, his prince clearly surprised, before he pulled back and walked away to his room. Just as he was about to leave the kitchen, he turned back to smirk. Roman was watching him with a dark look in his eyes.
Virgil had put on some purple eyeshadow and eyeliner in addition to his regular eyeshadow. After agonizing over his clothing options, he opted to go with nice black jeans, his strappy combat boots, a nice purple v-neck shirt, and a charm necklace. When Roman knocked on his door, he threw on a few rings on impulse. He nervously ran fingers through his hair and opened the door.

Roman extended a single red rose, devoid of thorns. “For you, my beautiful songbird.”

Virgil flushed and smiled, smelling the sweet scent of the rose. He sensed a shift in his room, and turned to see a thin crystal vase filled partway with water. He took one more sniff and gently placed the flower in the vase.

Virgil returned to Roman and wrapped his arms around his passionate boyfriend’s neck, who placed two hands on his thin waist.

“Thanks Ro, it’s beautiful,” he murmured before he kissed Roman, quick and sweet.

“It is my pleasure, love. It cannot, however, compare to your ethereal beauty,” Roman rumbled once the kiss ended.

They were still hovering close to each other, so Virgil gave him one more quick peck on the lips before pulling away, Roman’s hands slowly sliding off Virgil’s waist as he did so.

“Shall we?” Roman asked, extending his elbow.

Virgil smirked. “We shall.”

Roman chuckled and led them down the hallway towards his room while Patton wolf-whistled at them. Roman turned back and waved, eliciting giggles.

Soon, they were stepping through the mirror to the Imagination and were transported to the stables. Rojo and Arthur were tacked in Eastern riding gear and were held by a stableboy.

When Virgil sent a questioning look towards Roman, Roman smiled at him. “I thought we might take our horses through town and to the dragon witch’s cottage?”

Virgil’s grip on Roman’s arm tightened, causing the taller Side to place a hand over his anxious beloved’s. “Won’t the horses get spooked in crowds? Is Rojo trained? I know he’s young.”

“They’re perfectly well-trained. Arthur might try to veer off course occasionally if he sees or smells something he wants to eat, and Rojo likes to try to lead the herd, but that’s it.”

“Okay, okay… Is it hard to ride a horse?”

Roman rubbed his thumb over Virgil’s hand in what he hoped was a soothing manner. “Not too difficult, and Rojo is a very good horse to learn how to ride on. We’ll go slowly. Would you like to try?”

I have to at least try. Virgil inhaled deeply and nodded. Roman smiled at him.

“Wonderful. I’ll help you get on Rojo.”

Roman led Virgil to where the stableboy was still patiently waiting with the horses. Since he was holding reins, he bowed with his head and neck only. Virgil stuck his hand out so Rojo could smell him. Once Rojo puffed breath against Virgil’s hand and pulled back, Virgil pet Rojo’s neck while
he made his way to the saddle.

Roman put a hand on Virgil’s back. “Alright, now you want to put your left foot in the stirrup to bring your body up and swing your other leg around.”

Virgil took a few breaths to ease his nerves, then put his left foot in the stirrup. With Roman’s encouragement, he pushed up and managed to swing his leg over, Roman standing right there the entire time. Virgil looked over and tried to get his right foot in the other stirrup, but only managed to keep kicking it and pushing it forwards.

“How do you feel, love?”

Virgil shifted on the saddle. It was… different, but not uncomfortable. “I think I’m good. I can’t get my other foot in the stirrup though,” he admitted sheepishly.

Roman chuckled. “That’s quite alright darling, it can take a few times to get the hang of. I’ll help you, one moment.” Roman walked around and gently slid the other stirrup onto Virgil’s foot. Still holding Virgil’s foot, he looked up and smiled. “Better?”

Virgil blushed darkly and nodded. Roman laughed and mounted Arthur easily. He took one side of the reins in each hand, and the stableboy handed Virgil Rojo’s reins. Virgil felt his anxiety grow once he was given control of such a large animal.

“Alright, these horses are trained so if you pull one side of the reins, they’ll move to that side. Like so,” Roman shifted his weight forward to move Arthur into a walk, then pulled the right rein to make Arthur wheel left. Roman pulled Arthur to a stop.

“You can try. Just shift your weight forward, pull the rein on the side you want to go, and pull both reins backwards to stop.”

Virgil was nervous enough that his hands were shaking slightly, but he did as Roman instructed. He leaned forward a bit and Rojo took a few steps. Virgil panicked at the movement and pulled both reins back, stopping Rojo.

“Love? Are you alright?”

Virgil blew out a shaky breath. “Yeah, sorry, just panicked when he started moving. I’m good.”

“Are you sure? We do not have to, I promise.”

In response, Virgil took a stabilizing breath and leaned forward slightly again. Rojo started walking, and Virgil gently pulled the left rein. Rojo started making a gentle circle to the left. He experimentally pulled the right rein, and Rojo obediently turned to the right. Virgil made a full circle and came to a stop next to Roman.

“Well done Virgil!” Roman said, beaming proudly.

Virgil ducked his head. “Yeah, um, thanks.”

Roman smiled fondly. “Do you feel ready to depart, beloved?”

“I-I think so?”

“Alright. It should be a fairly easy ride, with only a few hills. When we’re going down a hill, lean backwards, and when we’re going up a hill, lean forwards. That’ll help Rojo.”
“Got it.”

“Excellent. We’ll go slow and I’ll lead. Rojo will probably try to get ahead of us, but you can just gently pull the reins backwards and he’ll fall back.”

Virgil sucked in a breath and nodded. Roman moved Arthur into a walk and Virgil barely had to lean forward before Rojo was following him. Sure enough, before they got near the end of the castle grounds, Rojo was already trying to lead. Virgil gently pulled the reins back, and Rojo begrudgingly slowed down.

“He’s seeing if he can get away with leading while you’re riding him,” Roman chuckled fondly.

Virgil raised an eyebrow at the horse below him. Rojo didn’t even try to defend himself.

When they started descending the hill, Virgil leaned back as Roman told him. He copied Roman’s angle and found himself frequently pulling back on the reins to get Rojo to slow down, partly to keep him from leading and partly because leaning back in the saddle was nerve-wracking. Finally, they made it to flat ground and approached the small town. Adults bowed as they passed by while the children giggled and waved, earning a wave from their prince. The children would squeal and run away when Roman acknowledged them, making Virgil huff out quiet laughs. Roman pointed out each shop and home they passed, only stopping once for a man who had grown carrots in his garden and wanted to give some to the horses. Once Arthur had finished his, he sniffed the citizen to see if he was hiding any more.

Soon enough, they were walking out of town. Virgil had gotten much more comfortable riding Rojo at this point and decided to lean forward, pushing Rojo to lead.

“I see what you’re doing Virgil,” Roman’s amused voice echoed from behind him.

Virgil turned around and smiled. “Slowpoke.”

Roman clicked his tongue and trotted up to Virgil. He pulled back so he was riding next to Virgil. Dropping the reins in the hand nearest his boyfriend, he delicately took Virgil’s hand and kissed it, starting at one side and placing kisses on each of the knuckles, moving up each finger one at a time, maintaining eye contact with Virgil. Virgil was staring back, wide-eyed and helpless to the sudden onslaught of heat creeping up and tingling his arm and neck. With a final kiss, Roman smirked and pulled away, pushing Arthur to the front, leading once more. Virgil gulped and stared after him, no match for the embodiment of Romance.

They entered a forest, a light breeze carrying a pleasant chill and the sweet scent of leaves towards them and sunlight dappling them from above. Virgil was quickly lulled into a near-hypnotic state from the dampened light, soft noises of hooves on the forest floor, and the sway of Rojo’s steps. Birds were chirping around them, none of the songs too loud or harsh. Virgil could hear the quiet hiss and bubble of a small stream obscured by the trees while he admired Roman’s strong back moving back and forth.

After 10 minutes, a small stone cottage came into view just over a bridge, smoke coming from a short chimney and the windows open. Virgil spied a garden of both vegetables and flowers off to one side and looping back around the house. Roman led them over to a post, dismounted, and tied a quick release knot in both reins. Once the horses were secured, Roman held out his hand.

“Alright love, the way you dismount is essentially the opposite of how you mounted. Just take your foot out of the stirrup and swing that leg over. Rest that leg on the ground and take your other foot out of the stirrup.”
Virgil swallowed and nodded. He shook his right foot free from the stirrup, and with a breath to steel his nerves, pushed up with his left leg and heaved his right over Rojo’s body. Roman had his hands hovering around Virgil the entire time, just in case. Virgil tried shaking his left foot free, but soon realized he was stuck.

“I think I’m stuck.”

Roman chuckled and gently pulled his foot free. They both giggled a little as Roman put his hands on Virgil’s waist and stepped closer, searching his eyes. Virgil put his hands on Roman’s shoulders and kissed him softly.

Virgil jumped as a voice called from the house.

“Good evenin’ Prince Roman! And ‘ello there bug! How are you two boys carryin’ on?”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed! Don't worry, we'll be seeing more of the dragon witch next chapter, I just had to halve this chapter because it got too long.

I'm also experimenting with queuing posts on my Tumblr and I think(?) I'm doing it right? I guess we'll find out!
Chapter 122

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! No major warnings for this chapter! Just a heads up though, that although sex doesn't happen, pretty intense steaminess does occur in the second half of the chapter and goes until the end of the chapter. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil flushed darkly, having forgotten that someone was likely expecting them.

Roman just turned and smiled as he kept his hands on Virgil’s waist.

“We’re doing quite well, thank you!”

The dragon witch was standing in the doorway of her cottage. “Well don’t just stand there, come on in dears! I have some hot tea for ye!”

Roman drew his hands away from Virgil’s waist and extended his elbow, which Virgil took. The dragon witch was smiling at them. She leaned up and patted Virgil’s cheek.

“Lovely to see you again dear.”

Virgil smiled shyly. “It’s good to see you too ma’am.”

“So polite! Won’t you come in? I have lots of goodies waiting for us!”

She led the two men into her humble, cozy living room, complete with a black cauldron in the fireplace. Finger sandwiches, a variety of pastries, and tea was set out. She quickly poured each of them a cup and encouraged them to fill up their plates. Virgil moaned involuntarily around a horseradish and herbed turkey sandwich, but cut himself off and looked apologetically at the dragon witch.

She just laughed. “No need to be sorry! I’m glad you like ‘em!”

Virgil smiled sheepishly. Roman and the dragon witch talked about the affairs of Roman’s kingdom while Virgil sat there, content to listen but doing his best to throw in a few sentences here and there. Three cups of tea and several plates of sandwiches and dessert pastries later, Virgil was feeling pleasantly full. He basked in the warm glow of the fire that was a strange red color and the light conversation floating around him. Now that he was done eating, he spoke more with the dragon witch and Roman, feeling at ease. After an hour, the conversation started to die down as the light outside turned orange.

“I believe we must take our leave, m’lady,” Roman said.

“Oh course dears! Let me pack you a small bag. I’m sure you’ll be hungry later! I was young too once,” she chirped with an intentional look towards Roman. Both men blushed while Roman grinned widely. Roman accepted the bag with a thank you and followed the dragon witch to her doorway. She reached up and pinched Roman’s cheek.
“Always lovely to have you around, Prince Roman.”

Roman smirked. “The feeling is mutual, madam.”

The dragon witch blushed and giggled. She took one of Virgil’s hands in hers. “My door’s always open bug. Just let me know if you need any food or have someone needing to be hexed.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “I’ll remember that. Thank you ma’am.”

“My pleasure dear.”

Virgil sent her one more smile and let Roman take him to the horses. Virgil hopped up and over Rojo’s back, needing Roman to help him put his right foot in the stirrup again. Roman untied their horses, handed Rojo’s reins to Virgil, and mounted Arthur. They left the same way they’d come, hooves clunking on the bridge over the babbling brook. Virgil felt a spike of anxiety when he realized that Patton might have made something for them.

“Wait, are Patton and Logan expecting us for dinner?”

Roman looked back at Virgil. “No my love, they’re actually in Logan’s room. Patton’s going to try to cook their dinner over a fire.”

“In Logan’s room?”

“Yes. Patton wanted to try it as a date idea.”

Virgil winced. Patton was a good cook, but trying to cook an entire dinner over an open flame in someone’s bedroom was a whole other type of challenge. *I just hope it doesn’t ruin their date.*

Going back through the forest seemed to take less time than when they’d first entered. They made their way through town again, the streets quieter with it being evening, and rode past the tavern. An indistinguishable bar song could be heard from inside while cheerful yellow light spilled out onto the street. They traveled back to the stalls, Virgil leaning forward to help Rojo up the hills. A different stableboy took the horses back into the stable, while Virgil turned to Roman.

Roman smiled down at him. “Would you like to return to the Light Side of the mindscape or stay here for tonight, beautiful raven?”

The nicknames never stopped making Virgil blush. “I said I’d make out with you in your royal chambers, didn’t I?” he recalled teasingly.

Roman brought a hand up and brushed the backs of his fingers on Virgil’s cheekbones. “You are not obligated to do so if you no longer want to. I’ve had a wonderful time with you already this evening and would be content to bring you back to your room. I wouldn’t want to push you—”

Virgil cut off Roman’s speech with a hard, fiery kiss. He pulled back just a moment, only to kiss Roman open-mouthed this time.

Virgil leaned back. “Let’s go to your chambers, your Highness.”

Roman’s eyes darkened at the honorific as he extended his elbow. Virgil took it, trailing his hand over a strong bicep unnecessarily. As they approached the castle doors, Virgil looked up at Roman.

“Hey Ro?”

“Yes love?”
“Is… where can I kiss you? I don’t know if it’d be bad of me to kiss you in front of guards or anything.”

“Why, my love, you can kiss me anywhere!”

Virgil paused, making Roman stop walking too. Virgil pressed his body against Roman’s side and rested the fingertips of one hand on his strong chest.

“Anywhere?” he asked lowly, slowly trailing his fingertips down until they reached Roman’s waistband and paused.

Roman’s eyes were wide and his mouth agape. He tried to respond, but all that came out was something between a surprised scoff and a squeak.

Virgil decided to have mercy on the flustered prince and rested his hand on Roman’s forearm, moving them forward again, with Roman stumbling a little. The guards maintained their form, only pausing to announce the return of the prince, although Virgil thought he saw sparks of amusement in their eyes.

Virgil led them quickly, knowing the path to Roman’s chambers at this point. He let Roman open the doors and lead them inside. When the doors closed, Roman turned to face Virgil fully and lifted his chin with his fingers.

“What happens now is up to you, love. I would be more than happy to retire to sleep.”

Virgil smiled up at him. “I would like to kiss you now.”

Roman smiled back and waved his arm, the torches and candles placed around the room lighting.

“Be my guest.”

Virgil put his hands on Roman’s chest and kissed him slowly, wanting to build up to what he had in mind. Roman followed Virgil’s lead, not wanting to frighten his younger lover.

Virgil pushed on Roman’s chest and followed him to the bed, kissing the entire way, Roman’s lips sending sparks from his lips down to his groin. When the backs of Roman’s legs hit the mattress, Virgil pulled back and pushed at Roman’s shoulders playfully. Roman let himself be pushed and landed on the bed, bouncing slightly. Virgil wasted no time in straddling Roman’s legs and heating up the kiss, tangling his fingers in Roman’s hair and pulling his head back so Roman had to look up to kiss him. Roman’s hand trailed up Virgil’s back to cup the back of his head while the other wrapped around Virgil’s lower back and pulled him closer.

The kisses turned open-mouthed, Virgil sucking Roman’s lower lip in between his own and nipping lightly, the intensity causing fireworks to explode behind Virgil’s eyes. If the moans coming from Roman were any indication, Virgil figured he was doing alright. The hand that had been at Virgil’s lower back started moving up and down his spine, fingertips softly scratching and causing small explosions of heat wherever they traveled. Virgil moaned into the kiss and ducked his head lower, kissing and sucking and biting at Roman’s jaw and neck. Roman’s hands were now wandering all over Virgil’s back as he let out whines and gasps. Virgil felt a growing hardness beneath him, but instead of feeling frightened, he felt a new kind of arousal crash through him. He groaned loudly, reconnecting their lips for a searing kiss.

Wanting to move this along, Virgil pushed at Roman’s shoulders again, just as lightly as the first
time, causing them to part. Roman’s chest was heaving, his eyes were dark, his face was flushed, and his lips were a dark red.

“Let’s move up the bed,” Virgil said breathlessly. He snorted at how quickly Roman scrambled back, Virgil having to work to keep up. Virgil laid down next to Roman and kissed him a few times from above, barely reignining himself back in to ask for what he wanted.

“Can you be over me?”

Roman’s eyebrows twitched. “Are you sure, my sweet?”

“Yeah.”

Roman kissed Virgil, sweet and gentle. “Okay love. Let me know if you get uncomfortable.”

Roman put one leg between Virgil’s and lifted himself up over Virgil slowly, watching the smaller Side’s face the entire time. When he paused, Virgil reached up and touched Roman’s face, similarly to how he had touched Patton’s. Roman stayed still, letting Virgil do what he needed and wanted.

Soon, the same feeling of intimacy and vulnerability and safety and love began building in Virgil’s chest amidst the heat already there.

“Kiss me?” he asked.

Roman readily obliged, sealing his lips over Virgil’s and bringing a hand up to cup his cheek and rub his cheekbone. Virgil slowly let the heat build in the kisses until he had a roaring fire beneath his skin. Virgil’s lower lip had been sucked between Roman’s this time, and the sensation had him moaning and squirming beneath the stronger man. The leg between his was driving him mad, making him unconsciously part his legs and bend his knees slightly, wanting more of Roman between them. One of Roman’s hands stayed on his face, fingertips dancing in small but delightful ways. The other was rubbing and scratching and squeezing along his arms, shoulders, and chest, sometimes moving down to just barely brush over his stomach, all contributing to the building fire. He felt his arousal clouding his mind and whined pitifully as he fought the urge to jerk his hips forward.

“Shhhh, sweet little sparrow, I’ve got you,” Roman murmured against his lips.

Virgil moaned and pressed his lips forward, demanding more. Roman chuckled and acquiesced, kissing Virgil thoroughly until he felt his legs shaking and hips twitching again.

*It has to go good this time.* Virgil licked at Roman’s lower lip. Roman pulled away carefully.

“Are you sure, pretty crow?”

“Please,” Virgil said huskily, his voice wrecked from the moans and whines he’d been letting out.

“Okay love,” Roman leaned back down and kissed him, opening his mouth to Virgil’s tongue this time.

When Virgil touched his tongue to Roman’s and started rubbing, he nearly cried out from the sensation. The first couple of touches were careful and slow, though they quickly built up passion and speed. Soon, they were kissing and barely parting, tongues caressing each other as they both moaned. Virgil had been thrown into a swirling inferno while he was connected to Roman, a blaze beneath his skin and his body burning from the intensity. Roman’s leg was rubbing up and down
against the inside of his, not quite reaching his upper thigh but getting close enough to make him almost painfully hard. His touches would occasionally brush over Virgil’s nipples, causing him to cry out and arch forward. Is it bad if I come if Roman doesn’t touch me? Is that okay? Can I come without being touched?

Roman pulled back and attached himself to the joint of Virgil’s neck and shoulder, sucking skin into his mouth rolling it between his teeth, licking and tickling the sensitive flesh. Virgil cried out in pleasure, baring his neck for more access. Roman kissed and blew on the abused skin before moving to his collarbone, the cold air making Virgil’s hips hitch upward. Roman used all of his self-restraint to not buck back.

Roman laved Virgil’s collarbone with attention, slowly moving to the notch in between his two collarbones. Virgil whined and pulled at Roman’s hair, earning him a delectable surprised moan.

Roman just licked at the sweat gathering at the notch at the base of Virgil’s neck, hearing a breathy gasp above him. He joined their lips together, allowing Virgil to lead and kiss him desperately and sloppily, a little drool forming as Virgil frantically kissed Roman with fervor.

With how Virgil’s hips were hitching, Roman kissed Virgil into submission before slowing things down. After a few minutes he parted and rested his forehead on Virgil’s looking into his dark boyfriend’s eyes. Virgil’s eyes were glazed over, his hair and face were damp with sweat, and his lips were bitten a deep burgundy. The flickering, golden candlelight danced beautifully across his love’s skin and highlighted the bruises forming on his lower neck and clavicle. Whoops.

Virgil looked around the room and huffed.

Roman frowned, worried Virgil might be getting uncomfortable. “What is it, my love?”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “It’s just… I’m in a castle, making out with a prince. This is unreal.”

Roman leaned down to just brush his lips against Virgil’s ear. “I can assure you, this is very real,” he growled.

Virgil shivered and whined. Roman placed a tender, feather-light kiss against the shell of Virgil’s ear before kissing his temple. Virgil pulled him down into another kiss. Roman allowed it for a few moments before he pulled back once more. With how heavily and rapidly Virgil was breathing, Roman knew he might get overwhelmed soon.

“Shall we get ready for bed?”

Virgil nodded, pupils still blown wide. “I might need a few minutes before I can stand up.”

Roman smirked. “I gathered.”

Virgil flushed a deeper red and groaned. Roman laughed and sweetly kissed his forehead before gently rolling off.

“Would you like me to hold you?”

Virgil crawled onto Roman’s chest and curled up, twisting a hand in the thick fabric of Roman’s uniform. Roman kissed Virgil’s hair and held him until they both felt a little more in control.

“Would you mind if I changed, my sweet?”

“That’s fine. I, uh, still can’t stand.”
Roman smiled proudly. “Would you like me to summon some sleep clothes on you?”

“That’d be awesome.”

Roman raised his hand and snapped his fingers, changing Virgil’s clothes into a crew-neck t-shirt and sweatpants. He continued to hold Virgil, never wanting to let him go.

When he felt Virgil start to fall asleep, he gently squeezed the thin shoulder in his hand.

“I’ll be right back, little shadow. I just need to get a few things.”

Virgil whined but nodded and let go. Roman got up and quickly went through his night routine. When he got back, he was certain Virgil was asleep. He gently draped a few blankets over him and crawled under the covers. He laid back and tucked his hand under his pillow. To his surprise, Virgil crawled over and situated himself on Roman’s chest with little snuffling sounds. Roman carefully wrapped his arms around Virgil, not wanting to wake him. He kissed the top of his head and relaxed, letting sleep overtake him.

Chapter End Notes

Hellooooooooo nurse! We're approaching a few major plot points in a row, so stay tuned for that!
Virgil woke to a warm chest beneath him and arms around him. He had a moment of panic where he thought Jealousy had him again for a reward, but he quickly identified Roman by the scent of roses and cinnamon. He relaxed again, but that jolt of adrenaline and the knowledge that the Dark Sides were in the dungeon just below them kept him from falling asleep. He bit back a snort at the quiet snoring. *Gotta remember to tease Princey about that.* Virgil watched as the rising sun cast slowly moving patterns against the stone walls and floor. Finally, Roman began to stir.

Virgil looked up and observed Roman’s face. His mouth closed as he sucked in a deep breath through his nose. His eyes shifted behind his eyelids just before he opened them and blinked blearily at the ceiling. Roman turned foggy eyes to Virgil and sent a dopey smile his way.

“Good morning, beautiful.”

“Morning Princey. You snore.”

Roman chuckled, his voice gravelly from sleep. “So I’ve been told.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh and set his head back down on the prince’s chest. Roman tightened his hold on Virgil before loosening it again and absently rubbing Virgil’s arm. They stayed there, comfortable in each other’s warmth and the warm, soft blankets covering them. Virgil felt safe and protected in Roman’s arms, and Roman knew Virgil was safe so long as he was holding him.

Eventually, however, Virgil’s bladder protested.

He groaned. “Sorry Ro, gotta pee.”

Roman kissed the top of Virgil’s head and let his arms fall to the sides. “I certainly won’t stop you.”

Virgil smiled softly at him and got up, feeling relaxed. Virgil suspected Roman heated the air and stone so he wouldn’t shiver.

Roman sighed happily and closed his eyes, recalling the previous night. Being able to share such intimacy and pleasure with his dark angel was truly a dream come true, and-

“**PRINCEY!!!**”

Roman jumped out of bed and raced to the bathroom. Virgil had sounded angry, but he wasn’t about to take any chances if his raven was scared or in danger.

Roman threw open the door. “What is it, my love?!” Roman paled as Virgil turned with his collar pulled down slightly and a furious glare.
Roman ducked his head, hunched his shoulders, and looked up at Virgil through his eyelashes. “My apologies, love, I didn’t mean to mark you like that.”

“Do you have any idea how much shit Remy and Saul are going to give me?!”

“I truly am sorry.”

Roman got whiplash as Virgil’s face relaxed and fixed him with a smile. “It’s okay! I’ll get even with you.”

“Wait, what? What do you mean? What does that mean?!”

Virgil patted Roman’s cheek on his way out of the bathroom. “You’ll find out!”

Roman stood paralyzed for a moment before he went into the bathroom and began his morning routine. He left a concealer on the counter, the one he used when Logan or Patton got a little carried away. Once he was done, he let Virgil in to use the concealer. Thankfully, Virgil didn’t seem too upset anymore, although he was wearing his crew neck sleeping shirt under his hoodie instead of his v-neck shirt.

Roman was nearly vibrating in excitement. He’d come up with so many new ideas overnight and he wanted to share them, but he wasn’t sure if Virgil was still mad at him. By the way Virgil encouraged him to speak, Roman figured Virgil couldn’t be too upset. Virgil listened while Roman spoke excitedly about this new ideas, Virgil nodding along and interjecting occasionally. Roman happily repeated everything to his other two boyfriends during breakfast.

///// Virgil had just put away the last clean dish while Patton stretched.

“Thanks again for helping me sweetie!”

Virgil smiled at Patton. “No problem Pat. Wanna hang out in your room? Thomas is just watching stuff anyways.”

“Sure, I’d love to!”

Virgil’s smile grew, despite the dread boiling in his gut. He could tell ever since he’d successfully made out with Logan that his brain was trying to make him anxious about it, but he refused to let a new anxiety creep up on him and ruin things for him and his boyfriends. He was keeping as much pressure as he could on the box in the back of his brain, and he knew if he let up for even a moment something would come spilling out that would throw a wrench in their relationship.

Once they expect you to have sex, why would they keep dating you?

Shut up!

It’s all you’re good for.

Shut UP!!

Virgil had initially thought these thoughts were just another version of his low self-worth, but this particular train of thought had been trying to hook into his brain now that things between him and his boyfriends were becoming more intense.

Virgil followed Patton up to his room. Patton flipped on the television, and the Parks and Rec
episode that Thomas was watching showed up. Virgil and Patton cuddled together on the bed, happily relaxing together and watching the hilarious television show. After the first two episodes, however, Virgil tilted his head up started rubbing Patton’s knee. *This is something romantic, right?* By the way Patton shivered and look down, Virgil’s anxiety about whether or not he was doing something weird was soothed.

Patton didn’t tighten the arm that was around Virgil, although he returned the dark stare Virgil had locked on him.

“Kiss me please,” Virgil asked.

Patton leaned down and pressed a slow, sensuous kiss to Virgil’s lips before pulling back a half inch. Virgil closed the gap quickly, pressing their mouths together desperately. Patton let himself be led and pushed onto his back by Virgil, who despite the passion and fervor in his kisses, was incredibly gentle when he pressed on Patton’s shoulders.

Virgil ended up resting part of his weight on one arm and the rest on Patton’s chest. Patton reached up and massaged the back of Virgil’s head and neck, earning him a deep rumble from the Side above him. He used his other hand to feel up and down Virgil’s back, both relishing the touch and trying to make sure Virgil stayed grounded. Patton *loved* being able to hold Virgil, and kissing him was the cherry on top! Thanks to Virgil’s hoodie, touching him came with this wonderful warm, cozy, comfy feeling.

Virgil was addicted to the smell and taste of Patton. He was sure he’d never get enough of the sweet vanilla scent that seemed to seep out of his pores, and he always tasted like a combination of the last thing he cooked and Christmas spices. Somehow, no matter the combination, it worked. Presently, he was using his free hand to touch Patton’s face, run his fingers through his hair, and touch his strong shoulders. He was getting a little annoyed that he couldn’t touch more in his current position, that and his arm was becoming sore.

Virgil pulled back. “Can we kiss on our sides? My arm's getting a little tired,” he admitted sheepishly.

“Sure, chocolate chip!”

Virgil snorted at the nickname as they adjusted. Patton brought their lips together again, sweet and soft, smiling into the kiss, just to make sure Virgil still felt okay in this position. Patton kept one hand on the back of Virgil’s head and neck and moved his other hand to his boyfriend’s waist.

Virgil took over leading the kiss almost as soon as Patton had started it. *Okay, if I try to use tongue right now Patton might get worried that I’m not actually ready. I’ve got to lead up to it.* Virgil started parting his lips as he kissed, which Patton eagerly copied. He kept the hand the was slightly pinned by their bodies on Patton’s shoulder, and used his other to run up and down Patton’s body, pressing and grabbing and rubbing as he did so. Patton’s moans let him know he was doing a good enough job.

Patton used the hand that was on Virgil’s waist to draw them closer together, both Sides moaning when they connected. Patton started rubbing his hand up and down Virgil’s side. He switched to dragging his fingertips lightly down his side, making Virgil twitch and both of them smile into the kiss. After a few minutes of touching and kissing each other, Virgil ran his tongue across Patton’s bottom lip.

Patton pulled back and looked into Virgil’s eyes. “Are you sure honey?”
“God, please, I want to so bad.”

Patton’s eyes darkened and he kissed Virgil a little roughly, opening his mouth when he felt Virgil’s tongue again. He groaned, long and low, at the feeling of kissing Virgil, their tongues just barely brushing at first but soon moving together.

The kiss changed from sweet and slightly playful to hot and intense in an instant. They were swept up in the feeling of each other’s mouths, the sensation of hands running over their bodies, the sounds and scents of each other, and the intimacy shared between them. They were both lost in the heat of the moment, and Virgil didn’t realize how hard he was getting until Patton accidentally brushed up against him.

Virgil whined and bucked, which caused Patton to pull away.

“Shhhhhh honey,” Patton soothed, panting and red-faced. “I know, it’s hard when you’re new at this. But if you want more, we’d need to have a discussion of sexual boundaries first, which can’t happen right now since you’re turned on.”

Virgil felt his eyes prick with tears. “I’m sorry,” he said thickly.

“No baby, it’s okay! I was okay with what was happening! I would have stopped you if I didn’t.” Patton brushed a few hairs out of Virgil’s face. “But I need to be sure that we’re clear on each other’s boundaries before we go further than that. A little grinding is okay, but with how new you are it might unintentionally escalate into something you’re not prepared for. Does that make sense?”

Virgil nodded. “Roman and Logan always stopped me when I got to this point too. Is that why? Because they know something else might happen? I thought it was just another part of kissing.”

Patton smiled at his sweet lover. “I’m sure that’s why. And it can be part of kissing, but you might have an orgasm if you kept doing that, and-”

“Got it!” Virgil interrupted, his face beet red.

Patton giggled and rubbed their noses together, drawing a smile from Virgil. “Do you want to keep kissing?”

Virgil frowned as he thought. “I… don’t think so? I’d probably just want more, but I don’t even know what more is. I mean, I know what more might mean, but I don’t think that’s what you mean, and it seems there’s other stuff between kissing and what the Dark Sides did to me.”

Patton’s eyes hardened. “There’s so much more, and what they did isn’t in any category of what we’d be doing at all.”

Virgil smiled and brushed a thumb on Patton’s cheekbone. “I know. I know you guys wouldn’t hurt me or force me to do something. I just don’t know… a lot, I guess?”

Patton softened his expression, internally kicking himself for letting his emotions take over and be angry when he and Virgil were so close together. “I’m glad to hear that, baby. Want to watch Parks and Rec?”

Virgil smiled and rubbed his nose against Patton’s, who giggled. “Sure Pat. I’d love to. Cuddles?”

“Yay!”
Virgil snorted, and they were soon cuddled together just like they were before they started kissing, happy and content.

/////

“This was such a great idea Logan!!” Patton squealed.

Logan blushed slightly as he laid out the extra-large blanket he’d brought into the Imagination. “Thank you Patton. Roman is also to thank, as this could not have happened without his hard work.” “I’m so proud of you Roman!!”

Roman pulled Patton close and kissed him. “It is my pleasure, sweetest love.”

Patton giggled and kissed Roman again, wrapping his arms around his prince’s neck. Virgil busied himself with setting out the food and drinks but smiled to himself at his boyfriends’ antics. Logan had suggested watching the Northern Lights, or “aurora borealis” as he put it, in the Imagination. Everyone had been on board pretty quickly, and they planned to go a week from then to give Roman time to set it up.

The night had finally come, Patton had packed snacks in a picnic basket, and they’d set off.

Logan raised an eyebrow as Patton and Roman got lost in kissing each other. “I’m concerned you may miss the aurora borealis if you continue.”

They parted, both red and neither looking apologetic. Virgil snorted and cuddled against Logan, having finished setting everything out.

The four boyfriends chatted as the sky darkened, drinking and eating as they felt like it. They all stopped when they saw Roman try and fail to subtly wave his hand.

A ribbon of green crossed the sky, and then another, and then the sky erupted in a mesmerizing display of dancing green curtains, feathers, and swirls. Virgil and Patton gasped when violet joined the green in a breathtaking display.

They were all rendered speechless as the colors danced and swayed in the sky, vibrant but not blinding. Virgil found himself hypnotized by the moving lights, unaware of any sounds or sensations, his entire awareness consumed by the enchanting, magical sight. He was so consumed by the display that he felt like he was in the sky, floating amongst the Northern Lights.

Virgil didn’t know how long it lasted, but he knew it was over far too soon. Logan pressed a kiss to Virgil’s hair.

“I gather you liked it?” he asked teasingly.

Virgil just nodded mutely. Patton was more verbal.

“THAT WAS INCREDIBLE!!”

Patton kissed Roman thoroughly, surprising the royal enough so he didn’t have time to gather himself and kiss back. Patton nearly jumped over to Logan and kissed him deeply, Logan able to reciprocate the kiss. Virgil chuckled at Patton’s enthusiasm and Roman’s red but smiling face.

“Do you want a kiss Virgie?” Patton asked.

Virgil smiled a little shyly. “A smaller one?”
Patton smiled and nodded, and leaned over to give Virgil an innocent, close-mouthed kiss. Once Virgil had kissed Patton, Patton went over to the basket and started putting things away.

Virgil tangled his hand in Logan’s hair and gave him a kiss. “This was great Lo.”

Logan smiled and touched Virgil’s face. “I’m glad you enjoyed it, darling.”

Virgil gave Logan a quick peck and looked at Roman, who was watching them longingly.

“Come on over dork.”

Roman hurried over, and Virgil kissed him as soon as he could, Roman not pushing the kiss farther than Virgil led. Roman kissed Logan next, deeply and passionately, the two Sides ever-competitive.

They headed back to the Mindscape, all equal parts thrilled and tired. Virgil kissed Patton goodnight at his door, and Roman and Logan at his own. He got ready for bed and crawled under the covers, smiling happily.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed!! I've recently hit two milestones: I've broken 300,000 words, and I got 200 followers on Tumblr! I had no idea I'd get that many!!
Virgil stared blankly at the ceiling, long having accepted that there was nothing he could do to change his fate. Deceit shuddered and groaned over Virgil as he came inside him. Virgil was too tired to keep shivering; he’d been strapped down, completely immobilized, to a table in the Room. For the first several hours, Virgil had managed to stay relatively calm as they left him alone. After those hours, however, the restraints wore down on his psyche and he struggled in them. He tried not to, but to be restrained for that long awoke an instinctual fear within him. He had no idea how long it took for his mind to break, but he just knew he was numb and wasn’t struggling anymore. The only things keeping him going were the nasogastric tube and the IV lines.

Deceit was panting as he pulled out and fixed himself, waving away the blood. He ran a yellow-gloved hand over Virgil’s body slowly, smiling to himself. His expression changed as he stalked over to Virgil and grabbed a handful of hair, wrenching his head backwards.

“Don’t mess this up. If you do, we won’t be responsible for our actions,” he hissed.

“Yes sir,” Virgil rasped, his throat dry. Deceit gave one of his saccharine smiles, patted his cheek just a little too roughly, and strode away, Rage taking Deceit’s place and kissing Virgil so violently his lip split.

~~~~~

Virgil jolted out of sleep and froze, a small whimper escaping him despite his best efforts.

I moved, I moved, oh god I moved!! And I made a sound!!! Oh god oh god oh god…

Virgil waited, trembling violently and silently crying, waiting for his punishment.

What are they going to do? They can’t beat me, what are they going to do?! They’ve already done so much, oh god what’s going to happen?! What are they going to do?!

He laid there, swallowing down sobs, until he registered a mattress beneath him and a blanket over him. All at once, he connected the dots and realized where he was and what had happened. He jumped out of bed, getting tripped by the sheets, and barely made it to the toilet in time to throw up. He puked up everything he had eaten and dry-heaved painfully for a long time after. Once his
stomach calmed down, he flushed the toilet. The sense memory of the nasogastric tube came back and he dry-heaved again, but luckily nothing more came out.

Virgil leaned his forehead against the seat, breathing heavily. He did what he could to catch his breath, sucking in shaky breaths and blowing them out. Eventually, he found the strength to stand up, his entire body quivering, and use mouthwash. He tipped the cap of mouthwash and started swishing, getting the taste of vomit and phantom taste of plastic out of his mouth. He spat it out, and looked in the mirror. He could only see down to his waist, which didn’t show anything. He slowly looked down his body, relieved to find himself intact.

*I’m not bleeding, I’m not bleeding, I’m okay. It’s okay, I’m okay. I’m safe. I’m not there anymore.*

Virgil’s knees gave out and he collapsed onto the floor, curling up into a ball and crying. He stayed there for an hour, getting colder and colder, until he couldn’t cry any more. Virgil laid motionless on the ground, unable to get up, feeling like he was floating and not connected with time or reality. He didn’t know how much time had passed like that, but he came back to himself when he felt how cold his feet were. He looked down to see them turning purple.

*I need to move.*

After a few minutes of gathering his strength, he slowly pushed himself up onto his hands, then his hands and knees, and finally to his feet by grabbing the sink counter and hauling his body upright. He walked, feet numb and clumsy, into his bedroom. He paused in front of his bed, new tears forming.

*I don’t want to be alone in a bed. I want Patton.*

Virgil sniffled miserably while he remembered the feeling of Patton’s arms around him, holding him close, the soft yet strong body beneath him incredibly comfortable.

*You’re not going to get that forever. Remember what Patton said? Better soak it up while you can.*

*Shut up!*

*Am I wrong?*

*...shut up.*

Virgil walked to Patton’s room, head hung low and his feet hurting, slowly coming back to life.

*Did you check the time before you left?*

*Fuck!*

*Better let him fuck you to make up for it.*

Virgil finally let a sob escape as he knocked on Patton’s door. He heard shuffling inside before Patton opened his door sleepily. He woke up fully when he saw Virgil.

“Oh baby,” he breathed, already opening his arms. “What happened?”

Virgil’s breath hiccuped. “N-n-nightmare.”

“Come here baby.”

Virgil curled into Patton’s chest, nearly collapsing as he sobbed. Patton hummed and hushed
Virgil, swaying them back and forth a little.

“I d-didn’t w-want it,” Virgil whimpered. “W-what the D-Dark Sides did t-to me.”

“I know honey, I know. I’m so sorry.”

They stood there for a few more minutes until Patton nuzzled the top of Virgil’s head.

“Want to go inside baby?”

“I-I don’t w-w-want any kissing. ‘M s-s-sorry.”

“Then there won’t be any kissing. You don’t have to apologize sweetie. I’m proud of you for telling me that.”

Virgil sniffled and allowed himself to be led to the bed, Patton closing the door behind them. Once Virgil had crawled onto the bed, Patton summoned Lucas and got in next to Virgil. Virgil grabbed Lucas and cuddled against Patton’s chest, relishing the warm, heavy arms around him.

“Goodnight chocolate chip.”

“Night Pat. I love you so much.”

“I love you too baby.”

///// 

Virgil slowly came to, smelling vanilla. Did I fall asleep in the kitchen? Soon, he remembered where he was and smiled, snuggling into the comfortable body beneath him.

I’m gonna miss this.

Virgil felt tears prick his eyes, but he forcefully shoved those thoughts away. I will enjoy this dammit!

Patton began to stir. Virgil felt arms tighten around him instinctively, huffing out a laugh at the innately cuddly nature of Patton.

“Mornin’ baby. How’d you sleep?”

Virgil sighed, breathing in the sweet scent of his boyfriend. “Better once I got here.”

“Good! I’m glad to hear that baby. Wanna cuddle some more?”

“Yeah.”

Patton pulled Virgil close and nuzzled his head, holding himself back from kissing the top of his younger boyfriend’s head. Virgil didn’t clarify what he meant, so no kissing meant no kissing. Patton rubbed Virgil’s arm soothingly, and Virgil savored every moment.

Patton’s alarm went off, making them both jump.

“I’m making waffles today!”

Virgil smiled. “Sounds delicious Pat.”

“Wanna help?”
“Hell yeah.”

Virgil sat up and stretched, Patton going to his bathroom. Virgil went to his room to get presentable and met Patton downstairs.

“Can you cut up some fruit sweetie? I already got the coffee started.”

Virgil started slicing up various fruits, noticing the different bowls of ingredients Patton had next to him.

“What’re those?”

Patton beamed. “Milk chocolate chips, white chocolate chips, and peanut butter chips!”

Virgil grinned. “Amazing.”

By the time Roman and Logan got into the kitchen, he and Patton were nearly finished with breakfast. Virgil was whipping up some eggs and was warming up breakfast sausages in a pan. He kept having to bite back tears, knowing he’d miss cooking with Patton. It was one of his favorite things to do and soon, he wouldn’t be able to do it any more.

_All because you’re a little slut._

Virgil couldn’t argue with that.

///// 

Roman had gotten back from vanquishing tornado eels from his realm and stepped into his bathroom, looking forward to a relaxing shower before going to sleep. Remembering Virgil’s promise of retribution, he checked each product container to make sure it wasn’t altered. Thankfully, everything looked clear.

He went through his advanced nightly beauty routine, which only took about an hour. He slipped into silk pyjamas and padded over to his bed. He could practically _feel_ the soft mattress and warm, heavy blankets. He lifted up the blankets, scooted under them, and laid his head down on his pillow.

Only for the pillow to be _way_ too soft.

Roman sat up quickly and looked back at his pillow, a distinct greasy feeling in his hair. The pillow had an oil stain where his head had been and something had come out of it. Dragging his fingers through the substance and sniffing it, he came to a horrible realization.

_Mayonnaise._

Roman shrieked and vanished the mayonnaise, leaving behind filthy sheets and several pillowcases. He spent the next fifteen minutes changing his sheets, pillowcases, and pyjamas, throwing the dirty ones into his hamper, and spent another thirty re-washing his hair and re-applying the conditioners.

Finally, he slid into his bed and laid down his head for the night, smirking.

_Well played, little bat._

/////
Virgil spent the next several weeks spending every moment he could with his boyfriends, dread continuing to build in his gut. He savored their scents, the way each one held him, the way each one hugged him, the way each one kissed. They were so different yet all so perfect for Virgil. He’d found himself getting choked up about how much he’d miss them, but he explained it away as loving them a little too much, which they seemed to accept.

Except Logan. He’s always been too observant, damn him.

He found himself in Roman’s room, just relaxing after a rather intense makeout session. Virgil had kept himself from moving his hips ever since Patton had let him know that wasn’t generally part of just kissing and required more discussion. At the moment, Roman was holding him and pressing soft kisses to the top of his head. Virgil felt at peace resting on the powerful chest with equally strong arms wrapped around him, keeping him safe. He was sporting a small, light bruise, but he was okay with little bruises.

“Forgive me, my love, but I’m afraid I’m falling asleep.”

“You’re falling asleep so soon after that?” Virgil teased.

Roman chuckled. “Someone wore me out,” he rumbled.

Virgil blushed and hid his face in Roman’s chest. With a last chuckle and kiss to Virgil’s hair, Roman stood and went to his bathroom to get ready for the night. Virgil stretched and stood.

“Imma go get Lucas.”

Roman nodded at him and closed the door to the bathroom behind him. Virgil walked around the bed and nearly got to the end when he noticed a small chest at the end of the bed that was open.

Huh. Never seen it open before.

Thinking it might have some skincare essentials or whatever shit that Roman “needed” for his nightly routine, Virgil opened it.

And almost immediately dissociated.

The chest was filled with toys, including dildos, vibrators, crops, paddles, floggers, blindfolds, leather restraints, lube, and lengths of rope and silk.

It’s going to happen, Roman’s going to tie you up and use you. Logan and Patton will come in afterwards. This is finally happening. You’re done, the dates are done, the relationship has finally reached the peak of having them fuck you. It’s all you’re good for, you know.

No! I don’t want… I want…

You signed up for this, you useless whore!! Don’t back out now because you’re too pathetic to hold up your end of the bargain!! Grow the fuck up and get back to doing what you’re actually good at!!

...they won’t hurt me as bad?

No. It’s going to be different. You know this, that’s why you signed up. They won’t hurt you more than necessary. They’ll probably be nice most of the time.

Virgil’s knees were quaking and he sobbed as he sank out, hyperventilating and instinctively
seeking out familiar presences.

When he appeared next to them, he was barely caught in time before he hit the ground.

“Oh coffee bean, what happened?”

Virgil’s vision was black around the edges and quickly diminishing. *Gotta tell them, I have to tell them that the Light Sides don’t want to date me any more.*

Virgil wheezed in a breath. “Roman, he… he…” and he passed out.

Remy held onto Virgil, letting Saul pick him up. They looked at each other with pure rage in their eyes.

“Time to plan a murder?” Remy asked.

“We’ll see, darling. Depends on what Roman did.”

As they put Virgil down on their bed and covered him, Remy leaned over and frowned.

“Is that a bruise on his neck?”

Saul took a closer look.

“It would seem so.”

Remy accidentally crushed the plastic Starbucks cup in his hand. “Murder?”

“Not yet darling. We need to know what happened.”

“Well, Virgil was more upset than he’s been in a while, Roman did something, and he has a bruise on his neck.”

“Let’s not be rash.”

Remy took a stabilizing breath. “You’re right baby. Come on, let’s see what the hell is going on.”

They sank out and arrived directly in Roman’s room. Roman jumped from where he was in his bed, not expecting any visitors.

“Greetings Remy, greetings Saul! What can I do for you?”

Remy smiled dangerously, and Saul gently put a hand on his shoulder. “Virgil was very upset when he came to us. Do you know why?”

Roman’s head jerked back slightly. “No, I’ve no idea. Did he have a flashback?”

Remy stepped forward, Saul’s hand dropping from his shoulder. “I don’t think so, boo. We asked him what happened, he said your name, and passed out.”

Roman’s face paled and his eyes became shiny. “H-he did?” Roman asked brokenly.

Remy hadn’t been expecting *that* response, but was still on guard. “Yeah. What happened?”

Roman’s lower lip wobbled as he hung his head and tears came out of his eyes. “We kissed on my bed. Did… did he not want that?” Roman’s voice cracked and became mostly cries. “Did I hurt my sweet angel?” he asked as he began to cry. “God I f-feel sick.”
Remy sighed. *Shit.* “Don’t know boo, but he was upset about something and you seem surprised.”

Saul was feeling distinctly uncomfortable. “Was anything out of place in your room when you came back in?”

Roman’s breath hitched. “Y-you think something in m-my room might have triggered him?”

“It’s possible. Was anything out of place?”

Roman sniffled. “I d-don’t know…” he paled. “Oh god.”

Remy was losing his patience. He had a Host to get to sleep and a little coffee bean to look after. “What?”

“My chest.”

Remy raised an eyebrow as he appraised Roman’s figure. “Yeah, we get it, you’re hot, what does this have to do with Virgil?”

“No, the chest at the end of my bed. The latch, it’s broken.”

Remy looked at the chest and started walking towards it. “What’s in it?”

“Don’t look in there!” Roman said quickly. Remy looked up at the prince expectantly, seeing a reddening face. He smirked.

“Marital aids?”

Roman just groaned and hid his face. Remy snickered, then sobered.

“I guess we know what triggered him.”

Roman slumped. “I did hurt my raven, just not in the way I thought…”

Saul took a few steps forward and clapped his hand on Roman’s shoulder. “I don’t think you did this time Roman.”

Roman sent a grateful smile Saul’s way. “Do kill me if I do, yeah?”

“We will,” Remy promised.

Saul squeezed Roman’s shoulder and stepped back. “We’ll take care of Virgil tonight. You don’t need to worry about him.”

Roman huffed humorlessly. “I still will.”

“Good.”

With that, Remy and Saul sank out. Saul got on the bed next to Virgil and Remy ran his fingers through the smaller Side’s hair, smoothing out his sleep. He stayed for as long as he could before Thomas needed him.

“I’ll be back as soon as I can,” he whispered.

“I know. I’ll look after him. I love you.”

“Love you too babe.”
Definitely a rougher chapter for, well, everyone, but it was definitely necessary. Buckle up kiddos.
Virgil woke slowly, the first thing coming into his awareness being a headache. He groaned and opened his eyes. The lights were dimmed, but he could tell he was in the Neutral Side of the mindscape. The previous night came flooding back to him, and his breath hitched as he started to whimper and weakly cry.

“Shhhhh little one, it’s okay now.”

Virgil practically threw himself into Saul’s chest and sobbed.

“It’s okay, you’re safe, you’re safe now,” Saul murmured as he rubbed the smaller Side’s back, trying to soothe him. Virgil’s cries only became more anguished and heart-wrenching and Saul frowned.

“Darling, tell me what’s wrong.”

Virgil let out a few more sobs. “Th-they don’t w-want to d-date me anym-more!”

“Did they say that?”

“N-no, b-but Roman has t-tools he w-wants to use on m-me!”

Saul clutched Virgil to his chest. “Did he tell you that or imply it?”

“N-no, but I kn-know that’s what he w-wants!”

“Darling, I’m just trying to understand. Can you explain to me how you know?”

“Th-that’s just how relationships w-work with m-me. Once they can u-use me, they do.”

Saul’s heart shattered at his words and the resigned tone in Virgil’s voice, even if he seemed to be calming down. “Little one, from what Roman told us, I truly don’t think that’s what he wants. He seemed horrified at the thought of accidentally hurting you.”

Virgil sniffled and shifted on Saul’s chest. *Makes sense. I know they’re not like the Dark Sides. They don’t want to have to hurt me more than necessary.* “I know, it’s just… hard. After the Dark Sides,“

Saul pulled Virgil farther onto his chest, knowing he’d probably never be able to hold Virgil close enough. “I’m so sorry, little one.”

Virgil snuggled the best he could at the new angle. “It’s not your fault.”
“If we had known, you know Remy and I would have gotten you out of there. We would have figured out a way to keep you safe.”

“I know Saul.” Virgil sighed. “And I know Roman isn’t like them. I just overreacted.”

“You didn’t overreact. You got triggered.”

Virgil closed his eyes, not having the strength to fight Saul on that.

“Remy will be back soon. Should we head to the kitchen?”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

/////  
Remy, Saul, and Virgil ate breakfast together before Virgil left for the Light Side of the mindscape again, Remy and Saul reiterating their promise to let Virgil come to them anytime. With a few last hugs, Virgil sank out of the Neutral Side appeared outside of Roman’s door.

Gotta apologize for freaking out. Right after we had such a good- no, great time last night. Virgil knocked on Roman’s door tentatively. He frowned when he didn’t hear anything. He knocked louder, thinking Princey was just engrossed in a task. When still no answer came, Virgil’s chest tightened. He tested the door handle, and finding it unlocked, pushed the door open slowly. Virgil scanned the lavish bedroom, finding it mostly intact. He saw the chest which he now knew was filled with tools for the Light Sides to use on him, but he tore his gaze away from that. I need to make sure Roman’s okay. What if he’s hurt? Or sad? Or upset about last night? What if he hit his head in the bathroom?

Virgil looked around the massive bathroom next, relieved to not find Roman bleeding out on the tiles but still worried about where he might be. Virgil searched his walk-in closet next, and panicked when he couldn’t find his prince there. If he was in the Imagination, one could almost always hear something when they stood outside his door. Virgil was about to go into an anxiety attack when he heard Roman’s boisterous laugh in the hallway. He sagged in relief, knees nearly buckling.

He was just talking to the others. Thank god. Of course he was, he has more to offer than I do. Virgil blinked at that.

No, no I have other things to offer in a relationship besides my body. Once it gets to that point that’s all they’ll use me for, but I’m fine with that. I get to spend time with them now, and they’re not going to hurt me more than they need to. That’s all I need. Virgil tried to believe that.

Roman walked in, surprised to see Virgil.

“Virgil! My sweet love, how are you?”

Virgil sighed and smiled. “I’m alright Princey, you?”

“I’m doing quite well, thank you for asking!” Roman’s smile fell as he approached Virgil, who hunched his shoulders. “Are you certain you’re alright, angel? Saul and Remy told me that you were upset.”
Virgil dropped his gaze and stared at the plush carpet. “Yeah, I’m alright. I’m sorry ‘bout that. I was just… overreacting, like I always do.”

Roman lifted Virgil’s chin with a finger. “Do not be so cruel to yourself, raven. You were frightened, quite reasonably so. I certainly didn’t intend for you to find those… items.” Roman’s face turned pink.

Virgil smiled shyly. “Yeah, I know. It’s fine, I’ve gotta learn about them at some point right?”

“In your own time, dark knight, and not a moment sooner.”

Virgil curled into Roman’s chest, who quickly wrapped arms around him. They stayed there for a few minutes, standing in silence, just feeling each other’s presences. Roman kissed the top of Virgil’s head chastely.

“I’m afraid I must depart, my love. My Host needs me.”


“Certainly, stormcloud! Let me open the path for you.”

Roman pulled away and extended his hands slightly towards his wardrobe. After a few moments, he smiled proudly.

“There! Now you should be able to go through.”

“Thanks Princey.” After a moment, Virgil kissed Roman slowly. He pulled back just as the kiss was starting to get heated. “Go take care of Thomas. I’ll see you later.”

Roman’s eyes were dark as he brought Virgil’s hand to his mouth and placed a kiss on his knuckles that went on just a little too long. “Indeed you shall,” he said lowly.

Virgil gulped as Roman smirked and sank out. After a minute of being paralyzed, he shook himself and walked up to the wardrobe. He took a deep breath, and stepped over the threshold, relieved to find himself in the stables and not Narnia. He walked to the end of the stables, royal stablehands bowing to him as he walked by, and stopped in front of Rojo. Virgil extended his hand for Rojo to smell, and scratched his face once he did.

“Sir?”

Virgil looked down at a shorter, elderly man.

“Pardon my intrusion sir, but I have some apples Rojo might like.”

Virgil smiled at the man, hoping to put him at ease. “Thank you, I appreciate it!”

The man smiled back and nodded, handing a small basket of apples over to Virgil with a bow before scurrying off to do some other chore. Sure enough, Rojo seemed to smell the apples because he extended his head and neck as far as it would reach over the wall. Virgil stepped back at the sudden movement, but smiled when Rojo took the apple from his hand gently.

“Sir?”

Virgil wasn’t sure how long he spent in the stables with Rojo, but when he left he felt much more relaxed and his head was much quieter. As he walked towards the portal that would bring him back to Roman’s room, he caught sight of the castle and couldn’t stop the fear that leapt into his throat. Normally, he was in the Imagination with at least one other Side, and although he knew the Dark
Sides were locked up securely in the dungeon, he was still frightened. He walked quickly, almost running to the portal and sighed in relief when he was back in Roman’s room. He knew it was illogical, but he couldn’t stop his heart from pounding.

Stop being a fucking idiot, you’re overreacting. Goddammit, you’re so fucking useless. It’s fine, you’re safe, they can’t hurt you anymore.

With one more look cast at the now plain wardrobe, he went downstairs to kill time and watch Thomas until lunch was ready.

///// Virgil spent the rest of the day relaxing with the Light Sides. Despite his scare in Roman’s realm earlier, he was able to fall back into an easy rhythm with his boyfriends. Patton had made Japanese fried chicken for dinner, and they cuddled on the couch ready to watch some movies.

Virgil was situated between Patton and Logan, Roman letting everyone who would listen know what a travesty it was that he wasn’t one of the Sides in the middle. Virgil had snorted at the dramatics, and wasted little time in turning his attention to Logan. Logan was smiling at him softly, the kind of unguarded smile only his boyfriends got to see.

How the hell am I supposed to resist kissing him now? Virgil smiled back as he leaned up and kissed Logan, gentle and relaxed. Logan had already thrown an arm over his shoulders, and he brought his other hand up to caress Virgil’s face. They kissed like that until the opening lines of the 2002 Scooby-Doo movie interrupted them. From the smiles and blushes on Patton’s and Roman’s faces, Virgil gathered they had been doing the same.

The movie had been hilarious, and after it ended they tuned into the show Thomas was watching. While Logan and Roman bickered over how to change the channel, Virgil turned to Patton.

“Hey.”

“Hey yourself!”

Virgil snorted. “Wanna make out?”

“You betcha!”

Virgil chuckled as he leaned in, kissing Patton much like he had been kissing Logan. Patton had also draped an arm around Virgil as soon as they had sat down, but unlike Logan, Patton used his other arm to also wrap around Virgil and put his hand at the back of his head. Just like a hug. Virgil smiled into the kiss and felt Patton smile back. After a few minutes, Virgil ran his tongue along Patton’s lips, who quickly reciprocated. The kiss was still slow and sweet, although it was beginning to become more passionate. When a small moan escaped Virgil, Patton pulled back.

“I don’t want to get you too distracted!”

Virgil was lightly panting. “I wouldn’t complain.”

Patton giggled, pressed one more kiss to Virgil’s lips, and leaned back against the couch, ready to watch the new Loki movie.

After that movie ended, it was time to go to bed. Logan was pulled into Patton’s bedroom by his tie, so it was just Roman and Virgil once they got to the purple door.
Virgil wrapped arms around Roman’s neck as he rested his hands on Virgil’s waist.

“I didn’t get to kiss you during our date tonight,” Virgil said quietly.

“I noticed. It’s not too late.”

“Hmmmmm, I guess we should make up for it, don’t you?”

“I do.”

Virgil smiled as Roman pulled him closer, a hand moving up to touch Virgil’s face and his free arm wrapping around Virgil’s back to keep him close. They kissed, Virgil initiating French kissing almost immediately. The kiss turned heated rather quickly, Roman taking the lead and sweeping Virgil away, seemingly to the center of the Earth. Heat and pressure were pressing in on him from all sides, but Virgil found it overwhelming in the best possible way as Roman continued to kiss him senseless. They stayed pressed together, fire building until Roman gently pulled back. Virgil’s eyes were glazed over slightly and he could feel that Roman was just as aroused as he was.

“Goodnight, my nightingale.”

“Night Ro,” Virgil croaked. Roman smirked, ran his thumb along Virgil’s slightly-bruised bottom lip and left for his own room.

Virgil retreated into his room, sporting a dopey smile as he grabbed Shelly and put her next to his pillow. He tried to get himself off in his bathroom, but lost his erection again. Despite the repeated failure and sexual frustration, Virgil went to sleep with a pleasant warmth in his chest.

//////

The next morning he tried to get himself off again with the same result. He felt a little disheartened, but pulled himself together and went downstairs for breakfast. Patton had made chocolate chip waffles (“for my sweet chocolate chip!”), but Virgil felt like something was off as soon as he had entered the kitchen. They were a little more quiet than usual, Roman was eating more slowly, and Patton’s cheeriness seemed a little forced, even as he and Virgil made plans to make blueberry pancakes the next morning. Sure enough, when they had all finished eating, Logan turned to Virgil.

“How are you feeling, my dear?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked around the table. “I dunno. Are you guys okay? You’ve been acting kinda weird this morning.

Logan adjusted his tie, and Virgil’s heart started beating faster. Oh shit.

“We’re quite alright Virgil. I apologize if our behavior has alarmed you. We believe that it may be time to discuss sexual boundaries if you feel up to it?”

Virgil felt like he’d been dunked into an ice bath. It’s starting. They don’t want to date me anymore, that part’s over. It’s going to be just like the Dark Sides- no, not like them, but I won’t be able to go on any more dates with them. I’m just going to be used. Will they stop kissing me? Is it worse if they keep kissing me? They’re going to use me. Virgil’s eyes welled with tears and his throat closed. They want to fuck me, I don’t want to, not yet. I’m scared. I can’t watch movies with them anymore. Will they let me eat with them? Was this my last breakfast with them? Is that why Patton made chocolate chip waffles? Because I won’t be his chocolate chip anymore?
The Light Sides’ eyes widened as Virgil sniffled, a tear breaking free and rolling down his face. 
I’m going to miss not having to lay still while I’m being fucked. I’m going to miss being called nice things. I’m going to miss being their boyfriend.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed the appetizer! :D
“Darling, we do not have to talk about sexual boundaries this morning if you do not want to.”

Virgil sniffled and his breath hiccuped. “N-no, that’s okay. It’s gotta happen at some point, right?”

Roman gently took one of Virgil’s hands in his own. “It does need to happen before we make love, but both those things will only happen when you’re comfortable with them.”

Virgil smiled through his tears at Roman. *I knew they would be better than the Dark Sides.* “I appreciate it Ro, but I think now’s the time.”

“Yeah sweetie?” Patton asked cautiously.

“I kn-know we were p-planning on making blueberry p-p-pancakes tomorrow morning, c-can we still do that?”

Patton tilted his head. “Of course baby. Why wouldn’t we?”

Virgil bit his lip as his heart began to shatter. “We’re past that part aren’t w-we? We’ve d-done that, and n-now you guys are gonna f-fuck me, and I’m f-f-fine with that! I am! I’m j-just glad I c-could have the t-time with you that I c-could! But, u-um, I was just,” Virgil felt irrationally angry at the sob that tore from his throat, “I w-was l-looking forward t-to m-making blueberry pancakes, and I w-was w-wondering if it would bother y-y-you if w-we still m-m-made them tomorrow?”

Virgil froze and paled, realizing his error. “I-I’m sorry!! I shouldn’t have asked, things are different now, I know they’re different now. I’m sorry, I know I don’t get a say anymore.”

Patton was shaking and had his hands over his mouth. Roman looked like he was about to be sick, and Logan wasn’t doing much better.

“Oh moonlight…” Logan began.

Virgil turned surprised eyes to him. “Y-you’re still gonna call me moonlight?”

With that, Patton burst into tears. Logan turned his attention to comforting Patton, letting Roman try to get through to Virgil.
“Pat, what’s wrong?! Why are you crying?” Virgil asked, concerned and confused.

“W-w-we’re not going t-to hurt you honey! We’re not like them!”

“I know!” Patton looked up at Virgil, hope shining in his eyes at Virgil’s exclamation. “I know you’re not like the Dark Sides!”

Patton was relieved, though he was still crying. “W-why do you think we w-want-” Patton’s voice choked off, unable to finish his question.

Virgil frowned, not really understanding why the Light Sides were so upset. “Because isn’t that why you wanted to talk, b-because you want to fuck me?”

“Nay, sweet angel,” Roman said quietly, voice shaking, “We noticed you were pushing to move forward in the relationship. We simply wanted you to be comfortable.”

“Oh. I-I guess that makes sense.” It’s all my fault.

If you hadn’t been such a slut you’d still have boyfriends. Now you’re their fucktoy.

I know.

“Tell me what’s going through that head of yours, stormcloud.”

Virgil sniffled. “I know you’re gonna be nicer than the Dark Sides.”

“That’s a rather low bar.”

Virgil laughed wetly. “Yeah, I guess so. Just… I know there’ll be less blood and pain, right?”

He saw Roman move and stop out of the corner of his eye as Patton’s cries picked up again. “May I hug you, love?”

“Yeah.”

Roman got out of his chair and wrapped his arms around Virgil, pulling him close but being careful with how hard he was squeezing the smaller Side. Virgil curled into the powerful chest, relishing the feeling, knowing this might be the last hug he ever got from his prince. He wanted to scream when Roman pulled back.

“Raven,” Roman began seriously, hands on Virgil’s shoulders, “we will never hurt you.”

Virgil was a little frustrated, because if they wanted to fuck him they had to hurt him at least a little. Not really a way around that part. Sex always hurts.

Roman wasn’t finished. “And I have no intention of not dating you anymore. Why would we stop dating you if we have sex?”

Virgil blinked, confused. “Isn’t dating just what leads up to sex? Like, we get to know each other like that, and then you fuck me? I kinda owe you after all the nice things you guys have done for me.” I know I’m just going to be a hole to them. Why am I upset? I shouldn’t be upset.

“Darling, no,” Logan said thickly from the other side of the table, still comforting a distraught Patton. “You don’t “owe” us anything, and no one is ever entitled to another person’s body. That includes your body.”
Virgil grunted in frustration. “Guys, it’s fine, I know what I signed up for, you can fuck me now if you want. You’ve spent long enough being nice to me and dating me, I-I’ll miss it,” he admitted as his voice cracked and his eyes burned, “but I know I can’t expect more than what you’ve given me. You’ve earned it. It’s fine, I know you’ll be nicer about it th-than the Dark Sides.” He shivered involuntarily.

Patton was barely able to speak through his tears. “Y-you thought us being n-nice to you and dating you w-was us just working up to,” he swallowed thickly and barely managed to blink back his tears, “to raping you?!”

“No, I know we were just working up to sex. And I know you won’t be hurting me more than what you need to get off! It’s fine, I’m consenting to it, you’re good.”

Patton was aghast. “That… that’s not… NO!” he cried as he dissolved into sobs again.

“Virgil,” Logan said slowly, “Have you ever done something intimate with us that you didn’t want?”

Virgil shook his head quickly. “No! I swear, I wanted everything! It was,” he smiled and his eyes grew a little distant. “really nice. So nice. And I enjoyed every second of it. You’ve been nicer than the Dark Sides, and that’s all I could ask for.” Tears gathered in his eyes. “I’m gonna miss it. I’m gonna miss going on th-those dates, and c-cooking with you, a-and being y-your boyfriend, and your moon, y-your raven, your ch-chocolate chip.” A harsh sob escaped him, his throat painful. “I l-loved the Imagination and Rojo, a-and the s-stars and Northern Lights, and k-kissing you.” He started breaking down and crying, grief-stricken over his loss. “They w-were so awesome and I’ve n-never been h-happier, b-but all good things m-must come t-to an e-end, right? I kn-knew it w-was t-t-temporary, I know w-what I signed up f-for.” Virgil was openly crying at this point, his chest feeling like it was caving in. “I kn-know it’s time t-temporary. I kn-kn-know you g-guys have earned i-it. Y-y-you n-need stress r-relief after d-dealing w-w-with m-me.”

And with that, Virgil completely broke down into violent sobs, nearly hysterical with heartbreak, face buried in his hands. This is it, they’re gonna use me now. I’m not their boyfriend anymore, we’re having sex, they’re not dating me anymore. No more romance. No more kissing. No more dates. No more cuddling. No more love. Oh god, how can I live?!

Roman brought one of his hands from Virgil’s shoulders to touch one of the hands on Virgil’s face.

“Love, sweet love, we do not want that. We still want to date you, and I feel quite confident speaking for all of us. We would never see you as a tool for stress relief,” he spat out the last part. “Nothing makes me happier than the thought of dating you and romancing you for the rest of our lives. You’ll always be my gorgeous raven, I promise.”

Virgil’s mind was spinning, grief still shredding his heart and causing stabbing pains in his chest. That doesn’t make any sense! You date, and it’s romantic, and then when you fuck that’s the end of the romance and shit! Why can’t they make up their damn minds?! It would be a hell of a lot easier if I knew when they’re planning on fucking me so I know when to stop expecting the nice dates and nicknames and whatever else!

“Aha! Love, you’ve seen Patton, Logan, and I go out on dates, yes?”

Virgil had to let out a few more sobs before he could speak. Why is he rubbing their relationship in my face? “Y-yeah?”

“We have sex with each other, but we haven’t stopped dating each other!”
“R-Roman’s right!” Patton exclaimed.

“So?”

“Why would it be any different for you, my dark knight?”

Virgil curled in on himself. “B-because I’m n-n-not like you,” he said as quietly as he could through his tears. “Because I’m m-m-meant to be a t-toy. It’s w-w-what I’m good at.”

“You are not,” Logan said firmly. “You are a person. The Dark Sides were wrong. I know they told and treated you differently, but they were wrong. You are just like us. You are a person with full rights, not an object, and you will always have a say.”

Virgil felt dizzy and light-headed. “Y-you don’t w-want to break up w-with me? W-we c-c-can have sex and s-still date?”

“Of course baby!”

Roman summoned a handkerchief and wiped tears and snot off Virgil’s face. “Please do not fret, beautiful. Romance and sex are not… eh, Logan, what’s the term?”

“Mutually exclusive.”

“Yes, that! In fact, they go hand-in-hand. I cannot imagine sex without romance.”

Virgil was trying to understand what the Light Sides were saying, but none of it made any sense! It went against everything he’d thought in regards to sex. “C-can I h-have some t-t-time to think? I-i-it’s kind of a l-lot of information,” he asked, breath still hitching violently.

“Of course sweetie! Just let us know if you need anything!”

Virgil nodded and sank out to his room. He collapsed on his bed and drew Lucas into his chest.

“I don’t know what’s going on anymore buddy,” he admitted. “I thought dating would end when they wanted sex from me. I don’t know what to think anymore.” He sniffled and he began taking hiccupsing breaths once more. “B-but how much of it is going to be like the Dark S-Sides? It always hurt so bad. How much sex are they going to want?” Virgil took a few shaky breaths. “I d-don’t w-w-want anything t-to hurt w-w-with th-them.”

Virgil cried into Lucas for close to two hours, feeling phantom pain in his lower half already. He pulled away from the stuffed animal and wiped his red, irritated face with his hoodie sleeve. He straightened his clothes, ran his hand through his hair a few times, then sank out.

When he appeared in the Neutral Side, he heard voices in the kitchen; Remy was giggling and Saul was chuckling. Virgil cleared his throat loudly. I do NOT want to walk in on them again.

“Hey coffee bean! Come on in! We’re making pancake art! It was Saul’s idea!”

Virgil smiled, despite the confusion and heartbreak still swirling in his chest and head. When he walked into the kitchen, Saul and Remy noticed his face immediately.

“What happened sugar?”

Virgil sniffled, still a little hungry since he hadn’t been able to eat as much as he should have during breakfast due to his nerves. “C-can we eat f-first?”
“Of course baby. Why don’t you have a seat, this was our last pancake anyway.”

Virgil plopped down in a chair, Saul sitting next to him and silently rubbing his back.

Virgil ate a few ambiguous-looking pancakes before he felt full again. Remy had sat himself on the other side of Virgil.

“What’s going on sugar?”

Virgil closed his eyes and leaned against Remy. “The Light Sides want to have sex and I f-freaked out a little.”

“Oh sweetie,” Remy cooed, holding him as close as he could with the chairs in the way.

“C-can we… can we cuddle?”

“Absolutely. Couch?”

“Can it be your bed instead? I’m kinda tired and I know you are.”

“Sure. Come on coffee bean.”

Soon, all three Sides were on Remy’s bed, with Virgil in between Saul and Remy. He had his head resting on Remy’s chest with Remy’s arms wrapped around him and Saul holding the two of them the best he could.

“Did they make you do anything or feel like you had to do anything you didn’t want to?” Remy asked quietly after a few minutes of silent cuddling.

Virgil shook his head. “No, they actually said some confusing stuff. They just wanted to have a conversation about “sexual boundaries” as Logan put it, so I thought they were gonna tell me what they wanted.”

“Good. A conversation first is important.”

“What was confusing, little one?”

Virgil snuggled closer to Remy. “They said they wouldn’t stop dating me just because they wanted to use me-”

“They said they wanted to use you?!” Remy asked furiously.

“No, th-that was more me thinking that. Roman called it “making love”. Sorry.”

Remy squeezed him. “It’s okay baby. I was just getting ready to fight.”

Virgil snorted. “I thought once they decided to fuck me that’d be the end of dating and romance and stuff. Like, then it would be kinda like the Dark Sides but not really, they’d just use me, but I know they won’t hurt me more than they have to.”

Remy gasped, heartbroken, while Saul tightened his grip on the two of them.

Virgil continued. “But they said it wasn’t like that at all and got really upset. Like, Patton was crying pretty hard and Logan and Roman looked sick. Even though I told them I knew there’d be less pain and blood!”
“Sex isn’t supposed to be like that at all,” Remy breathed.

“But I’m confused! I thought allosexual people dated until they had sex! And then it’s just sex! But they said that they still date while having sex?”

“Absolutely baby. Saul and I were making pancake art this morning!”

Saul breathed in the scent of oud and lavender. “You believe that when people begin a sexual relationship, something gets taken away. It is the opposite little one; sex is simply added. Does that help?”

Virgil felt his brain screech to a halt. Oh. “Okay, so… I can still go on dates with them and stuff, we’ll just be having sex?”

“Yes, and only having sex when everyone involved wants to.”

Virgil was still dubious about the fact that he could say no to sex once they started having it. It’s not like kissing after all. Sex is way different. I can’t be mean and say no! “That… makes me feel better. Thanks guys.” Virgil swallowed thickly as he got choked up. “I-I thought I w-w-was losing them,” he whimpered. “I thought I w-w-wasn’t gonna b-be Patton’s ch-chocolate chip anymore.”

Both sets of arms tightened around him. “Oh honey…”

“I can see why you were so upset. You thought you were going to lose everything you loved in the relationship with them.”

Virgil nodded as he sniffled. “I’d still get to be with them though, just in a different way.”

Remy kissed his hair. “As twitchy as I can get, I doubt the Light Sides would treat you anything like the Dark Sides.”

Virgil’s breath hitched. “Th-thanks Rem.” He curled up into Remy’s chest more. “Can we rest a bit? I’m tired of crying.”

“Oh of course.”

Virgil stayed with his brothers and surrogate parents until he felt both of their breathing even out. He carefully sank out to his room, grateful for their insight and support.

I need to get them a fucking gift basket or some shit.

Virgil cleaned up his appearance in the mirror and went downstairs once it was time for lunch. He heard the Light Sides chatting in the kitchen, albeit more subdued than normal. He walked as quietly as he could, not wanting to announce his presence for a reason unknown to him. When he rounded the corner, he saw Patton heating up some macaroni and cheese while Logan made a ricotta and tomato salad. Virgil thought he smelled tangy balsamic vinegar.

Oh shit. Okay, Saul said that things get added and not taken away. But what about at the table? What do I do?

“Hello Virgil!” Roman exclaimed.

Virgil sent him a half-smile and two-finger salute.

“How are you feeling, my love?”
Virgil bit his lip. “A little confused?”

Logan turned, eager to help. “What are you confused about Virgil?”

“I-” Virgil sucked in a breath to prevent his voice from shaking. “Do I still get to sit at the table? Saul said that things don’t get taken away when people start having sex, but I don’t know what that means when we’re in the kitchen?”

“What do you mean?”

Virgil cursed the tears that sprang to his eyes. “I should be under the table.”

There was a beat of silence, and then Logan abandoned the salad to wrap Virgil in a crushing hug.

“Never,” he whispered hoarsely. “Never. We’d never…” And with that, Logan broke. He began bawling into Virgil’s shoulder.

Virgil hugged Logan back. “Shit, Lo, it’s okay, it’s okay,” he said, trying to soothe his… boyfriend? Are we still boyfriends? We are, right?

Logan almost barked out a laugh. “You expected us to force you and you’re trying to comfort me?”

“You wouldn’t be forcing me! I agreed to it!”

That just made Logan cry harder. “I have no logic to comfort myself with,” he sobbed. “My boyfriend thinks I’d hurt him and that it’s okay.”

Virgil looked at the other two Light Sides in the room. Roman was facing away from them and had his hands on the counter, leaning heavily against it. Patton approached Roman, but Roman just gently raised up an open palm, stopping Patton. Patton walked over to Logan and Virgil instead.

“Honey, we don’t want you to agree to something just because we’re not as bad as those Dark Sides,” he said in a way that told Virgil he’d rehearsed it. “We want you to agree to something because you want it. Not because you think we are owed it or need something, which is wrong. Does that make sense honey?”

Virgil nodded. “You want sex with me when I feel good about it or something? When I want it?”

“Only then,” three voices echoed around the kitchen.

Virgil leaned his head on Logan’s shoulder. “I… I can understand the words you’re saying, but like, it’s kind of confusing?”

“Tell me what’s confusing,” Patton encouraged.

Virgil blew out a puff of air. “I don’t know, it just… doesn’t make any sense? This is so new and weird for me.”

“D-do you think Patton, R-Roman, and I have sex the way you’re describing?” Logan asked shakily.

“No, of course not!” Virgil cried. He paused. “Oh. I see what you did there.”

Logan squeezed him. “Why would it be any different for you?”

Virgil furrowed his brow. “I don’t know, it just is? I don’t… know why,” he finished in a whisper.
“Do you think you could talk to Dr. Picani about it?” Patton asked softly.

Virgil smiled. “Yeah, that’s probably not a bad idea.”

Logan pulled back, just enough to look Virgil in the eyes.

“We will go as slow as you want. We will never hurt you. If we were to have you perform sexual acts that you did not want for any reason, that would be hurting you.”

Virgil nodded, looking at the ground and frowning. Why is that in their definition of hurting if I’m agreeing to it? “Okay…”

Logan squeezed his shoulders. “Let’s eat. Food will help.”

Virgil met Logan’s gaze again and smiled. Logan smiled softly back, then went to his seat at the table. Everyone sat down soon after, Roman still looking pale and sick, but they soon settled back into regular conversation. Afterwards, they cuddled on the couch while Thomas played Final Fantasy for his Joystick Joyride series. Roman let Patton and Logan cuddle Virgil, insisting he’d be alright without it. He still reached a hand over Logan’s shoulders to scratch at the back of Virgil’s neck. Virgil closed his eyes, sighed, and rumbled in content. Although he was still very confused and not entirely convinced his boyfriends weren’t mad at him, he was grateful to have another day being loved by them.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed the first course! The line about blueberry pancakes came from my lovely, patient beta Jasper01 as we were discussing the pain. Go check out her Renegades! Au!! It’s incredible!!
Chapter 127

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! Nothing super graphic here, but in the first half of the chapter a character is reviewing their actions to see if they've committed any boundary violations and is reflecting on consent, and in the second half of the chapter there are some rather blunt discussions of Virgil's time with the Dark Sides, including some mentions of injury. In addition, in the first half of the chapter, a character vomits. I think that's it, please let me know if I missed any!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Roman shut the door to his bedroom behind him, Patton cuddling with Virgil on the couch where he had fallen asleep. Roman looked at his hands, seeing invisible stains on them.

_How much did Virgil actually want? How much did I force on him?_ Roman waved his hand so his room was soundproofed as he began to sob. _Being better than the Dark Sides is hardly a feat. Did he actually want any of this, or did he just want something that wasn’t them?_

Virgil’s attempts at reassurances ran through his mind.

“I know you’re gonna be nicer than the Dark Sides.”

“I know what I signed up for, you can fuck me now if you want.”

“It’s fine, I know you’ll be nicer about it than the Dark Sides.”

“And I know you won’t be hurting me more than what you need to get off?

“I know there’ll be less blood and pain, right?”

His and Virgil’s debate on the meaning of Disney movies came to mind.

_How much of this is Stockholm Syndrome?_

Roman felt like he was going to be sick and started moving quickly to his bathroom.

*People who have Stockholm Syndrome can’t consent. Hostages can’t consent because they’re in captivity.*

Roman threw up his lunch and breakfast into the toilet bowl. Once he was done, he flushed and rinsed his mouth with mouthwash. Thinking back to every time he touched Virgil, every time he kissed Virgil, every time he held Virgil… how much of that did he actually want? How much of that was because he had no other option? The Light Sides were the only ones he could date, he was stuck in their side of the mindscape, and they were the ones taking care of him after he was hurt. What kind of choice was that?

*My sweet angel, I never meant to hurt you. But I did. And I’m so sorry. I’ll never forgive myself for what I’ve done to you. You didn’t deserve to be sexually assaulted by a man who was supposed to love you. Roman’s eyes watered. And I do love you, I swear I do. But I clearly have not shown it.*
Roman stripped off his prince uniform and left it in a pile on the bathroom floor. He got into his shower and turned the water on cold, picking up his loofah and lathering it. He scrubbed at his skin, trying to wash away the phantom dirt collected there, tears streaming down his face and chest tight.

*My little crow, this entire time, has been with me because I’m “not as bad as the Dark Sides.” Did he ever want to be in a relationship with me, or did he just need human contact besides the Dark Sides? Did he attach to us because we helped him when he was hurt?*

*Did he ever truly love me?*

Roman broke down completely at that, collapsing on the floor and sobbing, nearly wailing. He had to turn the temperature of the water up after some time because he was shivering too much.

*How can someone truly love another when they’re trapped? I am no better than a captor who has forced their victim to love them. He had so many firsts with me, and they were all fake. He thought he loved me, as much as a prisoner’s psyche makes them believe they love their captors so they don’t go insane.*

He cried for hours, sobbing at the realization that the love he thought they had was all a farce, a psychological defense mechanism so Virgil could survive the abuse being forced on him by an alleged prince.

*How can call myself a prince when I induce Stockholm syndrome in my love and use that to sexually assault them?*

Roman stepped out of the shower, waving a hand to send his uniform to his laundry hamper. He couldn’t decide what to wear, so he wore nothing and simply climbed under the bedsheets, too broken and drained to do much else. His eyelids were noticeably swollen and his throat was raw. As he fell asleep, his thoughts lingered on how much more Virgil would have to overcome thanks to Roman’s actions.

///// 

Virgil felt bad for Roman. When he’d gone into Roman’s room to go to Dr. Picani’s office, he’d seen the Side asleep in bed. *My stupidity wore him out. Poor guy. I’ll have to see if I can make it up to him later.* At the moment, he sat on the couch listening to Dr. Picani sing the theme song of *Steven Universe*. He snorted when the doctor finally sat down, slightly out of breath.

“So! How are you doing today Virgil?”

“You, okay I guess? Can I have a comfort item?”

“Oh course!” Dr. Picani chirped as he slid the basket over to Virgil. Virgil quickly clutched the flying dolphin fish to his chest.

“Is there anything in particular you want to talk about today Virgil?”

Virgil nodded and kept his eyes on the floor. “The Light Sides brought up sex. Well, I kind of did, so it’s my fault, and I freaked out and now I feel bad-”

“It’s okay Virgil. Can you breathe for me?”

Virgil closed his eyes and focused on doing a few rounds of breathing exercises. “Sorry doc.”
“No need to apologize!” He waited a moment before continuing. “So the Light Sides brought up sex, huh?”

Virgil hugged the stuffed animal. “Yeah…”

“How’d that topic come up?”

Virgil blushed. “Our kissing was getting, um, more intense, and so they thought we should talk about sexual boundaries before we went any further.”

“That sounds like a great idea! I can also see how that might be frightening. Can you tell me what happened?”

Virgil curled in and almost brought his knees up before remembering to keep them on the ground when talking about something difficult.

“They were acting weird during breakfast, and then afterwards Logan said that they wanted to talk about sexual boundaries and I,” Virgil’s breath hitched at the memory, “I thought I was losing them.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head forward. “What made you think you were losing them?”

Virgil looked down, too ashamed to meet the doctor’s eyes. “When people have sex, the relationship changes. For me, sex meant that I wouldn’t be dating them anymore, I’d just be their toy.”

Dr. Picani couldn’t help the twinge he felt in his heart.

“And I was okay with that! I figured I get some nice romance and dates, and then they’d have paid their due to earn fucking me. They’d already more than earned it just by taking care of me, but I guess they didn’t see it that way. I asked Patton if I c-could still make blueberry pancakes with him, and when they asked I told them I thought that part of the relationship was over. They were upset, sad, but I was just confused. They were worried about hurting me, because to them I guess they’re still hurting me even if I agree to it.”

“Okay. So you believe that after allosexual people date for a while, all that dating leads up to sex, and once they have sex that’s all the relationship consists of?”

Virgil shifted in his seat. “Well, no, not usually I guess? Just for me? And Saul and Remy said that sex is just added to the relationship and nothing has to get taken away, but that’s kinda different for me to think about. It makes sense for other people, like the Light Sides and the Neutral Sides, but I just always saw the nice things as temporary.”

Dr. Picani frowned slightly. “What do you mean?”

“I mean, the dating and romance was just so the Light Sides felt comfortable fucking me and then,” Virgil’s voice cut off. He had to swallow to speak again. “Then I wouldn’t be able to date them anymore. And they’d s-stop calling me nice things. Logan calls me moonlight sometimes,” Virgil smiled for a moment at the memory.

“You believe that once they decide they want to have sex with you, they’ll treat you like the Dark Sides?” Dr. Picani ventured.

“No, nothing like that!” Virgil rushed out.
“Oh, okay! Can you tell me what they’d be doing that wouldn’t be like the Dark Sides?”

Virgil hugged the plush toy to his chest. “Well I’m agreeing to letting them fuck me whenever they need to, for one.”

Dr. Picani made a note to bring that up later.

“And I know they’ll try to make it hurt less and there’ll be less blood too! They’ll only hurt me as much as they need to so they can get off and relax. They think hurting me more than necessary is wrong, so they won’t do it, and the Dark Sides would hurt me just for fun. And I don’t think the Light Sides need to hurt me as much as the Dark Sides had to in order to get off, so I don’t even need to worry about that!”

Dr. Picani stretched his hand slightly after writing so quickly. “Okay, so they’re not like the Dark Sides because they won’t hurt you more than “necessary” and they won’t hurt you as much?”

“Yeah, pretty much. I’m not worried, I can handle a little pain, and I’ll probably stop bleeding pretty quickly once they finish too.”

“Okay. And they seemed pretty upset when you told them this?” he asked, trying not to let the twisting in his chest show on his face.

“They were. They think it still counts as hurting me even though I said it’s fine.”

Dr. Picani nodded, trying to figure out where to start untangling this web. “Now you mentioned earlier that you thought that other people would have a different experience than you. Can you tell me why that is?”

Virgil sniffled. “I dunno.”

Dr. Picani sighed. Time for a different approach. “Let’s try something else. Virgil, imagine if you will Roman.”

Virgil’s cheekbones turned slightly pink. “Okay,” he said, trying to hide his smile behind the stuffed fish.

“Now imagine him being used by you and Logan and Patton like how you expect to be used.”

Virgil jumped in his chair and his eyes were wide. Aha! A loose thread! “He’s agreed to it. Would you be okay with how Roman’s being treated?”

“No! Of course not! I’d never do that to him! I love him!” Virgil paused and narrowed his eyes. “Sneaky bastard.”

Dr. Picani laughed. “I’m a Slytherin, what can I say? Can you see why your boyfriends would be upset at the thought of doing that to you?”

Virgil bit his lip. “I mean, kinda? I don’t know, it still feels like they should be doing that to me.”

“Where do you think that belief came from?”

Virgil grunted in frustration. “I don’t know!”

“Could it have come from the Dark Sides?”

Virgil went rigid and stared through Dr. Picani. The doctor waited for Virgil to tell him what was wrong until he saw tears gathering in Virgil’s eyes.
“Virgil?”

Virgil jumped and jostled a tear out of his eye. “C-can we do a g-gounding exercise?”

“Of course. Can you find five things in the room that are green?”

Dr. Picani led Virgil through a grounding exercise and a couple breathing exercises. Once those were done and Virgil seemed a little more stable, he checked in.

“How are you feeling Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged. “A little better.”

“That’s good! Do you know what might have triggered it?”

Virgil’s breath hitched as he smiled weakly at the doctor. “I think we accidentally found a new cyst to lance.”

Dr. Picani pressed his lips together in sympathy. “I think you’re right Virgil. Do you want to keep talking about that or something else?”

Virgil closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and met Dr. Picani’s gaze. “Let’s keep talking about that.”

Dr. Picani nodded seriously and brought his pen to his notebook. “Alright. What did the Dark Sides say were the things that made you different?”

Virgil whimpered and hugged the doll tightly. “Th-that I’m useless. That I’m just good as a t-toy. That I’m only good for letting people get off in my body. That I’m supposed to just be like that all the time. That’s how they always kept me, you know? Like, on a mattress, or those metal cuffs that were installed in the kitchen. The metal hurt my wrists. And they’d get mad if they dislocated something when they were fucking me. My left hip popped out a lot for a while, and they got mad and punished me because it hurt so much I couldn’t stop screaming. I think it was when I was 7 my hip kept popping out? And then it did it a few other times after that.”

_Good grief, this poor guy._ His chest clenched painfully. “I’m so sorry you went through all of that Virgil. You didn’t deserve that. They were wrong to tell you those things, and they were wrong to do those things to you. It sounds like these things were what taught you your only worth was for people to use you to get off?”

Virgil let out a small sob into the doll and nodded.

“Okay. What do you say we stop here for today and work on grounding?”

Virgil nodded quickly, but soon dissolved into more violent sobs. Dr. Picani let Virgil cry, knowing this was a long time coming. As he listened to Virgil let out what he knew was just a small portion of his pain, he hoped that by exposing this wound they could start to unpack the incredibly unhealthy ideas Virgil had about sex.

As Virgil’s cries quieted down, Dr. Picani kept careful eyes on the young Side. Virgil grabbed a few tissues to clean up his face, then looked shamefully at Dr. Picani.

“Sorry.”

“Hey now, no apologizing. I think you needed that.”
Virgil laughed wetly. “I think you’re right doc.”

Dr. Picani smiled gently. “What would you like to talk about?”

Virgil bit his lip and met Dr. Picani’s gaze shyly. “Star Wars?”

“I think we can do that!”

Chapter End Notes

Hey! I have a Discord! https://discord.gg/Z9KYq8 Tbh, it's not something I can manage to go on super frequently because more than one social media is a lot for me, but I will strive to go on there at least once per day and answer any questions y'all have!!

As for the therapy session in this chapter: sometimes things hurt just a little too much to fully unpack them in one session. And that's okay. :) Sometimes, we just need a bit of time and a few attempts to get there.
Roman was still asleep when Virgil left Dr. Picani’s office. He briefly considered going to see Rojo, but he was exhausted and wanted to rest a bit before dinner. Once Virgil got in his room, he stripped off his shirt and hoodie, and slowly stepped out of his jeans. He still wanted to work on feeling more comfortable naked, and figured he may as well wear fewer clothes while he napped. He had to admit, being able to feel more of the soft, smooth sheets against his skin was rather nice. He realized he’d forgotten to put Shelly next to his pillow, but wasn’t too worried since his nightmares had been decreasing.

Virgil curled up with Lucas, shifting slightly to make sure there wasn’t any pain in his left hip. The flashback he’d had during his session with Dr. Picani had brought that fear back about his hip just popping out whenever it was moved too harshly, when they were too rough with him, when they tried bending his body too far…

Virgil shook his head and buried his face in Lucas’ soft fur, letting the comforting feeling soothe his terrified thoughts. He thought back to what Dr. Picani had said.

It makes sense, but god it’s hard. But what if they’re right? They’ve been with me the most out of any of the other Sides.

Virgil’s hands tightened on Lucas.

No. They said those things to… to keep me compliant. To make me what they wanted to make me. They wanted me to not fight back. They said those things so they could keep hurting me.

I’m… I’m not different. The Dark Sides were lying to me. They lied because they wanted to hurt me. So I would think that what they were doing was okay because I was different. So I wouldn’t know that I- dammit, I deserve a healthy relationship!

Virgil sniffled as emotions rose up, unbidden, and he began to cry.

Why’d they have to hurt me so bad? I didn’t want to be hurt! I didn’t deserve it! It hurt so much. They hurt me so much. It always hurt. They made me feel sick. I didn’t like it. I hated feeling so helpless, but they were so much bigger and stronger than me! They were so scary. I was scared.

He curled up more tightly and whimpered. I didn't deserve that. I didn't deserve any of it. Virgil
did a few breathing exercises until he was calmer.

I should get some sleep. It’s been a hell of a day.

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Virgil was too weak to move. Ever since he’d “ruined” their experiment, he only got enough water to survive and he could count on one hand the number of times he’d been given moldy bread.

He was unceremoniously dropped back on the ground after Apathy finished using him, the other Dark Sides standing around him.

“Do you have any idea how much of Malice’s energy you wasted?! It’s been four months, and Malice has just now gotten all of his energy back, did you know that? We were even kinder to you during the experiment! It’s clear now that you need a firm hand,” Deceit spat.

Virgil didn’t have the energy to respond, which earned him several harsh kicks to his protruding ribs.

“Answer me!!”

The wind kept getting knocked out of him with the vicious kicks. He was trying desperately to suck in air, only for it to get knocked back out of him. Another Dark Side joined Deceit, and yet another soon took his place as Deceit grew tired. The last thing he was aware of was the sensation of sliding around the floor in a puddle of his own dried and wet blood.

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“Wake up, whore.”

Virgil gasped as his head was wrenched backwards by his hair. He opened his eyes to see Jealousy leaning over him and Deceit using him.

“Thomas could have lied,” Deceit grunted, “but no, why make your life easier! We could have made it! He refuses to heed my influence, all because of his precious Morality. Perhaps he needs to stay down here with us.”

Deceit groaned as he released inside of Virgil. He felt his hands prickle in the way he knew meant he had IV lines in him. He was feeling a little better, but grew panicked at Deceit’s words.

Deceit sighed as he pulled out. “God, I needed that. It has been such a stressful day for me.” He snapped himself clean and righted his clothes. He glared at Virgil. “Even though you wasted our time and energy, you’re still good for something at least.” Deceit shook his head as he walked away. “Poor Malice.”

“Look at me!” Virgil’s eyes shot up to Jealousy’s. “The Neutral Sides want to see you. You know the drill.”

Virgil tried to respond with, “Yes sir,” but started hacking violently. Jealousy pressed on Virgil’s broken ribs, which caused his vision to white out but made him take smaller breaths.

“There, all better. See how good I am for you?”

“Yes sir,” Virgil croaked out, voice raspy.
“Good toy. Now, you know the drill?”

“Yes sir.”

“Good. Because if they find out, they’ll take you away from me and that would just be heartbreaking. And it would be a shame to have Thomas and the Light Sides get hurt because of your uselessness.”

“Yes sir.”

“You’re behaving very well since you’ve woken up. Deceit was right, you need a firm hand, but that doesn’t mean I can’t reward you.” Jealousy stood and started opening the front of his pants. “Open up for your treat! You love servicing me like this, don’t you?”

“Yes sir.”

/////

“Coffee bean!”

Virgil was wrapped up in a hug from Sleep - Remy now - while Saul joined the hug more gently and the Dark Sides stood behind them, watching. Virgil expertly bit back his cries of pain, even as his knees threatened to buckle. The IV drip and protein shake the Dark Sides had put him on for the previous day had done little to improve his strength, although at least now he could stand. Despite his pain, weakness, and lightheadedness, he still smiled and had to blink back tears at the love from his surrogate parents.

Remy raised his eyes and stared directly at Deceit. “You can go now. We’ll bring him back.”

The Dark Sides quickly sank out, not wanting to anger the Neutral Sides. Remy pulled back from the hug. “You’re still so skinny baby. Are they feeding you?”

“Yes s- Remy, they are. I just don’t eat a lot. Anxiety, you know?”

Remy brushed Virgil’s bangs out of his eyes. “If you’re sure. Come on, sit down, let’s see if some good home-cooking will sit well!”

Virgil nearly collapsed in relief, though he managed to make it to the couch. Saul sat down next to him and threw his arm on the back of the couch.

“You’re shivering, little one. Are you alright?”

Virgil nodded quickly. “Yeah, I’ve just been cold all day.”

“Would you like to cuddle? Sharing body heat and all that.”

Virgil smiled gratefully. “Sure.”

Saul scooted closer until he was pressed against Virgil and gently pulled the younger Side against him, both strong arms holding him securely. Virgil was relieved; he’d always been cold since he’d been down in the Dark Side, but whenever they withheld more food than usual he seemed to have an even harder time being warm. It was like he was constantly cold while he was down in the Dark Side. Thankfully, Saul’s warmth was soaking through their clothes and warming Virgil.

“Remy’s right, you’re so thin. Are you sure you’re getting enough food darling?”
Virgil closed his eyes and relaxed against the firm, warm body. “Yeah, I just don’t need a lot.”

“I’m still alive, I’m getting everything I need.’

“If you’re sure. Just tell Remy or I if something’s wrong and we’ll figure something out, alright?”

“Okay Saul.”

They cuddled silently after that, relieved to be able to be near each other again. Deceit had made it clear that a Dark Side spending too much time in one of the other realms would make them disintegrate, so they were very careful to not push it. Virgil was warming up, the first time since his last visit to the Neutral Side.

“Alright, here we are!”

Remy set down a tray that had three bowls of steaming chicken noodle soup and dumplings, with cheese, crackers, and milk on the side. The smell made Virgil’s stomach growl loudly, his body recognizing the sustenance he’d been missing for months.

“Eat up! There’s plenty more where that came from!”

Virgil leaned forward, careful to move only as fast as he could without wincing from the pain. He picked up a plate and bowl with shaky hands and brought it back to his lap, a little soup spilling on the plate. Virgil ate quickly, absolutely famished. Remy got him a second bowl while Virgil wolfed down some cheese and crackers. About halfway through his second bowl, Virgil’s stomach cramped painfully, unused to having so much in it.

“You okay sugar?”

Virgil grimaced and nodded. “Yeah, sorry, I think I ate too fast. It’ll go away soon.”

Saul rubbed his back. “I’m sorry darling. We’re here, it’ll be okay.”

Out of nowhere, Virgil started crying. He buried his face in his hands as too many emotions crashed through his mind to process. The “experiment”, his failure, the cruelty afterwards, the melancholy of missing his family, it all overwhelmed Virgil in an instant. Saul quickly put Virgil’s bowl back on the platter and wrapped his arms around him, Remy moving to his other side and doing the same.

“Shhhhhhh coffee bean, it’s alright, it’ll be okay.”

Virgil bawled, weeping as the horror and pain washed over him. Saul and Remy comforted him and soothed him as best they could, until after 45 minutes his cries died down.

“It’s okay sweetie, there you go. Feeling better hun?”

Virgil was taking hiccuping breaths, trying to calm down. “Y-yeah. Sorry, just had a stressful day.” The lie and reminder of the previous day caused a shiver to go through him.

“Coffee bean, I have to ask: are they hurting you?”

“No!” Virgil shouted, wincing at the volume of his own voice. “Sorry. But no, they’re not.”

“They’re not hitting you?”

Virgil shook his head against Saul’s strong chest. Remy chastely kissed the top of Virgil’s head.
“Okay honey. Just let us know.”

Virgil smiled up at Remy as his vision started to tunnel. “I will. Thanks Rem. I love you guys.”

“We love you too.”

When the time came to return Virgil to the Dark Side, both Saul and Remy held him tightly.

“How’s our Virgie! And thanks for taking care of him guys! It’s hard not being able to be there all the time for our little bro. If anyone was to hurt him, why I’d probably lose my mind!” Remy said with forced cheerfulness. Virgil noticed the Dark Sides looked paler than usual.

Although he was punished for allowing the Neutral Sides to know something was going on, Virgil couldn’t help but feel grateful that at least someone cared about him.

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Virgil woke up, tears already in his eyes. He slapped a hand over his mouth to muffle his sobs, too frightened and traumatized to move.

Oh god, Patton! Deceit threatened him!

Just as he was about to go check on his boyfriends, a knock came at the door.

“Sweetie? Everything okay in there?”

Virgil could only manage a watery, “Patton…” before the door opened and Patton was rushing over to Virgil. Virgil leaned up so Patton would have space to sit.

“Come here honey,” Patton said softly. Virgil curled up in his lap before remembering that he was only clad in boxers. Luckily, Patton wrapped a blanket around his shoulders quickly.

“It’s okay sweetie, you’re safe now.”

Virgil sobbed a few times into a thick shoulder as he sensed two other Sides enter his room. “Y-you’re alive! You’re okay!”

Patton pressed a kiss to Virgil’s forehead. “That’s right, I’m okay. Did the Dark Sides threaten me?”

Virgil could only nod and sob.

“Shhhhh, baby, I’m okay, Thomas is okay, Roman and Logan are okay.”

“I d-d-didn’t l-like it. W-what they d-did to me. Th-they hurt m-me!”

Virgil heard a growl in his room while Patton tightened his arms. “I know honey. I’m so sorry.”

Virgil nuzzled against Patton and tried to calm down. “I-I’m sorry.”

“Baby, no! It’s okay to cry! We all need it sometimes!”

Virgil whimpered and clung to Patton. He focused on his breathing exercises, and after ten minutes he felt himself starting to calm down.

“Feeling better sweetie?”
Virgil nodded, breath still hitching.

“Do you want Roman to summon some clothes on you?”

Virgil blushed darkly and hid his face. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to.”

“You don’t have to apologize, it’s okay!”

Virgil nodded. He heard a snap, and he was clothed in jeans, a t-shirt, socks, and his hoodie. The clothes were warm, like they had just come out of the dryer. Patton set the blanket aside.

“Do you feel up to some dinner? We’ve got spaghetti squash and fajita chicken and veggies!”

“S-sounds good.”

Patton pressed another kiss to Virgil’s hair before Virgil climbed off his lap. All three Light Sides looked grief-stricken, with Roman strangely quiet. He must be embarrassed or something. How many times has the poor guy had to put clothes on me by now? He made a mental note to make a card.

Patton led them downstairs, with Logan’s hand on Virgil’s back. They settled into dinner, conversation picking up and Virgil coming out of his shell-shock seeing the Light Sides unharmed.

“Oh! And we were thinking about playing Mario Kart tomorrow for our date! How’s that sound?”

Virgil smiled shakily. “Sounds cool. Although I don’t know how it’ll be with these two,” he quipped gesturing at Roman and Logan.

Logan’s eyebrows twitched while Roman bit his lip. Virgil frowned. That’s weird. That’s my thing.

“Sweet angel, I won’t attend if you don’t want me to. No matter the cost to me, I’d never want to make you uncomfortable in any way. You do not have to—”

“Woah woah woah, Princey, calm down! I was just joking.” Virgil’s eyes widened when Roman’s eyes grew shiny. “Dude, it’s fine. I’m not uncomfortable.”

Roman’s shoulders sagged. “I am glad to hear that, m- stormcloud. You are not obligated to do anything with me you don’t want just because you are also with Patton and Logan, I promise.”

Virgil’s anxiety spiked. “Are… do you not want to be in a relationship with me?”

Roman’s hands twitched forward before he pulled them back. “No, my love! I just wanted to give you the option!”

Virgil let out a breath in a rush. “I’m Anxiety dude, you can’t say shit like that.”

“I apologize.”

Virgil took a deep breath in through his nose. “It’s fine Princey. Mario Kart sounds great.” Virgil sent a smile Roman’s way, hoping to reassure him, but got a forced smile in return. I need to talk to Princey later. What the hell is going on?

Chapter End Notes
Hey! Hey you! Yeah, you! Go check out Jasper01's Renegades! AU! She's been expanding it! It's really good stuff! Very well thought-out! Easy to follow, not too complex! And here's her Tumblr! You should follow her! She's hilarious!
Roman collapsed on his bed and threw his arm over his eyes.

*Roman, you dunce! Now they know! Your plan to subtly find out how Virgil felt is now for naught!* Three crisp knocks sounded at his door. Roman waved his door open to let Logan in.

“Greetings Roman. How are you feeling?”

Roman just groaned.

“I see. You seemed quite unsettled at dinner tonight. May I inquire as to the cause?”

Roman sighed. “Do you know of Stockholm Syndrome?”

Logan laid on the bed next to Roman. “Not anymore. I believe he used to,” Logan said carefully. *Those damned Dark Sides…*

Roman’s breath hitched. *My sweet angel. How badly have I mangled his mind? Logan sees it too!* His throat closed up and nausea swirled in his stomach.

“Is it too late? Does he even want to be with us?” Roman whispered.

“It is not too late, and all evidence points to him wanting to be with us. You saw how upset he became when he thought you didn’t want to be with him anymore.” *Does Roman think Virgil still has Stockholm Syndrome and views the Dark Sides as benevolent?*

Roman raised his arm, and Logan curled up against his chest. Roman held him tightly.

“Do you want to be with me, beautiful?”

Logan touched Roman’s face, making him look down. “I do. You make me very happy. I cannot imagine life without you.”

Roman caressed Logan’s face. “I couldn’t agree more, my love.”

Logan closed his eyes and leaned up, Roman leaning down to meet in a gentle, sweet kiss. They
kissed for a few minutes before Roman pulled back.

“Let’s stay together tonight, yes?” Roman asked nervously.

Logan frowned at his uncertainty. “Of course, darling.”

The two Sides got ready for bed and curled up together. Logan fell asleep long before Roman did, the romantic Side devastated.

Logan agreed he had Stockholm Syndrome when he started dating us. Even if he doesn’t have it now, would he have even wanted to date us if his mind hadn’t associated safety with romantic attraction? Would he have wanted to date us even if he hadn’t been hurt by the Dark Sides? Is his happiness with us a result of contentment or confusion?

Roman silently cried himself to sleep.

////////

Roman begged off breakfast, stating he wasn’t feeling well. In reality, he couldn’t bring himself to face Virgil.

You coward. Some prince. You sexually assault someone by taking advantage of Stockholm Syndrome and you can’t even face them? You should abdicate your throne. You’re not worthy.

I know! I know, okay?

Roman forced himself to go down for lunch, not wanting to worry his boyfriends (and one captive, his brain cruelly reminded him) more than he already had. Patton had made cream of broccoli soup with toasted baguette slices and some sliced cheese. Roman pecked Patton on the cheek gratefully while he helped serve up the steaming soup. He noticed Virgil observing him warily. Of course he is, he doesn’t know when I might make unwanted advancements on him. Throughout lunch, he was careful not to touch Virgil in an attempt to make him feel safer. I have already forced myself on him enough.

He quickly excused himself to his room, wanting to work on a script for the next Sanders Sides video.

Coward.

Roman thanked his acting skills for being able to hold back his tears during lunch. He dreaded dinner and the date afterwards, but resolved to stay away from Virgil. It is the least I can do.

////////

The only thing stopping Virgil from biting his nails down to the cuticle was the fear of dying from nail polish ingestion. Remy had painted on several coats in a glittery lilac color that Virgil was certain would not be good for his system.

Virgil noticed how weird Roman had been acting for the past few days. Ever since I freaked the fuck out. Virgil cringed at the memory. Now he knows even more about how fucked up I am. Of course he’s uncomfortable around me.

He tried to focus on helping Thomas, but it was a slow day for anxiety and dread kept clawing its way to the front of his mind.
He knows how disgusting you are, how tainted you are. Why on Earth would he want to touch you?! You’ve had so much of their come on and in you, how could you think he wouldn’t be disgusted by you?

Virgil felt hands roaming his body and hot breath puffing against his ear. Dark laughter echoed around him and he could smell old sweat. He grabbed Shelly and tried to do grounding exercises, but to no avail. The hands were feeling more and more solid by the second. He dropped Shelly on his bed and got outside his room, looking for help. He knew Logan and Patton were helping Thomas in his realm, and Virgil really didn’t want to be so close to Thomas when he was freaking out.

Roman. Shit, Ro, I’m sorry to interrupt your work.

Virgil knocked on the door, almost banging on it in his desperation. The grand double doors were opened quickly, a worried Roman on the other side.

“Ro, c-can you help? I’m h-having a f-flashback. I kn-know you’re busy and you d-don’t have to-”

“Nonsense, love. Come in- or we can stay out here!” Roman rushed out at the end.

*Obviously he doesn’t want your contamination in his gorgeous bedroom.* “O-out here’s fine.”

Virgil didn’t miss the flash of pain in Roman’s eyes. *He’s just sad because you’re sad. You bring everyone down.* Virgil flinched when he felt someone bite down hard on his shoulder.

“All right raven, can you find 5 things that are blue?”

Virgil looked around. “I can see Logan and Patton’s doors from here, there’s some pictures hanging on the walls, your fingernails are blue, and… um…” he looked around frantically. *Come ON, you’re just trying to find five things that are blue, and you’re going to fail at that?*

“It’s alright, little crow. What are four things you can hear?”

*He knows you’re too incompetent to find five things of the same primary color.* “Your voice, my voice, my heartbeat, and my breathing.”

“Wonderful, my sweet. Three things you can feel?”

*I want to feel you, but you won’t touch me because I’m too disgusting.* “My hoodie, m-my hands…” Virgil broke down into sobs. *I just wish I could have gotten one more hug from you before you stopped touching me. I want to feel your hands and arms protecting me, just one more time.*

“Virgil, beautiful, are you still with me?”

Virgil nodded, still crying, grieving his loss.

“What can I do? What do you need?” Roman begged.

“P-please t-t-touch m-me?”

Roman’s eyes widened and he took a step back, paling and not saying anything for several seconds. In those seconds, Virgil felt his heart shatter as he watched shock, horror, disgust, and sadness flicker across Roman’s face. “Love, are sure you want me to touch you?”
Dude, he’s begging you to say no. “No Ro, I—I’ll be okay.” He forced a smile onto his face, feeling sick at the relief on Roman’s. “Thanks.” And he ran back to his room, leaving a conflicted prince behind him.

Virgil slammed the door behind him, snapped his room soundproof with some difficulty, and succumbed to the panic, grief, and flashback.

///// Patton and Logan looked over at their two other boyfriends worriedly throughout dinner. Roman was much quieter than usual and ate a third of what he normally did. His skin was lacking the radiance it usually had and was instead monotone and pale. Virgil was even paler, with dark circles under his bloodshot and swollen eyes. Patton and Logan kept the conversation light, allowing for one of their boyfriends to state what was wrong in their own time.

After dinner, while Virgil volunteered to set up the gaming console with *Mario Kart*, Roman kissed both Patton and Logan. They both noticed he avoided Virgil on his way out.

The date wasn’t much better. Roman sat on the opposite side of the couch of Virgil, flinching away when Virgil went to hand him the controller. Patton frowned at Virgil’s hurt look. *Whatever is going on needs to stop. This is hurting both of them.*

For a while during their date, all four were laughing, the cause of Roman and Virgil’s strange behavior seemingly forgotten. Things were going well.

Until Roman stood to get snacks from the kitchen.

He went out of his way to avoid being near Virgil, and as he went into the kitchen, Virgil bit his knuckle and started hyperventilating.

Logan put down his controller immediately. “Virgil, darling, what’s wrong?”

Virgil just shook his head kept breathing noisily, whimpers on every inhale and exhale. Roman came back into the room, worry etched on his face at Virgil’s distress.

“Virgil, are you-”

“Sorry guys, I think I’m just overwhelmed, I need some time to myself,” Virgil said before he quickly sank out. Roman’s shoulders dropped and he hung his head. He took a deep breath and prepared to sink out before Patton jumped in.

“Nuh-uh mister! We’re figuring this out!”

Roman sighed deeply. “Patton, dearheart, I really think I should leave-”

“Nope! Sit down, we’re talking. *Now.*”

Roman quickly sat on the couch, knowing better than to ignore Patton when he used *that* tone of voice.

Patton looked over his glasses at Roman, patient but determined. “What’s going on between you and Virgil?”

Roman looked down shamefully. “I believe I have,” he sucked in a breath, “made him uncomfortable. I spoke with him today. He declined to be touched or come into my room.”
Logan hummed. “So that’s why you’ve been actively avoiding him.”

“Was I that obvious? I thought I was being subtle.”

Patton took Roman’s hand and kissed it. “Baby, I love you so much, but subtlety isn’t one of your many strengths.”

Roman smiled sheepishly. He sobered quickly. “Do you think Virgil noticed?”

Patton nodded solemnly. “I think so sweetie. I think that’s why he was so upset.”

Roman held his head in his hands. “I can’t stop hurting my love…” he said quietly to himself.

“Roman, precisely when do you think you made Virgil uncomfortable?”

Roman sniffled, tears gathering in his eyes. “When we started dating. Before that, really.”

Logan tilted his head. “Does this have anything to do with our conversation last night?” Patton looked at Logan as Roman let out a small sob.

“Oh baby, why on Earth do you think he has Stockholm Syndrome? He’s not our prisoner!”

Roman sobbed into his boyfriend’s thick shoulder. “B-but he had n-no other option! We t-took care of h-him, and what if he c-confused that s-safety and care f-for romantic feelings?”

Patton kissed Roman’s forehead gently. “Well for one, that’s not Stockholm Syndrome-”

“B-b-but it’s s-something!”

“You’re right, it is, but that’s only if the relationship only has drama. Most of our relationship is calm. We’ve had to help Virgil a lot, but that doesn’t make up the majority of our relationship. If our relationship was completely based on what you said, then Virgil would have fallen out of love with us a long time ago.”

Roman sniffled miserably. “So he d-doesn’t have Stockholm Syndrome.”

“No he does not,” Logan chimed in. “I apologize for the previous night. I was under the impression that when you asked if Virgil had Stockholm Syndrome, that you meant with the Dark Sides. To clarify, I do not believe Virgil has Stockholm Syndrome in our relationship.”

Roman snuggled against Patton as Logan started rubbing his back. “I don’t know…”

Patton squeezed Roman. “Well, if you really want an expert opinion, you’ve got an expert right at your fingertips! Why don’t you ask Dr. Picani what he thinks? And besides, Virgil’s been going to see Dr. Picani for a lot longer than he’s been dating us and he’s continued to see Dr. Picani. Don’t you think Dr. Picani would have seen it if our relationship was a problem?”

“I guess…” Roman said, unconvinced.

Patton kissed the top of Roman’s head. “Go see Dr. Picani.”
“In a minute? Can we cuddle?”

“Of course.”

Logan and Patton cuddled their dramatic boyfriend until he felt stable enough to go see the doctor, reassuring him that he wasn’t hurting them or Virgil.

////////

Roman slammed his door open and raced down the hall. It had taken 2 hours of back and forth with Dr. Picani before he’d come to the realization that the only way he’d hurt Virgil was by withholding affection.

_I’m an idiot, I’m an idiot, I’m an idiot, I’m an idiot_, he chanted in his head as he skidded to a stop in front of Virgil’s door. He pounded on it frantically, desperate to speak to Virgil.

Virgil swung the door open, bloodshot eyes wide and panicked.

“I love you!” Roman shouted.

Virgil winced at the volume, but his heart soared at the words. “Y-you do?”

“Of course, my beautiful, gorgeous, handsome, sexy, dark, mysterious-”

“B-but you h-haven’t been touching me s-since… since I t-told you stuff,” he finished in a whisper.

Roman lowered his voice and leaned forward. “My dark knight, that folly is my own. I thought you didn’t actually want to be in a relationship with us, that it was some kind of confusion or Stockholm Syndrome.”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “You thought I didn’t want to be in a relationship with you when my whole stupid crisis was about me wanting to stay in a relationship with you,” he deadpanned.

Roman blushed lightly. “Yes?”

Virgil rolled his eyes. “Oh my god dude, you need to find some chill.” He bit his lip nervously. “So does that mean you still want to touch me?”

“_Gods_ yes.”

Virgil slowly held out his hand, and Roman took it lightly. Virgil curled his fingers around the larger, stronger hand and pulled. He felt the calluses from exploring the Imagination and practicing various art forms, the warmth that the royal perpetually gave off, the incredible fragrance that constantly hung around him.

“Let’s spend the night together, yeah?” Virgil asked quietly.

“I would love nothing more.”

Virgil crawled under the covers, bringing Roman with him. They laid on their sides and looked at each other. Virgil extended a hand slowly and lightly brushed his fingertips over Roman’s smooth face, feeling the soft skin. Roman did the same, Virgil closing his eyes at the sensation of warm, gentle fingers tracing the details of his face. Roman touched his face for so long he nearly fell asleep to it.

“My sweet, would you like me to hold you?”
Virgil moved forward and curled on top of Roman’s chest in response. He kept his eyes closed and smiled as he felt strong, firm arms wrap around him. The last thing he felt before he fell asleep was a sweet kiss being placed on top of his head.

Chapter End Notes

Thank goodness for the Patton/ Picani team up! Roman needed everyone to pound some sense into his brain. It took a lot, but he got there.
Virgil woke to the heady scent of sweet roses and deep cinnamon. He breathed in deeply, feeling strong arms tighten on him.

“Good morning, my love,” Roman rumbled quietly, voice still gravelly from sleep.

Virgil sighed happily. “Mornin’ Ro.”

He felt a chaste kiss placed to the top of his head. He nuzzled the broad chest beneath him and soaked up the heat radiating from Roman until his anxiety kicked in.

“Hey Ro?”

“Yes, beautiful?”

Okay, well that nickname pretty much says it, but still… “Do you think I’m disgusting?”

Roman pulled Virgil closer. “Not at all, my stormcloud!”

“So you not t-touching me was only because you didn’t u-understand Stockholm Syndrome?”

Roman felt the tips of his ears warm. “That is the only reason. I craved your touch, but worried that you didn’t want me.”

“Babe, I love you, but you’ve gotta stop taking pages out of my book.” Virgil felt a puff of air against his head. “Besides, Princey, I’ve wanted you for so long.”

“Is that so?” Roman asked lowly. Virgil shivered as Roman’s grip grew stronger.

“Y-yeah, I mean, you’re a literal prince, of course my gay ass was attracted to you.”

Roman pulled Virgil until he was half laying on the prince. “How long have you wanted me?” he growled into Virgil’s ear.

Goosebumps erupted over Virgil’s body. Feeling the firm muscles beneath him was doing things to him, namely things that Roman would start to notice fairly soon.

Roman rubbed one hand up and down Virgil’s lower back, cock twitching at how his love gasped and arched his back with each touch to his spine. He decided to bring his hand up to rest on Virgil’s waist, not wanting to initiate anything too intense so soon.

Virgil looked down at Roman, panting slightly. “I’d kiss you, but your breath stinks.”
Roman laughed. “You’re not doing much better, little bat, but I am not faint of heart.”

Virgil snorted and laid his head on Roman’s chest. Roman brought his hand up and massaged the back of Virgil’s head, hearing deep rumbles a moment later.

“Shall we get ready for breakfast?”

“So I get to sleep another hour? Sweet.”

Roman let out a string of offended Princey noises while Virgil muffled his laughter in Roman’s chest. After a few more minutes of cuddling, Roman had to get up to get ready for the day, amidst much groaning from Virgil.

“I shall see you soon, my sweet,” Roman said quietly, staring into Virgil’s eyes. Without breaking eye contact and with just a little smirk, he took Virgil’s hand, slowly running his thumb over slender fingers, and bent down to kiss it. His lips pressed against the back of Virgil’s fingers delicately, the plush lips cushion-soft on Virgil’s skin. He was unable to look away from the intense gaze Roman was sending him. Roman pulled away, gently setting Virgil’s hand down, and walked out of Virgil’s room, leaving his boyfriend rather hot and bothered.

Virgil looked down and knew that this erection wouldn’t go away by itself. He threw the blankets off and went over to his bathroom. He shuffled down his pants and boxers and squirted some lotion in his hand. While he waited for it to warm up, he narrowed his eyes at the offending member.

“You’d better fucking cooperate this time. I’m getting really fucking annoyed.

Once Virgil deemed the lotion warm enough, he got to work. He let his mind wander a bit to see what it would settle on. His ears were filled with the clear, precise cadence of Logan, speaking deeply and directly into his ear.

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“You’re doing so well, darling. There you go, just like that. Amazing, truly.” Logan kisses his face gently, soothing him from the overwhelming feelings. “You feel wonderful, my dear.”

Virgil whines and gasps.

“Shhhhh moonlight, it’s alright. I’ll take care of you.”

Virgil started teasing the head of his penis, feeling a fluid gather there. I’ve never gotten this far before!! Will I finally be able to get off?

He refocused on his fantasy, letting out small, involuntary moans. Logan was leaning over him, working his hand between Virgil’s parted thighs, fingers wet with lube.

“Do you want this, Virgil?”

Virgil nodded quickly, unable to speak. Logan leaned down and kissed him, deep and filthy.

“Wonderful.” he whispered against Virgil’s lips. Logan started gently rubbing just one finger against Virgil’s opening.

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Virgil felt as his erection began to fade. He tried focusing on the feeling of his hand and the inherent attractiveness of Logan, but it was no use. With no other external stimulation, Virgil’s
mind won out every time. After a few minutes, he gave up on the venture. He wiped off his penis and flushed the toilet paper, washed his hands, and righted his clothes. I’m getting really fucking sick of this. He fixed his hair and makeup next, wanting to be somewhat presentable. Stepping out into his room, he checked the time.

Perfect. Just enough time.

Virgil flopped face-first onto his bed and screamed his frustration into his pillow. He laid there, breathing through his pillow and pissed off, until Logan knocked on his door for breakfast. When Logan walked away from the door, he let out one more frustrated scream before pushing himself off his bed and going downstairs.

Patton was making crepes again with a side of bacon, one of Virgil’s favorite meals. Patton made a whipped cream and chocolate chip crepe for Virgil, along with a turkey, spinach, and mushroom one. Patton customized the crepes for each Side, and soon they were eating happily, Patton and Roman filling most of the conversation.

After breakfast, Virgil helped Patton clean up while Roman and Logan went to Logan’s room to work through the script for the next Sanders Sides episode. While Virgil was drying a plate, Patton bumped hips with him and giggled. Virgil looked down at Patton’s hip with a raised eyebrow, slowly trailed his eyes up Patton’s body, and met his gaze, smirking. Patton blushed and smiled at Virgil. Once they were done, Virgil wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck and pressed their bodies together.

“Hey,” Patton said quietly.

“Hey yourself.”

Patton giggled and leaned in for a kiss. Virgil reciprocated, missing the contact. None of the Light Sides had tried to kiss Virgil since the disastrous attempt at boundary negotiation, and Virgil felt like a man in a desert without water.

He was thirsty.

After a few minutes of gently kissing that was slowly intensifying, Virgil reluctantly pulled back.

“Your room?”

Patton gave him a quick peck, and they sank out to Patton’s room together. Virgil initiated more kissing, and soon they were stumbling back towards the bed. Virgil playfully pushed on Patton’s shoulders, and Patton let himself fall backwards, giggling. He scooted up the bed so his back was against the headboard, and Virgil quickly followed, straddling the larger man.

Virgil put a hand behind Patton’s head and one on his shoulder, using the hand on his head to pull him in for a kiss. He whimpered at the taste of Patton, the amazing feel of his lips moving against his own.

Patton placed his hands on Virgil’s waist and moaned into the kiss, hearing a moan back. He started rubbing his hands up and down Virgil’s waist when he felt a tongue swipe against his lips. He opened his mouth eagerly, moaning desperately when he felt Virgil’s tongue against his own.

Fireworks exploded behind Virgil’s eyelids at the wet heat of Patton’s mouth. He lifted himself up slightly on his knees so he could press even more into Patton, the additional contact and new angle of kissing pulling a low moan from him. Patton’s little, high-pitched, soft moans were driving him crazy, and he wanted to hear more.
Patton started sliding his hands on Virgil’s back, the sensation making Virgil arch and groan. Virgil’s hands tightened on Patton, and he pulled back.

“You can touch me lower if you want,” he said breathlessly.

Patton’s eyebrows shot up. “Are you sure honey?”

Virgil nodded. “Yeah, just not… the front?” He internally kicked himself for saying something so infantile.

Patton nodded and smiled, kissing him gently. “Okay baby. Just let me know if you change your mind.”

Virgil nodded eagerly and smashed their lips together. Patton decided to keep moving his hands on Virgil’s back until the kissing heated up again. Virgil made sure he didn’t have to wait long, deepening the kiss almost immediately and moving his body against Patton’s sinuously, careful to keep his hips away. Patton let out a long, loud moan at that.

He’s sure gotten good!

Virgil kept rubbing their bodies together rhythmically, the feeling of Patton beneath him almost as intoxicating as his taste. He nipped Patton’s lower lip, and pulled back just far enough to start kissing, sucking, and lightly nibbling on Patton’s jaw and neck.

Patton gasped and tilted his head back, allowing Virgil more access. He felt a smile against his neck. With Virgil preoccupied with Patton’s neck, Patton slid his hands down Virgil and stopped at his waistband, waiting. When Virgil nodded against his neck before resuming his previous activity, Patton brushed his hands down the sides of Virgil’s hips and his thighs, massaging them. Virgil moaned and gasped at the sensation of his thighs being massaged, encouraging Patton with sounds and slightly sloppier kissing.

“Fuck, I missed this. Missed you please,” Virgil begged.

Patton twisted his head to place a feather-light kiss against Virgil’s neck before Virgil took over again. Patton grabbed Virgil, softly at first, but at the pleasured cry tightened his grip and pulled Virgil forward.

Virgil’s arousal increased tenfold at Patton’s touch. Having him touch his thighs was incredible, but having Patton’s hands there was thrilling. His blood sang with need, and his head was cloudy with arousal. Virgil rejoined their lips, both men moaning as Patton now had to tip his head backwards to kiss Virgil. Virgil led the kiss, feeling fire building around their bodies and racing between them. They were both moaning loudly and uncontrollably, Virgil bringing his hands down over Patton’s chest and carefully brushing them over clothed nipples. He felt victorious as Patton’s hips twitched slightly and he pulled a whimper from the older man. Patton busied himself with rubbing and touching Virgil wherever he could, trying to make Virgil feel as good as he did. He was quite successful; Virgil’s erection from the morning had returned with a vengeance and was straining against the zipper in his pants.

Eventually Virgil pulled back panting and rested his forehead on Patton’s. They stared into each other’s eyes while they caught their breath. After a minute, Patton brought a hand up and booped Virgil’s nose, and they giggled together.

“I think we better call it here,” Virgil said. “If we keep going, it would be stuff that I think we need to have a conversation for.”
Patton brushed a hand against Virgil’s face. “That sounds like a good idea, sweetie.”

Virgil smiled and rubbed the tips of their noses together, causing them both to start giggling again.

“Wanna cuddle and maybe kiss a little?”

“I’d love that!”

Virgil gave Patton a quick peck on the lips before moving off him and cuddling up against his soft, warm body. Patton wrapped an arm around his boyfriend and kissed the side of his head, not mentioning the tent in both their pants. Patton snapped to turn on reruns of *Spongebob Squarepants*. Throughout the episodes they watched, Virgil would occasionally tilt his head up towards Patton and kiss him gently, Patton savoring the soft kisses from his chocolate chip. They stayed like that until lunch time arrived.

Chapter End Notes

Update: Roman and Logan did *not* work on the script.
Logan opened his door and gestured. “After you, my prince.”

Roman blushed and smirked. “If you’re trying to distract me from the script so you can take the new song out of it, I’m afraid you’ll need to try harder than that.”

“I intend to try harder. And I’ve already reviewed the script and sent the edits back to your room. I have no problem with the musical number,” Logan said as he put a hand on Roman’s lower back.

Roman frowned at Logan. “Then why did we come up to your room if not to edit the script?”

Logan stepped in front of Roman and pressed against him. “I’ll give you three guesses,” he said lowly.

Roman smiled widely and placed his hands on Logan’s waist. “I think I understand now.”

“Then allow me to test your understanding with a practical application.”

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With that, Logan pushed Roman against his wall, tangled his fingers in his hair and pulled harshly, and kissed him. The kiss itself was rough and dirty, with very little finesse, Roman moaning helplessly into Logan’s mouth. Roman did his best to keep up and try to take over the kiss, but Logan wasn’t having it.

Logan pulled back and bit Roman’s ear lobe. “I’m in control this time,” he growled, waiting for a response.

“Yes.”

“Excellent.”

Logan returned to kissing Roman senseless, licking and biting, tugging on his lower lip. He pulled Roman off the wall and led him over to his bed, still kissing. He pulled Roman’s lips away from his by the royal’s hair.

“Strip.”

Logan let go of Roman’s hair and pushed at his chest, Roman stumbling a bit but hurrying to follow orders. Logan tugged off his tie and untied it, tossing it expertly on the headboard. He’d chosen one of his softer ties this morning specifically for this purpose. He crossed his arms and looked sternly at Roman.
When Roman got down to his boxer briefs, he smirked at Logan and started taking them off slowly, rotating his hips to the side and putting on a show for Logan. Logan snarled as he stalked up to Roman and pulled his hair.

“Did I say you could slow down, brat?”

Roman let out a pathetic moan at the rough treatment. “You didn’t say I couldn’t,” he snarked, though the effect was somewhat ruined at his breathlessness.

Logan tugged Roman’s hair harder, earning him a gasp and a whine. He eased up on the pressure a bit, not wanting to overwhelm Roman too quickly.

“Don’t be a smartass, or else I might not let you get off.”

Despite being somewhat impressed at the sheer length of the pitiful whine Roman let out, Logan made a note to make sure Roman reached climax. Roman was slipping already, and not getting off might be detrimental.

Logan released Roman’s hair. “Get those off.”

Roman moved quickly, almost tripping when he was getting out of the leg holes. Once Logan determined Roman was steady on his feet, he roughly pushed him onto the bed.

“On your back, knees bent.”

Roman scrambled to get in the position Logan wanted him in. Logan stared into Roman’s eyes, slowly untucking his own shirt and starting to undo his buttons. When Roman started snaking a hand down, Logan ordered him not to touch himself. Roman whined but complied. Logan popped the button on his jeans, then slowly pulled his polo over his head. When the shirt cleared his vision, he saw Roman staring at him and fondling himself, with a hint of a smile. Logan snarled as he marched over and grabbed a length of rope. He yanked Roman’s hands away and quickly bound them together in a modified double-column tie, then loosely tied his tie around Roman’s neck as a makeshift collar. He left his hand on Roman’s shoulder for a moment, making deliberate eye contact. Roman gave a small smile.

“Touch yourself again without permission and I’ll leave you hard, tied to my bed while I work.”

Roman’s eyes widened and he nodded. Logan slapped the side of Roman’s thigh and stepped back, slowly getting out of his jeans. He hadn’t bothered wearing boxer briefs that day. He picked up his clothes and turned his back to Roman, folding his clothes on top of his desk chair, then folding Roman’s clothes and placing them on top of his desk. When he continued to adjust the stack of clothes unnecessarily, he heard Roman whimper behind him. Logan smirked to himself, spent a few more moments schooling his features into a neutral mask, then turned.

Roman had kept his hands where they were supposed to be and was staring at Logan desperately. Logan walked over and kissed Roman while tugging on his hair. He paused when the action pulled a quieter whimper from Roman and saw tears spring to his eyes. He placed a gentler kiss on his lips.

“Color, darling?” he asked, softening his face.

“Green, master!”

Logan kissed Roman deeply, more loving than rough, then slipped back into his role. He tugged Roman’s hair harshly, cock twitching at the surprised gasp.
“Please, master!”

“Silence, brat. You don’t make the calls today.”

Logan got between Roman’s legs, Roman hitching his hips upwards and whining. Logan slapped Roman’s thigh again, mouth watering as the red cock jumped at his rough treatment.

“Behave! I do not make empty promises!”

Roman whimpered but settled his hips back on the mattress. Logan reached up and traced along the edge of his tie on Roman’s neck.

“You look good in my colors,” he purred.

“Yes master, I do!”

Logan chuckled. “So glad you agree.” He summoned a bottle of lube and flicked the cap open, watching Roman writhe on the bed beneath him. He coated his fingers with lube. While he was waiting for the lubricant to warm up, he reached up with his other hand and teased Roman’s nipples, only lightly brushing over them before pinching and twisting them. Roman cried out and arched his back, causing Logan to slap the reddened nubs in punishment. He pretended not to hear the moan that came after it.

Once Logan had decided the lube was sufficiently warm, he lowered his hand and started circling Roman’s entrance, gently rubbing it. Once Roman had come back to himself enough to nod, Logan pushed his index finger up to the first knuckle.

Roman whined and tried pushing his hips back. “I can take more, please Logan!”

Logan raised an eyebrow and pushed his index finger fully in. Roman moaned lewdly.

“Oh, is that what you wanted?” Logan growled. “You want to feel me for days afterwards?”

“Yes, please master!”

Logan poured more lube on his fingers and went about prepping Roman quickly and none-too-gently, encouraged by the moans increasing in volume. Though Logan figured that was partially from his relentless assault on Roman’s prostate.

“Please, I’m ready, please!”

“Tell me what you want.”

“I want you, I want your cock, please fuck me!” Roman cried.

Logan removed his fingers with a whine from Roman and coated his own cock liberally, not wanting to actually hurt Roman. He snapped his hands clean and touched the head of his cock to Roman’s entrance, waiting. When Roman whined and pushed back, Logan slammed in to the hilt. Roman threw his head back and keened. Logan held himself there, waiting for Roman to relax around him, but Roman started trying to move himself on Logan’s cock. Logan grabbed Roman’s hips to hold him still and started up a brutal pace, roughly jacking Roman in time with his thrusts.

Roman was moaning non-stop, both men already close to the edge. Logan adjusted the angle of his thrusts to hit Roman’s prostate, moving quickly and roughly. After only few more minutes of that, Roman crashed over the edge with a shout, eyes clenched shut and hips stuttering. Logan kept
moving his hand over Roman’s cock, knowing he loved the overstimulation.

Seeing Roman lose control like that did things to Logan, and he followed him over the edge soon after. Once he caught his breath, he quickly untied the makeshift collar and the double-column tie. Roman’s arms fell to the side, completely limp. Logan pulled out, summoned a warm, damp washcloth and cleaned both of them.

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He tossed the dirty washcloth to the side and layed down next to Roman, gathering him up in his arms. He kissed the sweaty hair gently, telling Roman how well he’d done and cuddling him. When Roman started dozing off, Logan placed gentle kisses all over his face.

“Come back to me, darling. Open your beautiful eyes.”

Roman’s eyes opened sluggishly.

“How about a bath?”

Roman groaned and hugged Logan tightly. Logan huffed out a laugh.

“I’ll be there the entire time, dear.” He waited for Roman to nod before lifting him and carrying him with some difficulty to his bathtub. He sat Roman on a stack of towels he had laid out beforehand while he waited for the water to become warm, running his fingers through Roman’s hair and lightly scratching his scalp. Once the bath was ready, complete with a glittery bath bomb, Logan helped Roman into the bath and started gently wiping down his skin. He gave Roman a scalp massage while he shampooed and conditioned his hair, then drained the water and dried him off. Roman’s eyes were more focused, so Logan helped Roman walk back to the bed, which he snapped clean sheets onto. He gave Roman a soft t-shirt and sweatpants to change into, then applied cream to his wrists and forearms.

Once Roman was able to sit with minimal swaying, Logan got each of them gatorade and granola bars, Roman leaning more and more on Logan. Once the snacks were done, Logan pulled Roman down onto the bed with him and held him against his chest. Logan kissed the top of Roman’s head.

“Sleep well, sweet prince,” Logan murmured, prepared to spend the rest of the afternoon napping and cuddling his lover.

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After dinner, during which both Patton and Virgil noticed how relaxed and dopey Roman was, Thomas summoned the Sides. He was having a conflict about whether or not he’d be able to finish his portion of the editing on time, and he didn’t know what to do because he was already stressed.

Roman was sitting on the couch and cuddling with Patton. “I don’t know why you’re feeling worried about this Thomas, I’m feeling great,” Roman said slowly.

Thomas’ eyebrows shot up. “Really? I’m not feeling super hot about… anything, right now. What’s got you in such a good mood?”

“Don’t ask,” Virgil said quickly. Roman smirked and Logan just smiled and adjusted his glasses.

“Well Thomas, seeing as I’m the knowledge center of your brain, I can assure you that you’re more than capable of finishing your portion of the editing.”
“But what if he can’t?!” Virgil blurted, then covered his mouth. He looked at Logan, apologetic and fearful.

Logan’s features softened. “It’s alright, Virgil. Please tell us what is troubling you.”

Virgil chewed on his hoodie sleeve a little. “Just… what if he can’t? You know a lot, but you don’t know everything! What if something comes up? Or what if a section takes longer to edit than you thought? There’s a lot that can go wrong!”

“While you are correct, you must not underestimate Thomas or myself. Thomas has many facets, including his creative problem-solving faculties, as well as wonderful connections with his friends and co-workers, who can help him out if he truly needs it. And Thomas is quite good at solving a number of logical problems. Here, Virgil, posit a logic problem. Perhaps a demonstration of my abilities will put your mind at ease.”

Virgil shifted on the stairs. “Okay… say a full sentence without using the letter ‘A’.”

Without missing a beat, “I love you, Virgil.”

Virgil turned bright red while Thomas and Patton let out identical squeals. “I, um, okay, I guess that works,” he grumbled.

Logan smirked arrogantly and turned his attention back to Thomas. “Feeling better Thomas?”

“Yeah, that worked! Thanks Logan!”

“Anytime Thomas.”

The Sides sank out, Roman and Patton going to Patton’s room to continue cuddling. Virgil and Logan ended up in the commons.

“Would you like to do solitary activities together?”

Virgil smiled shakily. “That sounds cool.”

Logan frowned and tilted his head. “Are you alright?”

“Yeah, I’m good! I’ve just got some leftover nerves.”

“I see. Would you like to cuddle while we do our solitary activities? You may experience a release of dopamine and oxytocin, which could help calm you down.”

Virgil snorted. “How could I refuse?”

“No idea.”

Logan sat on the couch and lifted his arm up. Virgil cuddled against him while an arm was draped over his shoulders. He plugged in his headphones and started scrolling through Tumblr. Eventually, he found his mind wandering to his fantasy from earlier that day. He put his phone and headphones away.

“Are you going to sleep already?”

Virgil looked up at Logan and smiled. “Nope.” He wrapped his arms around Logan’s neck. “Kiss me?”
Logan looked surprised. “I would love to. Are you certain that’s what you want?”

Virgil’s smile grew as he wrapped Logan’s tie around his hand and used it to pull Logan in for a kiss. Logan was surprised, but smiled into the kiss and set his book aside, using that hand to cup Virgil’s head. Virgil kept a hold on his tie and pulled them down so Virgil was on his back underneath Logan.

Logan kissed Virgil for a few more seconds before pulling back. “Are you sure this is alright?”

“Hell yes.”

Logan just smiled and dove back in, taking charge of the kiss. Virgil found himself quickly drowning in heat and arousal, swept away by Logan’s passion and fervor. Logan’s hands were moving everywhere above Virgil’s waistband, and it only added to the fire building in Virgil. Logan explored his body, grabbing, touching, rubbing, squeezing everywhere he could get. He brushed over Virgil’s clothed nipples experimentally, earning him a gasp and a mewl. He smiled, pulling his head down and gently kissing and sucking at Virgil’s neck, surprising him with the barest scrapes of teeth every so often.

Virgil was letting out a steady stream of moans and expletives. “Lo!”

“Yes moonlight?”

“You can touch me lower, just not on the front.”

Logan pulled back and looked into Virgil’s eyes. “Are you sure? We do not need to-”

“I’m sure,” Virgil answered quickly. Logan nodded, looking into Virgil’s eyes a moment longer before kissing him again. He started out slow and sweet, giving Virgil plenty of time to change his mind if he wanted to. Logan gradually built the passion back up before sliding both hands down to the top of Virgil’s pants. Virgil pulled back, and Logan was ready to stop.

“Lower, please.”

Logan slid his hands over Virgil’s thighs and rubbed them, encouraged by the gasps and moans Virgil was letting out.

Having Logan touch him in such an intimate area was sending sparks directly to Virgil’s groin. He got hard painfully quickly, and felt a desire to have Logan touch him there. Logan moved to suck and nibble along Virgil’s ear.

“Lo, please, fuck, need you, please touch m-” Virgil stopped himself short, feeling like a bucket of cold water had been dumped over him. He froze as tears gathered in his eyes. Logan noticed his partner had stopped responding and pulled up. Once he saw how frightened his lover was, he sat up, followed quickly by Virgil.

“Virgil, I’m sorry, are you alrig-”

“Are you okay?!”

Logan jumped at the question. “I am, yes.”

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry, I know we’ve gotta have a conversation about that stuff, I didn’t mean to push you or pressure you or anything!”
Logan sagged in relief and smiled. “I’m alright, moon. You didn’t pressure me. I did not feel uncomfortable.”

Virgil let out a breath of relief. “Oh thank god.”

Logan brushed Virgil’s bangs out of his face. “How are you feeling?”

“I’m fine, I was just worried I did something wrong.”

“Not at all. Would you like to cuddle?”

Virgil snuggled up to Logan and tilted his head up. “Can we kiss a little bit please?”

“Certainly.” Logan and Virgil kissed for a few more minutes on the couch and cuddled there until it was time to go to bed. Logan and Virgil kissed each other goodnight, and looked forward to the morning when they would see each other again.

Chapter End Notes

The interaction between Virgil and Logan where Virgil challenges him to say a sentence without the letter A is inspired by the hilarious @reberyfdog on Tumblr!

Logan had a great day.
Hi folks!! First things first, most of this chapter contains frank discussions about various sexual acts, including their formal names and folks' likes and dislikes. There is a safeword use near the end, but it's not in a sexual situation. Earlier in the chapter, there's a very light-hearted demonstration of "go" and "pause" safewords as well. There are also two very short sections in between lines of tildes closer to the end. One is a flashback, and that part of the text is italicized. The next section is in between tildes but is not italicized. That section describes a situation that the person fears that mirrors the flashback.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil groaned when Roman started singing Make a Man Out of You outside his door.
“"I'm up Princey."
“"Somehow I'll..."
“"Princey, I'm awake."
“"...make a man..."
“"Princey!"
“"...OUT OF YOUUUUUU!!!"
“"PRINCEY!!!!"
“"Yes beloved?"
“"I'm awake!"
“"I know. I'm never gonna catch my breath..."

Virgil sighed and went into his bathroom to shower. He heard Roman finish the song even through his shower. He stepped out, got his hair and makeup done for the day, and went over to his closet, only realizing once he stood in front of his wardrobe that he wasn’t wearing any clothes.

Holy shit, I didn’t even realize!

Wanting to celebrate his progress, he chose his t-shirt with the cutout and his fancy skinny jeans. He pulled on his strappy combat boots, threw on some rings, and headed downstairs. When he got into the kitchen, Roman caught sight of him first. His jaw dropped slightly and his eyes darkened.

Roman stood and walked over to Virgil, brushing the backs of his fingertips across Virgil’s cheek.
“"Good morning, my love,” he rumbled, “You look simply ravishing this morning.”

Virgil smiled, wrapped his arms around Roman’s neck, and kissed him. Roman kissed back slowly,
placing his hands on Virgil’s hips. They kissed for a minute until Patton gently announced that breakfast was ready. With a final quick kiss, they headed to their chairs. As Patton was plating up avocado toast with poached eggs, he looked over at Virgil and paused.

“See something you like Pat?” Virgil asked with a smirk.

Patton just nodded. “Uh huh!”

Virgil snorted as Patton shook himself and went back to plating.

“You always look particularly lovely in that shirt,” Logan said, keeping very deliberate eye contact.

Virgil blushed and smiled shyly. “Thanks L.”

“Of course darling.”

The Sides dug in eagerly. Virgil loved cutting his egg open and watching the gooey yolk run over his toast. So good.

“Seeing as Thomas has a relaxed morning, I was wondering if you all would like to spend some time together?”

“I love that idea!” Patton gushed.

Roman smiled. “That sounds wonderful.”

Virgil felt anxiety bubbling up. Should it be today? Should we? It’s about time, isn’t it? Like, a lot of relationships have this… “I’m down.”

“Excellent. May I suggest Into the Universe With Stephen Hawking?”

The rest of breakfast was spent with Roman and Logan good-naturedly bickering over what to watch. Virgil listened to them, sharing amused looks with Patton, all while nervousness was growing.

Once breakfast was cleaned up, the four Sides piled onto the couch and got ready to watch Into the Universe. Virgil was under Roman’s arm and cuddled up against his side with Patton leaning on his free side.

Okay, if you don’t do it now it’ll be awkward. “Uh, hey guys?”

They all paused to look at him, which didn’t help his anxiety. “Can we, um, talk about sex boundaries?” Oh my god, you can’t even say it right.

“We can do that baby! Are you sure you want to?”

Virgil nodded quickly. “I’m sure.”

Patton studied his face a moment before nodded. “Okay honey. Should we move to the kitchen?” he asked.

Virgil felt Roman move beneath him and reflexively grabbed his prince. Roman froze.

“Love?”
Virgil hid his face in Roman’s chest out of embarrassment. “Sorry, can we just stay here?”

Roman squeezed Virgil lightly. “You’d feel more comfortable having this discussion while cuddling?”

Virgil’s face and ears heated up, but he nodded.

“I’m fine with that.” Roman looked around, the other Light Sides agreeing.

“Alright, my sweet. We’ll stay here. Tell us if you get uncomfortable and we can stop, okay?”

Virgil nodded into Roman’s chest again and pulled back. Roman smiled down at him softly and loosened his arm, letting Virgil lean back. Virgil looked around the room and fought the urge to shrink in on himself with three people staring at him.

“Um… so, uh, where should we start?”

“Consent!” Patton chirped. “Virgil, what’s your definition of enthusiastic consent?”

“Oh, uh agreeing to something without being nagged to do it?”

“You’ve got that part right! It’s saying yes to something that you want to do. It’s not enthusiastic consent if you feel you “have” to, if you don’t want to but you’re doing it for the other person, or if you won’t enjoy yourself. Does that make sense?”

“Yeah… I’m feeling all kinds of called out,” Virgil joked.

Patton just smiled sadly. “We don’t want you doing anything you don’t want, honey.”

“I know Pat. I’m working on not feeling bad for being so damn slow with sex.”

“It is understandable that you’d feel bad for not engaging in sex with us, given your history,” Logan began. “However, know that we do not mind one bit. If you say no to something, we will not be upset or take it personally.”

“Sex is a garnish, not an entree,” Roman interjected.

Virgil leaned his head against Roman’s shoulder. “I know, I’m working on it. I’ve gotten better. I know you guys like being with me even if we’re not having sex.”

Roman pressed a kiss to the top of Virgil’s head. “Absolutely. You make my heart sing!”

“Thanks Princey.”

“Anytime, my gorgeous raven.”

Logan adjusted his glasses. “Do you have any questions about enthusiastic consent, Virgil? This is the most important part of our discussion.”

“No, I think I’ve got it.”

“Alright. Do let us know if any questions come up. In our relationship, we utilize safewords as well to check in with each other, particularly during kink scenes. We use the stoplight system: green for go ahead, yellow for pause and check in, and red for stop and move to aftercare. Do you have any questions regarding those?”
Virgil frowned. “So green is everything is good?”

“Yes.”

“And if red is things aren’t good and need to stop, then when would you use yellow?”

“Excellent question. Yellow is for if you need something changed, need a moment to breathe and ground yourself, or need some time to see if you can continue or if red might be the color you need instead. There may be other scenarios as well.”

“Just remember, if you’re not feeling great or if something feels wrong but you still feel like you want to keep going,” Patton added.

Virgil shifted. “I guess that makes sense? I don’t get it exactly, but maybe once I’ve experienced it I’ll figure it out?”

“Perhaps a demonstration is in order,” Logan offered. He turned to Patton. “Patton, darling, may I kiss you?”

“Green!”

Logan and Patton kissed, slow and sweet. When they parted Logan met Patton’s eyes. “Would you like to have sexual intercourse right now?”

“Yellow. I don’t want to have sex right now, but maybe later. And I’m still okay with kissing!”

“Alright, my dear.” Logan turned to Virgil. “Does that help?”

Virgil’s face was a little pink but he nodded. “Yeah, that helps. Thanks.”

Logan looked back into Patton’s eyes. “Not a problem,” he said quietly. Patton giggled. Logan smiled and refocused on Virgil. “Do you have any other questions regarding the stoplight system?”

“No, I think I’m good there.”

“Excellent. Another important thing to keep in mind is that consent can be withdrawn at any time, and you can change your mind as to what things you like and do not like. For example, you may think you’ll like something, but once you try it you may find you don’t enjoy it as much as you’d thought. Or you might enjoy something in one situation, but not feel like it another day.”

“Yeah, that makes sense,” Virgil responded. You have to let them get off if they start, though. You don’t want to be a tease and give them blue balls.

I know.

“Wonderful. With that in mind, do you feel comfortable discussing which acts you are and are not okay with?”

Virgil swallowed and nodded. “Let’s do this.”

Roman squeezed Virgil’s arm. “Again, my precious little emo, if you need to stop at any time, just let us know.”

“I will.”

Roman picked up the conversation. “When we had this conversation with just the three of us, we
had three categories: things that are yes, maybe, and no. How do those categories sound?”

Virgil nodded, committing the categories to memory. “Those sound good.”

“Perfect. Is there anything you definitely want to try?”

Virgil blushed. “Um, I’m not sure? I’ve liked when we’re kissing and, um, I kinda thrust against you,” he forced out quickly, keeping his eyes on the coffee table.

“Grinding?”

“Yeah.”

“Alright. Is that in the yes or maybe category?”

Virgil’s ears turned warmer. “Yes.”

Roman rubbed his arm gently. “There is no need to be embarrassed, stormcloud. It’s okay to have wants and desires.”

Why does he have to make that sound so hot? “Thanks Ro. Yeah, I think grinding is in the yes category for me.”

“Alright. We’re all quite alright with grinding. Is there anything else that’s in the yes category for you?”

“Um, I think maybe hands?” Virgil tensed. “Except, only if it doesn’t hurt. And I don’t like it when I’m hit or punched or grabbed really hard. I don’t like when it hurts.”

Both Roman and Patton had to hold themselves back from pulling Virgil into their arms. “We won’t hurt you, love. You were so good to tell us that you don’t like pain and what you’re not okay with.”

Virgil breathed in roses, cinnamon, and fresh air for a moment. “Yeah, I don’t like it when it hurts.”

“We will keep that in mind, and we’d never cause you pain without your enthusiastic consent.”

Roman’s heart broke a little when he felt Virgil’s muscles relax. “Do you want to add anything?”

“I don’t think so. Maybe just use, like lotion or something? When it’s dry it kinda hurts after a while, especially if it’s fast or rough.”

Damn those Dark Sides to the lowest pits of Hell! “Of course, my sweet.”

“I think that’s it for hands.” Virgil closed his eyes and took a steadying breath. His pulse was fast and his skin didn’t feel clean, but he still wanted to complete the conversation.

“You’re doing very well. Is there anything else you’d like to add to any of those categories?”

“Um, maybe… oral sex?” he mumbled.

“Analingus or fellatio?” Logan asked.

Jesus Christ, LOGAN. “Fellatio. I don’t think I’m okay with… the first one. Maybe in the future, kind of? I don’t know.”
“That’s okay, chocolate chip! That’s why this isn’t a one-time discussion!”

Virgil smiled at Patton. “Thanks babe. Um, yeah, so—” Virgil was cut off by a flashback.

~~~~~~

Apathy was holding Virgil’s head in place against his abdomen, making Virgil choke and gag. The smell and taste was intolerable. He was new to the Dark Sides, new to their punishments, new to everything.

~~~~~~

“Virgil? Can you hear me, my dark knight?”

When did I close my eyes? “Yeah, sorry about that. Um, just don’t be too rough with it? I’m good at not gagging, but it doesn’t feel good if it’s too hard? I’m sorry.” He closed his eyes against the tears.

“You don’t have to apologize sweetie! Do you want to stop?”

~~~~~~

Virgil imagined Patton holding his head like Apathy did and smiling down at him. It didn’t feel good.

~~~~~~

Virgil curled into Roman’s chest as his breath started to hitch. Oh hey, maybe I can make it up to them and show them I actually was listening and that I’m not a totally useless piece of shit? “R-red,” he whimpered.

Roman’s arms wrapped around him immediately. “Okay, my sweet. You did so good telling us you needed to stop. It’s okay. What do you need?”

“M triggered. ‘M s-sorry. I j-just didn’t f-feel good. Felt bad. I think it was a flashback?”

“No need to apologize, I promise! Is there something that can help you feel better?”

Virgil pressed against Roman. “Hold m-me?” he asked, not sure if Roman would want to hold him after he freaked out over a conversation.

“Of course, angel.”

“Th-thank you. Helps me f-feel s-safe. I h-had a flashback.”

“I’m so sorry, my love.”

“Would it help if we were over there too?” Patton asked.

Virgil nodded, and Patton joined the cuddle. Logan moved as close as he could to Virgil and offered a hand, which Virgil took.

“Can you squeeze my hand when I squeeze yours?” Logan asked.

Virgil nodded, then smiled as wide as he could. “Green.”
Logan smiled back, proud of Virgil. “Perfect.” Logan led Virgil through the grounding exercise until the youngest Side had stopped crying.

“How are you feeling?”

Virgil sniffled, and was offered a handkerchief, Logan slightly perturbed that he was at an awkward angle to grab his pack of Kleenex. “Better. I’m sorry about that.”

Patton hugged Virgil as best he could from where he was sitting. “It’s okay baby! It can take a couple attempts to get everything!”

Virgil closed his eyes and snuggled against Roman. Roman gently scratched the back of Virgil’s head, hearing him rumble a moment later. “Would you like to cuddle with us the rest of the morning, little crow?”

“Yeah, that sounds good,” Virgil said quietly, sighing happily when Roman and Patton kissed his hair. Logan turned on *Into the Universe*, and the three Light Sides held their boyfriend until he felt safe again.

Chapter End Notes

BOUNDARIES.

CONVO.

Don’t worry, there'll be more!! They'll cover everything! Poor Virge just got a little triggered. And he knows Patton wouldn't hurt him, but brains are mean.

Also! He applied what he learned, the good boi! And he didn't realize he wasn't wearing any clothes in his room! Things are moving forward!
Chapter 133

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! We have a bit of steaminess in this chapter, but other than that there are no warnings! Enjoy!

Also, I've been getting a lot more work lately, which is awesome!! There might be more chapters every other day than every day, but I can promise updates of at least once per week!

The increased work also made me forget to add something to the A/N's in chapter 132! In the flashback, it's explained that Virgil visited the Neutral Sides on occasion during his imprisonment. It's also explained that Deceit had everyone except his fellow Dark Sides convinced that the Dark Sides could only stay in other areas for a short amount of time, or else they'd disintegrate.

After lunch, Thomas had to work on paring down a script for the next video by almost a third, so Logan and Roman were working together in Roman’s room while Virgil and Patton hung out in the commons, both of them needing to supervise the process and Patton not quite finished cuddling Virgil. At the moment, Virgil was being held against Patton’s chest with Patton’s cheek on top of his head.

After a few hours, Thomas took a break, even though everyone sensed Roman still working feverishly. Patton kissed Virgil’s hair.

“Do you wanna get some cookies, baby?”

Virgil tilted his head up and captured Patton’s lips for a kiss. “I’d rather make out with you,” he rumbled.

Patton smiled widely. “Green!”

Virgil snorted while they shifted so Virgil was straddling Patton, while Patton laid on the couch and had his hands just over Virgil’s waistband. Virgil paused for a moment to caress Patton’s cheek, who hummed and smiled. Virgil leaned down and kissed Patton gently. When Patton eagerly returned the kiss, Virgil slid his tongue along the seam of his lips. Patton opened his mouth readily, and Virgil quickly took charge of the kiss.

Patton brought both hands up, one rubbing and massaging at the back of Virgil’s head and neck and the other hand moving all over Virgil’s back. Virgil arched and moaned into the kiss, Patton’s hands leaving trails of fire and goosebumps in their wake. Virgil smiled when he noticed that Patton was using the hand at the back of his neck to soothe and ground him. Virgil was still unsure of what to do with his hands, so he kept one on his boyfriend’s face and moved one over a thick, strong chest, shoulder, and arm.

When Patton rubbed over a sensitive spot on Virgil’s side, he flinched and gasped. Patton stopped touching him immediately, pulled back and looking at his boyfriend in concern.
“You okay sweetie?”

Virgil blushed. “Yeah, just ticklish,” he said, voice rough.

Patton started giggling, and despite his best efforts, Virgil soon joined him, resting his forehead on Patton’s shoulder while they dissolved into a fit of giggles. Once they had calmed down, Virgil met Patton’s gaze, both men still smiling and holding back laughter. Patton brought his hand up and cupped Virgil’s cheek, smoothing his thumb over the soft skin. Virgil sighed and closed his eyes, nuzzling the gentle hand. When he opened them again, he stared at Patton lovingly for a moment before going back in for a kiss. They kissed a few times, still smiling, before Virgil deepened the kiss again. Patton danced fingertips up Virgil’s spine, making him twitch and squirm. They laughed into the kiss a bit before Virgil gently nipped Patton’s lower lip.

Patton’s hand grew close to the section of Virgil’s t-shirt that was cut out, but skittered away, seemingly realizing where his hand was going. Virgil pulled back and rubbed noses with Patton, leaning his forehead on Patton’s and staring into his eyes.

“You can touch me there if you want.”

The thumb that was still on Virgil’s face moved. “Are you sure sweetie?”

“I’m sure.” Then he smiled. “Green.”

Patton’s smile grew as he kissed Virgil, reveling in the taste of floral lavender and a hint of minty toothpaste. Virgil leaned down and started laving attention on Patton’s neck, focusing on the spots he’d learned were most sensitive. He let the moans and mewls from Patton wash over him, his arousal building until he was straining against the zipper of his jeans. Patton was touching and squeezing all over Virgil’s body, in one spot one second and a completely different spot the next, making Virgil’s head spin in a heavenly way.

Patton rested a hand just below the cutout and waited. Virgil responded by sucking a section of skin into his mouth and gingerly worrying it with his teeth. Patton gasped as he arched up. He brushed his hand over Virgil’s bared skin experimentally, feeling encouraged by the gasp and high-pitched moan he heard. He pushed at Virgil’s chest gently, Virgil rising up on his elbows.

“Pat? You oka- oh FUCK.”

Virgil nearly lost his senses when Patton kissed the skin on his shoulder and started pressing soft kisses and licks, with a soft scrape of teeth here and there. Every touch felt like a zap of lightning that went through his body and fried his brain. He knew he was letting out all kinds of embarrassing sounds, but he couldn’t seem to make himself stop. Having someone touch his bare chest and shoulder was exhilarating, and Virgil had no idea how people didn’t just spontaneously combust while they were making out without shirts on, much less having sex.

Wanting to return the favor, he brought his hands down to Patton’s chest and played with his nipples through his shirt. Patton let out delicious moans to match Virgil’s in volume. Patton moved back up and kissed Virgil, taking control of the kiss from beneath Virgil, and trying to communicate his love for the Side.

The two men lost themselves in each other until they felt a pull from Thomas. They parted reluctantly, checking to see what Thomas needed while they laid on the couch. Thomas was attempting to continue editing, but was having difficulty focusing.

“Whoops!” Patton chirped. The two Sides sat up on the couch, settling into the cuddling position
they’d been in before while they helped keep Thomas focused on the task at hand.

////////

Roman wiped his brow, sweating after the exertion both he and Logan had expended. Logan was winded himself, but they both looked at each other with satisfaction.

“Excellent work on the script today Roman,” Logan said, “though it was quite a task, I believe it is ready for peer review.”

Roman stood up and stretched. “I hope you’re right Specs. Thomas has been struggling with this script for a few weeks now. I’m going to manage some business in my kingdom, and I think I’ll take a bubble bath afterwards. I’ve earned it.”

“Indeed you have, my king. May I request a kiss before you depart?”

Roman walked over to Logan and wrapped an arm around his lower back, pulling them flush.

Not that Logan was complaining.

Roman kissed him surprisingly gently, considering how eager he’d been. Logan reciprocated the kiss, relaxing in his prince’s hold. With relaxation, however, came exhaustion.

Roman pulled back and kissed Logan’s forehead. “Why don’t you sleep until dinner?” he asked softly.

Logan closed his eyes and leaned his head against Roman’s shoulder. He felt Roman huff before he picked Logan up and carried him to his bed.

Roman kissed Logan’s forehead again and set his glasses on the nightstand. “Sleep well, my little nerd.”

Logan just muttered sleepily and curled up on the bed. Sparing one last look at his boyfriend, Roman closed the door to Logan’s room quietly. Once he stepped out into the hallway, he could hear moans and gasps coming from downstairs.

He smirked. *I guess I know what they’re up to.*

Once Roman was standing in front of his wardrobe, he took a minute to compose himself, then stepped into his realm, ready to fight any monsters and soothe Thomas’ worries with creativity.

////////

A few days later, Virgil was lounging on his bed, idly scrolling through Tumblr while keeping an eye on Thomas. He heard a few knocks on his door right before the scent of coffee hit his nose. Virgil smiled and got up to open his door.

“Coffee bean!” Remy exclaimed before he hugged Virgil. After a good, long hug with Remy, Virgil gave Saul a hug as well.

“It’s good to see you, little one.”

“It’s good to see you guys too,” Virgil said quietly into Saul’s shoulder. With a final squeeze, Saul let go of Virgil.

“Come on in guys. I don’t have much going on right now, but we can hang out.”
The three Sides piled onto Virgil’s bed, and Virgil cuddled against his two big brothers.

“Hey sugar? We had something we wanted to ask your permission for.”

Virgil felt his anxiety spike. “What’s up?”

“Nothing bad baby, and if you don’t want to you can say no,” Remy assured. “We know you spend more time with the Light Sides than with us. Which is fine, this is where you belong now! But Saul and I think that we have information about your past that the Light Sides don’t have and vice versa.”

Virgil’s heart was still pounding and he was dragging in larger breaths than usual. “Okay. What about it?” He winced when it came out more aggressive than he intended.

“We were thinking it might help if we had the same information? That way, we might know more triggers you might have and we’ll all have the same baseline of information?”

Virgil’s head was feeling cottony, and he was having a hard time understanding what they were saying. “So you and the Light Sides wanna talk to each other about me and the stuff I went through so you all know the same stuff?” he asked.

“Exactly. But, we will absolutely not if you don’t want us to. It’s okay, we don’t have to know. We just think it might help so you don’t have to repeat things that are painful and so we don’t misinterpret anything.”

He was still confused. He didn’t know what was going on or what they were saying, but he didn’t want to upset them. “That’s okay.”

Saul frowned, looking down at the smaller Side. “Are you certain? You don’t have to, and you agreed a lot faster than we thought you might. You don’t have any questions or concerns?”

“I’m okay, I think my head’s just a little cottony right now.”

Remy brushed the bangs out of Virgil’s eyes. “Do you know what we’re asking, sweetie?”

Virgil hesitated, then nodded.

“Was that a lie?”

Virgil whimpered and tensed. “I’m s-sorry!!”

Remy wrapped his arms around Virgil and hugged him. “It’s okay, coffee bean! We just want to make sure you understand what we’re asking before we do anything. Do you need anything?”

“Am I in trouble?” Virgil asked nervously.

“Not at all sweetie! It sounds like you’re a little scared right now.” Remy’s heart broke at the nod.

“I don’t know what’s happening,” Virgil said in a small, frightened voice.

“Shhhhhh darling, you’re safe. It’s okay, we’re here, we’ll take care of you,” Saul soothed.

Virgil leaned against Remy, head cottony and uncomfortable. He wanted to stop talking, everything was confusing.

“Do you want to take a nap sweetie?” Remy asked. Virgil nodded. He wasn’t particularly tired, but
napping meant he didn’t have to try to understand what they were saying.

Remy started laying down and Virgil followed him, curling up on his chest. Saul wrapped protective arms around Virgil from behind.

Remy kissed the top of his head. “Night, sugar. We’ll wake you up in time for dinner.”

*I can understand that!* “Okay. Thank you. Love you guys.”

“We love you too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hey folks!! I promise I'm still working on that Sims video for this fic, I'm just busy and useless with tech lol.

OKAY, and now: Sometimes when I get stressed, my head gets cottony and I can't understand complex topics or words. Like, I'll recognize the words as something I should know, but I don't understand them. For example, one time I didn't know what "recently" meant, so I answered an important question incorrectly. And then I'll forget things I've learned or told other people, most notably I'll forget coping mechanisms. And one time I forgot I'd told someone I'd recently figured out that I'm grey-aro, and I've had several long conversations with this person about that topic. It's definitely a stress response, but it feels different. I'll usually be more easily intimidated and I'll just attach to one of my friends and hover around them. It's really different. I've described it to friends as being 15 or 16 year old Lil (although, like when I couldn't remember what "recent" meant, my brain was probably even younger). Does anyone else get this?
Chapter 134

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! We have some pretty frank discussions of Virgil’s past and various sexual acts, but nothing terribly graphic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil only dozed off for a half hour, and that was only thanks to Remy consistently running his hands through Virgil’s hair. Nevertheless, by the time Logan knocked on his door for dinner his head was feeling clearer.

Remy scratched the back of Virgil’s head. “How are you feeling sugar?”

A coil unwound in Virgil’s chest at the nickname. “Better. Sorry about that. I don’t know what that was.”

“No need to apologize, little one. We were asking a really hard question."

Virgil let out an annoyed huff. “Yeah, but I can’t lose my head every time someone asks me a difficult question.”

“Cut yourself some slack babe. This is dealing with the hell you went through.”

Virgil curled more onto Remy’s chest. “Yeah…”

Remy kissed the top of Virgil’s head. “Why don’t we go down and eat something?”

Virgil responded by sighing and pushing himself up. He paused as he listened to the Neutral Sides also get up to leave.

“You guys can talk if you want,” he said, staring at his lap.

He heard both Sides pause. “Are you sure sweetie?”

“Yeah, I’m sure. It’s fine.”

“If you’re sure. Do you want to be there while we talk?”

Virgil snorted. “Me be there while you go over all the ways I got fucked up? Probably wouldn’t end well.”

Remy winced. “Sorry babes.”

“It’s fine,” Virgil sighed, “I’ll just hang out in my room or something.”

The three Sides headed downstairs, and feasted on the roasted veggies and slow cooker balsamic beef Logan had made. Everyone complimented Logan on on the meal, Patton being especially enthusiastic. Virgil knew the meal was delicious, but his nerves made him unable to eat much more than half a serving.
When he couldn’t eat anymore, he placed his dish in the sink. “I’ll be in my room. See you guys later.”

He sank out quickly, wanting to avoid the looks and questions. Appearing in his room, he grabbed Shelly and got comfortable on his bed, ready to listen to music and scroll through Tumblr until however long it took them to go over his many layers of awful.

_They’re going to be sharing with each other how-_

_Shut up. They care about me, that’s why they’re doing this._

Virgil turned up the volume on his music and focused intently on Tumblr, resolutely ignoring the mean little voice in the back of his head. After an hour, the combination of the meal and the stress from earlier had his eyelids growing heavy, so he put his phone on his nightstand and curled up on his bed, bringing Lucas to his chest. With his headphones off, he could hear noises coming from downstairs.

It took him a few seconds to realize it was crying.

Virgil swiftly put his headphones back on and cranked up the volume on *Evanescence*, biting his lip against the knowledge that he was, once again, moving his loved ones to tears just with his existence.

He stayed curled up on his bed until he heard knocking at his door. He tugged out his headphones to hear what the person on the other side of the door might be saying.

“Coffee bean?” came Remy’s thin voice, clearly trying to keep his voice steady. “Do you want some company or alone time?”

Virgil snapped to open his door and set his phone and headphones on his nightstand. “You can come in.”

Saul and Remy came through, both of their eyes red. Virgil shifted so there would be enough room on his bed for the three of them.

Saul brought Virgil to his chest and Remy got in behind Virgil.

“We love you baby,” Remy said, voice shakier.

“Indeed we do darling.”

Virgil closed his eyes against his mind’s cruelty. “I love you guys too.”

Saul held Virgil just that bit closer. “Are you tired little one?”

Virgil relaxed against Saul’s chest. “Yeah.”

Remy started running a hand through Virgil’s hair. “Go to sleep sugar. We’ll be here.”

So he did.

///// The next morning, after some cuddles and goodbye hugs, Virgil went downstairs for breakfast. Patton had made a miner’s hash with Dutch baby pancakes, both of which Virgil wolfed down due to eating so little the previous night. Throughout breakfast, he noticed each of the Light Sides had
kept stealing glances at him. Once he had finished his food and he saw Logan looking at him out of the corner of his eye, he decided to confront it.

“Like what you see?” Virgil asked, smirking.

Logan blushed and had the decency to look embarrassed. “Apologies Virgil. I know we discussed some sensitive information last night.”

Virgil shrugged. “I wasn’t there.”

“I know. I also know that it still may have caused some distress.”

Virgil let a breath out through his nose. “It’s fine guys. I’m more worried about you.”

Patton smiled sweetly at Virgil. “You’re so thoughtful baby! We’re doing okay. We just love you so much!” Virgil noticed the quiver at the end of Patton’s sentence.

They probably need cuddling or some shit. I guess I can deal with that.

“Thomas has a busy day today, maybe we should stay downstairs and work together?” Virgil offered.

“I foresee no problem with that,” Logan said, trying not to show his excitement.

“There’s nothing more I would love than to spend the day with my handsome loves!”

“I love it!!!”

Once breakfast was cleaned up, they moved to the couch and cuddled together. Roman pouted a little about not being able to be one of the Sides holding Virgil, but he reached his arm across and scritched the back of Virgil’s head, earning a rumble. Though they spent most of their time focused on Thomas, whenever they’d pull back to take a break Virgil would be there, safe.

They decided as a group to spend the night together in Roman’s room. Virgil kissed each one of his boyfriends gently, none of the kisses becoming heated; they were for reassurance, not arousal. They crawled into bed together, and Virgil fell asleep surrounded by his boyfriends.

///// A few days later, Thomas had a free hour to relax. He was experimenting with different kinds of meditation, so the Sides got to do essentially whatever they wanted in the meantime.

As it was, Virgil and the Light Sides were cuddling on the couch, listening to Patton gush about Thomas’ friends, with Roman interjecting to wax poetic about a potential new boyfriend for Thomas. Logan and Patton were on either side of Virgil, with Virgil currently being clutched to Patton’s chest.

We should probably try this again.

“Hey guys?”

Patton paused in his excited rambling to look down at Virgil. “Yeah chocolate chip?”

“Should… um, should we try to have the talk again?” Virgil cringed at his awkwardness.

Patton rubbed his arm soothingly. “If you want to. If you don’t want to, that’s fine too.”
“No, we should,” Virgil said resolutely.

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“Okay honey. Are you guys ready for that talk?” Once Roman and Logan agreed, Virgil sat up a little more, though he was still being held by Patton.

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“Where do you want to start?” Patton asked gently.

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Virgil looked intently at his knees. “Maybe hands? That’s where I started getting triggered last time.”

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“We can start there. We’ll let you take the lead on that.”

“We can start there. We’ll let you take the lead on that.”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded. “So, I guess I’m good with it as long as it’s not painful and there’s lubricant?”

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“That’s quite understandable. Is there something you would like to try in regards to manual stimulation?” Logan asked.

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Virgil flushed. He’d had a few fantasies while unsuccessfultly trying to get himself off, but he wasn’t sure he’d like it in real life.

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“Maybe, like, with you leaning over me? I don’t know if I’ll like it in action though, or if I just like the thought of it.”

“Maybe, like, with you leaning over me? I don’t know if I’ll like it in action though, or if I just like the thought of it.”

“That’s quite alright. We can always try it, and if you don’t like it we don’t have to do it.”

“That’s quite alright. We can always try it, and if you don’t like it we don’t have to do it.”

Liar. They’re just saying that because that’s what you’re supposed to say. Don’t be an asshole and get them all worked up, only to not get them off. You can lay there while they do what they need to do.

Liar. They’re just saying that because that’s what you’re supposed to say. Don’t be an asshole and get them all worked up, only to not get them off. You can lay there while they do what they need to do.

“Yeah, that makes sense. Um, I guess that’s it?”

“Yeah, that makes sense. Um, I guess that’s it?”

“We shall keep that in mind, sweet stormcloud! Related to handjobs, do you enjoy overstimulation?”

“We shall keep that in mind, sweet stormcloud! Related to handjobs, do you enjoy overstimulation?”

Virgil jolted at the unexpected question. “Is that where you keep going after someone’s already gotten off?”

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“Yes, that is correct,” Logan confirmed. “Roman and I enjoy it, and Patton does not.”

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Virgil shifted. “I don’t like that. It hurts. It always hurt a lot.” It took a second, but Patton hugged Virgil a moment later.

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“Oh sweetie, I’m so sorry,” he whispered.

“Oh sweetie, I’m so sorry,” he whispered.

“It’s fine, I just don’t like it.”

“It’s fine, I just don’t like it.”

“Do you want to stop?”

“Do you want to stop?”

“No, let’s keep going.”

“No, let’s keep going.”

Patton kissed the top of his head. “Okay honey.” With a final squeeze, Patton released his grip on Virgil, though he kept his arm draped over his angsty boyfriend.

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“What would you like to talk about next?” Logan offered.
Virgil thought for a moment. “I guess oral sex?”

“If you would like.”

“Um, so I guess I’m cool with giving and receiving it?”

“You guess or you know?” Roman asked seriously.

Virgil blushed again. “I know I’d like to try it?”

“Okay baby. We’re all good with both giving and receiving too. Is there anything you don’t like?”

Virgil turned his head again and breathed in Patton’s vanilla scent. “I don’t like being used roughly,” he said hoarsely.

Patton wrapped both arms around Virgil. “Then we won’t. We’d never want to hurt you baby.”

“I know,” he swallowed thickly. “I just don’t know what you guys are into.”

“We’re not into harming you, or using you,” Roman said with a hint of disgust. “Sex is a beautiful exchange of pleasure and intimacy. Even during roleplays, everyone should be getting some enjoyment out of it.”

“Yeah, I know. Sorry,” Virgil mumbled, feeling properly chastised.

“It’s alright, my sweet raven. I’m just rather... passionate about the topic.”

Virgil snorted. “I gathered. Enthusiastic consent, emphasis on the enthusiasm, right?”

“Very right. We will accept nothing less,” Logan said firmly.

“Got it. So, uh, is there anything else to talk about in terms of blow jobs and stuff?”

“Do you prefer ejaculation in your mouth, you face, somewhere else, or no preference?”

Virgil nearly choked. “Fucking HELL Logan!”

Logan just raised an eyebrow in confusion. “You seem surprised by the question.”

“Uh, yeah! Shit dude!”

“Do you have a preference?”

Virgil tried to get through his shock to think about it. “Uh, I don’t like being sticky? Actually, yeah, I hate that feeling. So, um, I guess I’d prefer the first option.”

“Noted. We all have changing preferences, so we just let each other know at the beginning of coitus. What would you like to discuss next Virgil?”

They wanna know when they get to fuck you, you useless, pathetic, worthless-

“I don’t know.”

“Two possible avenues of discussion can include anal sex and sex toys.”

Sex toys, he thinks you’re a sex toy, wants to fuck you like the doll you are-
Virgil began feeling hands roam his body and a pain in his lower half. “I don’t know about toys. Those sound a little… too much right now. I’m sorry. Was there something you wanted to use on me?”

Patton frowned. “Honey, that’s not the first time you’ve said the word “use” or “used” when it comes to sex. Do you think that’s what sex is going to be like? Just us using you to climax?” he asked, voice wobbling a little at the end.

**Ah shit.**

*Where’s the lie though? That’s all you’re good for. May as well show them your best quality.*

“No, it’s not…” he sighed. “I guess I don’t know any other way it could be.”

Patton sniffled and pulled Virgil close again. “I know it can be hard when you’ve only known horrible things around sexual activity. But I promise it’s so wonderful! And you should feel good during sex too.”

Virgil leaned against the soft body. “I believe you, it’s just hard to imagine, you know?”

Patton kissed the top of his head. “I know baby. I’m so sorry.”

Logan adjusted his tie. “Let’s end here today. We’ve covered a number of topics, and I believe it would be best if we didn’t try to talk about too much at once. Are we in agreement?”

With affirmations from everyone, Logan pressed against Virgil to join in on the cuddles. Roman wrapped his arms around as much of Virgil and Patton as he could reach a moment later.

Once Thomas had to get to work again, the Sides all silently agreed to stay downstairs with each other. Roman and Patton had to go upstairs to focus more intensively on their duties, but Virgil and Logan stayed downstairs.

And if Virgil took advantage of a break to kiss Logan senseless, that was their business.

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**Chapter End Notes**

Hi all!! [Here's a link to the Discord that won't expire!](https://discord.gg/yourDiscordLink)

Also, did you notice that this time they stopped not because Virgil got upset, but because Patton did?
Virgil stepped out of his shower and toweled off, putting on some lotion and new clothes. Thomas had gone to an audition, and Virgil had sweated through his t-shirt and jeans, requiring a shower afterwards so he wasn’t gross anymore. He winced when he thought about the state Roman must be in.

He had just flopped on his bed when Patton knocked on his door for dinner. Virgil sighed, very tired, but got up off his bed to go downstairs for dinner anyway. Patton had made roasted edamame, broiled tilapia with an herb-Madeira yogurt sauce, and homemade sweet potato and sage gnocchi. Both Virgil and Roman wolfed down their dinners, Roman notably out of his prince outfit and in a red t-shirt and black jeans. Virgil shamelessly checked out the muscles usually hidden by clothing.

After dinner, Logan volunteered to help Patton clean up, even though Patton had already finished most of the dishes while he was waiting for the tilapia to finish cooking. Roman stayed behind to help, and Virgil decided to plop on the couch in front of the tv to try and distract himself from the anxious thoughts running through his head.

There’s nothing Thomas can do about the audition now, thinking about it over and over again won’t help.

But what if you could see where he could have done better?

... FUCK you’re right.

Virgil trained his eyes on the TV, not really watching as his anxiety built higher and higher.

“Love?”

Virgil jumped; he hadn’t noticed Roman come in.

“Hey Ro, what’s up?”

Roman’s brow was furrowed in concern. “You seemed rather upset by something.”

Virgil sighed. “Just the audition.”

“Why? Did I do something wrong?”

Gonna have to tread carefully here. “I don’t think so? I just always worry about this stuff, like, what if there’s something we could have done better, what if Thomas was really bad in the audition and people talk about it and he can never land another role again-”
“Slow down, dark knight. Are your thoughts spiralling?”

Virgil groaned and covered his face. “Maybe. Probably. I swear I was trying to stop them! That’s why I’m watching TV. But it’s not working.”

He heard Roman take a few steps closer.

“Perhaps you simply require a distraction that involves a more physical component to it,” Roman said, voice pitched lower. When Virgil pulled his hands away from his eyes, he saw Roman looking at him darkly.

Virgil smiled and shifted so he was laying in a more comfortable position on the couch. “Maybe I do.”

Roman smiled and climbed on top of him, bringing a hand up to caress Virgil’s face, silently searching his eyes. Virgil smiled and pulled Roman’s head down, connecting their lips. Virgil quickly intensified the kiss, wanting to be as distracted as possible by his boyfriend. He was grabbing and touching as much of Roman as he could reach, fire building in his veins at touching the firm body of his lover. The things Roman was doing made him react involuntarily, pleasure overwhelming his nerves to the point where self-consciousness could no longer silence him.

Roman eagerly followed Virgil’s lead, happy to oblige the handsome man beneath him. He started using his free hand to run up and down Virgil’s body, reveling in how Virgil’s waist fit perfectly in his hand, how he arched up whenever one of his nipples was brushed, how little moans and gasps escaped the sweet boy when Roman did something unexpected.

Soon, they were both completely wrapped up in each other, Virgil feeling like he was in an inferno. Being able to touch so much more of Roman’s arms than he usually could was a wonderful treat, and he took advantage of every second. As Roman leaned down to lick and suck at his neck, he also brought a hand up to focus on teasing one of Virgil’s nipples, brushing over it with his thumb and pinching and twisting it gently. When Roman timed a pinch to coincide with sucking a new section of skin into his mouth, Virgil nearly shouted from the pleasure. He could hear sounds escaping him that he would normally be self-conscious of, but he couldn’t find it in himself to care at this moment; he was just holding on for the ride, his more experienced boyfriend overriding his remaining brain cells and rendering him helpless to the passionate onslaught.

Roman reconnected their lips and tangled a hand in Virgil’s hair. Both Virgil and Roman were so consumed by each other that they didn’t notice they’d moved.

Virgil sensed someone staring at them. Figuring it was one or both of their boyfriends, he opened his eyes and looked to the side.

His blood ran cold when he saw Thomas staring at them slack-jawed.

Virgil yelped and pushed Roman off him, the confused royal leaning back on his knees to give Virgil space.

“Love? What’s the- oh, hello Thomas. What’s wrong, sweet angel?”

Virgil had pulled his knees up to his chest and buried his face in them. He lifted his head just enough to look at Roman incredulously.

“What- Roman, Thomas is there!”

Roman tilted his head. “Yes love, I see him. Are you shy?”
Virgil just groaned and hid his eyes again.

“Okay!! You guys are dating?! I didn’t even know you could do that!” Thomas exclaimed.

Virgil let out another pained groan.

“Why wouldn’t we be able to do that?” Patton asked at the same time Logan asked, “Did you not know we were dating?”

“NO!! I thought you guys were just really friendly and loved each other as friends!”

Logan blinked at Thomas. “Really.”

“Yeah! I tell my friends I love them! And I cuddle with them!”

Logan sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “I thought I raised you better than this.”

“Kiddo, we weren’t exactly hiding it.”

Thomas reeled back. “WAIT, are you and Logan dating too?! Prinxiety and Logicality are real?!”

“Kill me now,” Virgil moaned.

Roman just chuckled. “Yes Thomas, but only because we’re all dating each other.”

“What.”

“We’ve been dating for almost two years now!”

“What.”

“We are indeed very committed to each other.”

“What.”

“Okay, yeah, you’re freaking out, can I go now?”

Thomas blew out a long breath. “Okay, so you guys are dating. Ummmm… congratulations?” he tried.

Virgil cringed. “Dude, that was so awkward.”

Thomas sat down heavily on the loveseat.

“This is a lot. Um, well,” Thomas turned to Virgil and smiled at him. “I’m happy for you guys. Really, I am.”

Virgil pressed his face harder against his knees to hide the dark blush. “Can I go? Please?”

Thomas bit his lip to keep from laughing. “Relax Virge, I’m not gonna judge you. I was just calling you up because my worry around the audition went way down and I wanted to make sure you guys were okay, but I think I know now what happened.”

Virgil whined and hid his face, near tears at the humiliation he was feeling.

*He’s gonna make fun of you! How good are you as Anxiety if you’re so selfish you don’t even realize you’ve been summoned? He’ll see how much of a slut you are and think you wanted it, and*
then he’ll convince the Light Sides you wanted it, and they’re gonna send you back to the Dark Sides.

“You can go Virge, I’m good,” Thomas laughed.

Virgil just nodded into his knees and sank out to his bedroom. He looked through Thomas’ eyes and see them talking about him.

“So,” Thomas began, looking directly at Roman, “you and Virgil seemed to be pretty into it.”

Roman had stood since Virgil sank out. He puffed out his chest with a wide smile. “Indeed we were! He was so entranced by my abilities he didn’t even notice we had entered another realm! Not a surprise, of course, due to-”

Virgil pulled back, unwilling to hear the rest of the conversation.

_He was gonna say how much of a whore you are._

_Shut up!_

Virgil put in his headphones and blasted music, trying to drown out the horrible thoughts while he silently cried himself to sleep.

////

Virgil woke up and immediately hated himself.

_They’re obviously not going to think that! Jesus, tired me is stupid me._

Virgil brushed his teeth and fixed his hair and makeup. Right before he got to the door, his brain whispered to him.

_But what if they do?_

Virgil froze at the door, heart squeezing in his chest. He shook his head and walked into the hallway.

_No. They were in a relationship with me before they knew I’d even kiss them. They’re not with me just to fuck me, and they’re not gonna think less of me because I want to maybe have sex with them. They have sex with each other all the time!_

_“GOOD MORNING BEAUTIFUL!!”_

Virgil just about jumped out of his skin.

_“Jesus Christ Princey!”_

Roman had struck his usual dramatic pose and held it.

_“Forgive me, my love! I am simply enchanted by gazing upon your lovely visage!”_

Virgil blushed. “Yeah, well, hi to you too.”

Roman’s face softened as he stepped towards Virgil. He smiled and lifted his chin with his fingers.

_“May I kiss you?”_
Virgil froze. He knows you’re a whore. He knows you can’t wait to let him use you like the hole you are.

No! He’s not like that!

~~~~~~

But you are! How badly are you craving his cock, even though you know it’ll hurt and make you bleed?

Shut up! Please!

He’s going to kiss you, and then bring you to his room, and then push you against the bed, and then take your clothes off-

~~~~~~

“Love?”

Virgil jumped. Roman had moved his hand to Virgil’s shoulder and was gently brushing his thumb back and forth.

“We don’t have to, angel. We never have to, I promise,” he vowed, eyes dark with concern.

“S-sorry Ro, I’m not feeling too good r-right now.”

“No apologies my love! It’s okay! Can you tell me what’s troubling you?”

Virgil moved forward and curled into Roman’s chest, strong arms coming up around him a moment later.

“I’m just… scared that you guys will look at me differently when we start having sex. Or even now, that it’s an option.”

Roman leaned his cheek on top of Virgil’s head, beginning to sway them slightly. “We won’t, sweet angel, I can promise you that. You’re more than just a warm body. You’re so incredible. You’re protective, loyal, selfless, vigilant, thoughtful, adorable, sweet, kind, funny, smart, witty-”

Virgil hid his face and groaned. He felt a puff of air and a kiss on his head.

“Never fear, nightingale. My love for you goes far beyond the physical.”

Virgil closed his eyes and breathed in roses, cinnamon, and fresh air. Roman wrapping around him, securely covering his arms and back, was helping to ground him and make him feel safe again.

Reluctantly, Virgil pulled back. “Should we go see what’s for breakfast?”

Roman smiled down at him. “Let’s.”

///// After breakfast, Thomas was going to work on his bookkeeping, which was primarily Logan’s job. Virgil and Roman went to Virgil’s room to watch about 5 minutes of Lilo and Stitch before making out on Virgil’s bed. It wasn’t as intense as it usually was, but Virgil realized he probably liked being touched on his thighs and ass because there were more nerve endings there. He silently thanked Logan for that factoid.
Once he and Roman were cuddling and actually watching the movie, Virgil decided to check on Thomas. Logan was helping their Host go through everything the IRS might want to know about. Virgil swallowed and nuzzled against Roman as he remembered his thoughts from the previous night.

“Angel? What’s wrong?” Roman asked, loosening his arms.

“Nothing, I’m just worried about what Thomas might think. It’s stupid.”

Roman clutched Virgil against his chest. “You are not stupid, and Thomas doesn’t think any less of you.”

“How do you know?”

“Because he told me last night.”

“...oh.”

Roman chuckled and kissed the top of Virgil’s head. “You can go talk to him if you want. You know, communicate with him.”

“Ew, gross.”

Roman laughed then. “As abhorrent as communication may sound, it might actually help you feel better.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know.”

Roman just kissed the top of Virgil’s head again before letting silence reign. Sure enough, after a few more minutes of cuddling, Virgil started shifting.

“I hate it when you’re right.”

Roman huffed a laugh into Virgil’s hair. “I’ll see you afterwards then?”

“Yeaahhhhh…”

With a final kiss, Roman released Virgil and watched as he kept his eyes resolutely down while he played the sleeves of his hoodie.

“It will be alright, dear stormcloud.”

Virgil sent an unsure smile over to Roman. “Thanks Ro,” he said with a two-finger salute before he sank out. Once Virgil had gone, Roman sighed in relief and left for his bathroom to take care of an issue that had arisen while he’d made out with Virgil.

Chapter End Notes

I formatted this on the bus on my way to work because I really wanted to get this out to you and work has been very busy! I somehow did it!! :D I’ve never felt more accomplished.
Chapter 136

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! A couple warnings for this chapter. First thing, we've got some pretty negative internal thoughts, including a couple that are verbalized. There are also references to Virgil's past throughout the chapter, most not too graphic, but there is one section that's graphic enough that it's enclosed between lines of tildes. Virgil does have a flashback, which is enclosed between the lines of tildes. Another character sees him have a flashback, and Virgil passes out. Nausea and throwing up are mentioned a couple times by the character witnessing the flashback from the outside. Virgil also initiates sex he isn't ready for.

Finally, when the story begins talking about articles, there's an article that's shown that tries to talk about what rape victims/ survivors "should" do. This includes shaming victims/ survivors who don't go through the legal process (fuck that), saying they can't call themselves victims (fuck that also), among other things.

Take care of yourselves!! <3

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When Virgil rose up in Thomas’ living room, he wasn’t expecting to see Thomas doing pushups. He stared at his Host for a few moments before Thomas saw him.

“Oh! Hey Virge!” Thomas jumped up and stretched his arms out. “What’s up buddy?”

Virgil played with the cuff of his hoodie. “I, uh, just wanted to apologize for yesterday. You didn’t ask to see two aspects of your personality making out on your couch.”

Thomas just laughed. “It’s okay Virge! I summoned you guys pretty quickly, I should have given you a warning first. Although I don’t know if you would have noticed it,” he finished with a smirk.

Virgil groaned and blushed, flipping up his hood. Thomas laughed again.

“It really is okay. I’m just happy you guys are happy.”

Virgil bit his lip and hoped Thomas couldn’t see his eyes. “Does this… change your opinion of me at all?” he asked quietly.

*That* gave Thomas pause. “What do you mean buddy?”

“Like, you didn’t think we *could* date, and you know what happened to me, and I was just wondering i-if that changes h-how you think of m-m-me?”

Thomas’ heart clenched painfully in his chest. “Virge, that doesn’t change how I think of you at all. Can you tell me why you think you dating the Light Sides would change how I thought of what you went through?”

Virgil breathed through his nose a few times while some tears dropped off his face. “B-because you m-m-might think I w-wanted it,” he admitted tearfully. “Th-that I’m j-j-just a,” he sniffled, “a
“Oh my god, Virgil!” Thomas took a step forward and paused. “Can I hug you?”

At Virgil’s nod, Thomas wrapped Virgil in a bear hug and squeezed him as tightly as he dared.

“No, never, I promise,” Thomas whispered over and over into Virgil’s hoodie. Thomas held him as he quietly cried, the only indication of Virgil’s tears being the jerky breaths moving his back and the moisture collecting on his shoulder. Once Thomas was convinced Virgil was done crying, he loosened his arms and rubbed his back.

“There you go. Feeling better?”

Virgil just nodded into his Host’s shoulder, embarrassed at what he had said and his subsequent breakdown in front of Thomas.

“Come on, wanna watch some bad sci-fi? They’ve got a marathon.”

Virgil snorted. “Sure.”

Thomas gave Virgil one last squeeze before he pulled back. “Want any food or drink?”

Virgil shook his head. “I’m good, we ate pretty recently.”

Thomas and Virgil got situated on the couch, Thomas with an arm over Virgil’s shoulder and Virgil with his head on Thomas’ shoulder.

“You sure Logan won’t be pissed about the schedule?”

Thomas used his hand to squeeze Virgil’s shoulder reassuringly. “I’m sure he’s fine with it. I’m helping out his boyfriend after all!”

“What? Please kill me.”

Thomas giggled a very Patton-like giggle. “Sorry, couldn’t resist!”

Thomas and Virgil cuddled for an episode and a half before Virgil fell asleep, exhausted by being with Roman earlier and his continual stress from yesterday about Thomas knowing about them.

Thomas chuckled when Virgil fell asleep. Poor guy, He always seems to fall asleep around me. Thomas laid down with Virgil as gently as he could, quietly grateful for the break. He’d been going at top speed for the past few months with barely a rest, so being able to cuddle with someone and watch TV was very welcome. He quickly dozed off after he’d laid down, never really slipping into true sleep. When he cracked his eyes open and saw an hour had passed, he decided it was time to wake up Virgil.

“Hey, Virgil? I think it’s time to wake up buddy.”

Virgil grunted and stirred sleepily on his chest. Since he was already waking up, Thomas didn’t bother holding back his coo. Virgil sent a sleepy glare his way.

“Hey Virge! Feeling up to today?”

“I guess,” Virgil said gravelly.

Thomas ruffled his hair, hearing a sleepy hiss a moment later. “You should probably go back to
your boyfriends. Wouldn’t want them to worry.”

“How long is this going to be a thing?”

“As long as I can drag it out.”

“Well, fuck me.”

“Tell your boyfriends that.”

“...THOMAS.”

Thomas laughed heartily. “Sorry, it was too easy! You set it up perfectly!”

Virgil grumbled as he sat up and stretched.

“I’ll see ya later Thomas and uh,” Virgil ducked his head, but not before Thomas saw the growing blush. “Thanks.”

Thomas smiled gently. “Not a problem buddy.”

Virgil sent him a two-finger salute and sank out. Thomas sighed and sat down to edit the latest shorts compilation. Editing might be hard, but taxes were so much worse.

/////

Virgil reappeared in his room, realizing he and Thomas had napped until nearly lunch time. He laid down on his bed and sent a burst of anxiety to Thomas to help motivate him. Once he saw Thomas was moving at a pace that (mostly) satisfied Virgil, he picked up his phone and started scrolling through Tumblr.

*Why can’t I do more with my boyfriends? Wait! No, no they’re happy, I’m happy, everything’s fine…*

Despite his best attempts, he couldn’t manage to change the course of his thinking and soon switched over to Google.

“How to get farther in your healing.”

“How to have sex after rape.”

“How to get over your stupid shit.”

Virgil deleted the last search option and laid back, digging the heels of his palms into his eyes. He knew he was agitated and was having a hard time getting his irritation under control, but that didn’t stop the anger dammit! After a few minutes away from his phone screen, he looked through more results. One article in particular caught his attention.

“How Rape Survivors Can Move Past What Happened to Them.”

Virgil opened up the article. He cringed at one of the first points made (“Don’t call yourself a victim, you’re a survivor! Don’t play the victim! You’re stronger than that!” and “Don’t wallow in self-pity!”), but he kept reading, wanting to see if there were any useful tips. The last point was one titled “Closure.”

“If you were truly a rape victim, then unless your local police station in particular is corrupt your
rapist is in prison, probably for life, because you would have reported it immediately and gone through the entire legal process.”

Virgil frowned at that. That is so not true, what the fuck? Like, every part of that sentence is wrong. Factually incorrect. On every level.

“If you ever want to get over your rape, you need to confront your rapist. Go to the prison and sit down with him. There’s going to be glass between you, so you don’t need to be scared! Tell him everything you’ve gone through because of him. You might be scared of the thought initially, but if you choose to be scared the rest of your life of someone who can’t hurt you anymore, you’ll just be a victim, and we’ve already covered why that’s a bad choice in Point 2!”

“Fuck this!” Virgil shouted as he threw his phone on his bed. He’d read enough articles from people who thought there were “correct” and “wrong” actions and responses for rape victims to take for one lifetime.

The article had only rankled his already-agitated nerves, and he started pacing rapidly in his room.

 Fucking asshole. How many people is he going to hurt with this bullshit?!

Virgil picked his phone back up and went into the comments section, pleased to see the writer was already getting roasted, but pissed off that he was replying to the comments and just doubling down on what he was saying, insisting that rape victims were acting illogically and since he wasn’t “hysterical” he could see logic. Virgil threw his phone back on his bed and sank out, appearing in the Neutral Side of the mindscape.

Saul jumped, Virgil’s energy rather potent.

“Little one? Are you alright?”

“Let’s work out.”

Saul just nodded, snapping into his gym clothes and giving Virgil some workout gear. Virgil did reps much faster than he usually did, Saul slowing him down at a few points so he wouldn’t hurt himself. After 45 minutes, Saul watched as the fight left Virgil. Instead of his prickly, almost erratic energy, he just looked tired.

“Do you think you can do a bit of cardio darling? It will help with muscle soreness.”

Virgil nodded, panting. Saul got him set up on the elliptical, and went for his afternoon jog in the Subconscious. When he got back, he heard the shower running in the guest bathroom. He showered in the master bathroom quickly and started cooking up some eggs for Virgil. When Virgil emerged in his regular clothes and still-damp hair, Saul just slid the eggs over along with some caffeinated tea.

“Thanks Saul.”

“Not a problem darling.”

They ate silently, Saul only talking once Virgil had finished eating.

“Did something happen, little one?”

Virgil sighed, gripping his fork. “Some asshole wrote an asshole article.”
Saul hummed. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Virgil relaxed his grip on his fork. “Not really.”

“Alright. Is there anything I can do?”

Virgil turned his head and smiled. “Not right now Saul. Thank you.”

“Of course. Come here any time.”

They both stood, hugged, and promised to see each other soon before Virgil sank out back to his bedroom.

////

A few days later, the muscle soreness had mostly dissipated, and Virgil was feeling more like himself. He was helping Patton clean up after lunch, stealing kisses when they could. Virgil was very content, despite Thomas having a busy day. He had his boyfriends, he could kiss them and make out with them, and they still wanted to date him!

_You’re still too weak to let them fuck you though._

Virgil straightened his back. _No I’m not._ He cleared his throat. “Hey Pat?”

“Yeah chocolate chip?”

“Wanna hang out in your room later?”

_It’ll hurt, it’s gonna hurt so bad, Jealousy prepped you and gave you lube and everything and it still hurt so bad._

“That sounds great baby!!”

Virgil sent a convincing smile Patton’s way and helped him put away the last of the dishes, hands shaking slightly.

_This is what he wants, this is what he deserves, you owe it to him. Besides, once he gets going, you won’t have a choice to stop anyways, so you can just get it over with._

Virgil swallowed thickly and barely avoided jumping when Patton put a hand on his waist.

“Ready baby?”

Virgil turned around and wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck, kissing him deeply.

“Definitely.”

Patton brought both arms around Virgil’s waist and pulled them together, kissing Virgil again. They both sank out and rose up in Patton’s room, Virgil stumbling a bit.

Patton just laughed quietly. “You okay there?”

“Yeah, sorry, little dizzy.”

“It’s okay honey. Wanna sit down?”
Virgil’s heart was pounding and his throat was tightening up, but he gently pushed on Patton’s shoulders, having the larger man lay on the bed while Virgil straddled him.

“Sure,” Virgil said before he recaptured Patton’s lips. He felt like he was ready to run a marathon (Run away! Run, get out of here! It’s not safe! It’s going to hurt!!), but focused on getting air to his increasingly desperate lungs and making the kiss filthy. He wasn’t sure exactly how to do that, but he ran his tongue along the inside of Patton’s mouth, and by the moans he was hearing he figured he must not be doing too bad.

His breathing was becoming more and more uneven when Patton pulled back.

“You okay honey?” Patton asked, frowning.

Virgil smiled shakily. “Yeah, just a little out of breath.”

Patton rubbed Virgil’s thigh in what Virgil figured was probably supposed to be a soothing gesture, but instead caused heat, then panic, to flare.

“Do you want to take a breather sweetie? We can stop.”

Virgil shook his head. “I can’t stop, I can’t, I won’t do that to Patton. That’d be downright mean of me. “No, I want to keep going. I really, really do, I promise.”

Patton squeezed his thigh. “Okay. Just tell me if you get uncomfortable.”

I can’t. “I will.”

Patton smiled and kissed Virgil gently before pulling back, letting Virgil decide what should happen next. Virgil tangled his hand in Patton’s hair and laid more fully on Patton while deeply kissing him. Patton brought his hand up Virgil’s spine to rest on the back of his head, making Virgil arch his back away from the touch.

Virgil pulled back. “Hey, Pat? You know how we’ve had that conversation? About stuff?”

Patton smiled and cupped Virgil’s cheek with one hand. “Yeah?”

Virgil smiled, despite his growing terror he still felt excited at the prospect of finally being able to offer his boyfriends sex. “Can we try that?”

Patton looked into his eyes seriously. “Are you sure baby?”

Virgil nodded. “I’m sure. I want this, I do.”

Patton smiled sweetly. “Okay honey, okay. How do you want me?”

Virgil bit his lip. “Can you take the lead? I’m not sure how to do… this, exactly, you know? It’s different.”

“I can. Want me to be on top?”

Virgil’s blood curdled in horror. “Sure.” He’s going to hurt me, I’ve already said yes, I can’t stop it, it’s going to hurt.

It’ll be fine, he’ll take care of me, he’ll make sure it doesn’t hurt too bad.

Patton delicately guided them so he was over Virgil, but only softly caressing his face.
Oh god, it’s going to hurt so bad. It’s going to hurt, but I’ve been hurt worse, I can deal with this.

Patton kissed Virgil, so feather-light Virgil barely felt it. He placed a hand on Virgil’s waist and every alarm in Virgil’s system went off. Virgil could barely see or hear anything, and he focused on staying still.

I can stay still, I know how to do that. It’ll hurt less if I stay still. He’s being nice now, but it’ll still hurt when he fucks me.

Virgil felt gentle kisses on his neck, which would normally feel amazing. Instead, he just wanted it to stop, it feels bad, gross, bad, wrong, I don’t want this, I’m scared, where are the Light Sides, why am I back here? Help! Please, someone help! No no no, I have to stay still, but I have to get out, why can’t I move?!

Patton slowly trailed his fingertips down from Virgil’s waist, continuing to kiss Virgil’s neck so he could speak if he needed. Virgil was holding onto Patton and letting out little gasps, though there weren’t any moans. He was just about to ask Virgil if he was okay when Virgil stiffened and stopped breathing.

Patton stopped immediately and pulled back, feeling sick at the tears going down Virgil’s pinched face.

Virgil wasn’t with Patton and was with him at the same time. He knew he was scared and that he didn’t want to have sex but that he didn’t have a choice, he just wanted it to stop. When fingertips got closer to his waistband than to his waist, he panicked and went rigid, realizing his mistake, unable to breathe, the sickly sweet scent of Malice already in his nose.

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I moved, I moved. Malice is going to punish me, he’s going to hang me again, he’s going to make me bleed more. I want my dads! I just want my dads! Remy! Saul! Dads, help me, please! I don’t want this!! It hurts!!

The hands wandering his body made him want to throw up. They were grabbing, pinching, squeezing him, places that hurt.

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Patton draped a knitted blanket over Virgil as his heart violently tore in two.

“Shhhhh baby, it’s okay.”

Virgil was rigid, sucking in harsh breaths through his nose, face and jaw clenched, with tears running in steady streams down the sides of his face.

“Honey, oh sweetheart, wake up, please baby. You’re safe, I swear you are. I’d never hurt you baby. You’re in the Light Side now, you’re safe, you’re not there anymore.”

Patton tried running a hand through Virgil’s hair, but at his frightened whimper he immediately stopped. Patton’s chest felt like it was caving in and he wanted to throw up, knowing his intimate touches had caused Virgil to be so scared. He summoned an ice cube, but Virgil was clenching his hand so tightly that Patton couldn’t get it in. He tried scented candles, but that only seemed to make Virgil more distressed.

Finally, after a few more minutes, Virgil went limp. Patton froze, terrified his sweet boyfriend had
stopped breathing, and let out his own sigh of relief when he saw Virgil’s chest rising and falling.


Although Patton was relieved his face was lax, he felt nauseous knowing that his sweetheart had passed out from fear of him. Sniffling, he tugged the blanket up Virgil’s body and made sure that every inch of him, from his neck to his toes, was covered. He summoned Lucas and put that next to Virgil’s hand, and brought a glass of water from his bathroom. He allowed himself a few minutes to cry quietly before he laid down next to Virgil, resolving to watch him every second until he woke up.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, you made it!! There was definitely a lot of angst this chapter, but that's nothing compared to what's coming up soon wait what-
Hey folks. Although there are no lines of tildes in here, consider the entire chapter to be in between two lines of tildes. Virgil experiences tactile, taste, and emotional flashbacks throughout this entire chapter, and it's described in graphic detail. There are pretty graphic descriptions of sexual assault and the thought processes Virgil had to engage in order to survive. Please read with caution, this one hurts. <3

Virgil woke up slowly, heart beginning to race as he remembered what he’d fallen asleep to.

_Am I back? I thought I was safe! Was it all a dream?_ Virgil felt his eyes begin to burn. _It was all a dream. Fake. I should have known. Good things don’t happen to me. Only bad things happen to me because I’m bad. That’s why the Dark Sides hurt me. I’m bad. I’m a bad kid. I deserve this. I’m gross now._ He started sniffling and drawing in hiccuping breaths.

“How’s it going? Are you awake?”

_It’s a trick, it’s a trick, it’s not him!!_ Virgil didn’t respond, terrified of what might happen.

“It’s okay honey, you’re safe.”

Virgil frowned. _Why does he sound sad?_

“Oh baby, come back to me. You’re not there anymore, you’re in the Light Side. Don’t you remember?”

Virgil whimpered at that. _It’s all a dream! It’s all fake! Malice made me think I was safe again! He knew it had to be a dream._ He could still feel someone groping and grabbing him painfully while thrusting in and out of him, so he was probably going to wake up soon.

“I’m going to give you an ice cube, okay? It’ll feel cold in your hand, but it will help ground you.”

Virgil didn’t understand all of the words Malice was saying, but he didn’t dare challenge him. He was relieved he didn’t jump when an ice cube was placed in his hand. _This is different, but at least it doesn’t hurt yet._

“It’s okay baby, take your time. Come back to me. You’re safe, you’re not being hurt anymore, I promise. Wake up, chocolate chip. I’d never,” Patton’s voice began to break. “hurt you.”

Virgil cracked his eyes open. Something just seemed… _off._ He saw a white ceiling above him that had a weird bumpy texture.

“How’s it going?”

Virgil slowly slid his eyes over, gasping at the sight of a teary-eyed Patton. He looked pretty much the same, but also different to how Virgil remembered. He was wearing a different shirt, and instead of his grey cardigan he had the cat hoodie Logan gave him wrapped around his shoulders.
Wait, how do I know that? Where do I remember that from?

Patton smiled. “There you are.”

“Patton?” Virgil asked, voice small.

“It’s me, sweetie. Do you know where you are?”

He said I was in the Light Side, so I should say that. “The Light Side?”

“That’s right honey! Are you back with me?”

Virgil nodded, figuring that was the right answer. The way Patton smiled and relaxed, Virgil knew he was right.

“Oh thank goodness!! It looks like you had a pretty bad flashback, huh? I,” Patton’s face crumpled, “I’m so sorry, baby. I should have been able to tell something was off before you got scared. Do you need anything?”

Virgil shook his head.

“Alright sweetie, just let me know. There’s some water on the nightstand, and Lucas is next to you.”

Virgil took the cue and sat up, wincing as the motion pulled at his injuries. He looked down and saw the stuffed spider Logan had given him.

No, it was all a dream. Virgil wanted to cry when he felt someone release inside of him. What you’re feeling is real, what you’re seeing and hearing is fake. He grabbed the spider, not wanting to upset Patton. He was proud of himself for not flinching and cowering when Patton slowly stood from the bed and started walking around it towards him.

Get ready to suck.

Instead, Patton handed him the glass of water.

Duh, of course! He probably doesn’t like to fuck a dry hole.

Virgil drank the water as slowly as he dared, keeping his eyes on Patton the entire time. When he finished, Patton took the glass from him and set it back on the nightstand.

Okay, now he-

“Do you want to stay here or go somewhere else?”

Virgil panicked. Oh no, what’s the right answer? I don’t know the right answer!!

“Um…” SAY SOMETHING!!!

“Do you want some options, sweetheart?”

Virgil nodded quickly. I can watch him when he gives options and see which one he wants! He blanched when he realized he didn’t say, “Yes, sir,” but relaxed a little when Patton just smiled.

“Okay! We could stay in here and hang out, we could go to your room and hang out, we could go downstairs and hang out, or you could have some alone time if you want that. Does one of those
sound better to you?"

Virgil thought he’d heard Patton’s voice perk up when he mentioned downstairs, so he nodded and controlled his gag reflex when he felt someone shove down his throat. Will I wake up soon? Is it better to be dreaming and know you’re dreaming or to be awake?

“Downstairs?” His blood turned to ice in his veins. Now they’ll put me on the mattress!! Oh no, I hate the mattress!! At least it’s more comfortable than the kitchen. Wait, what if he puts me on the kitchen counter? That hurts!!

“Sounds great Virgie! Do you want to bring Lucas with you?”

Virgil looked down at the stuffed spider, large, kind eyes staring back up at him. I don’t want to get him dirty, but he might get destroyed if he stays back here. Logan gave him to me. Both thoughts made Virgil’s sternum feel like it was breaking; for some foolish, stupid reason, the thought of not having Lucas to hold made him want to collapse on the ground and cry.

No! It’ll be worse if Malice makes me watch him get dirty too. And he’s not real, so it doesn’t actually matter. Virgil shook his head, his throat tightening. You stupid fucking whore!! You’re just a useless whore! And no wonder! You’re upset about a fake stuffed animal!! Logan didn’t give him to you, it’s fake!! Why would Logan, gorgeous, intelligent, sharp, resourceful, drop-dead sexy Logan ever do something nice for a used-up slut like you?

Fighting back tears despite his reasoning, he set Lucas back against the pillows and stood slowly, trying to keep his gag reflex under control. Patton smiled and led him out of the room, starting to chatter on about the dinner he was making.

I guess I will end up in the kitchen after all. Even though the mattress is gross, it’s still comfier than the table or chair or ropes or chains or floor or cuffs or devices in Malice’s room or-

“What do you think?”

Virgil jumped. Oh no! I wasn’t paying attention!! He started shaking. “Um, the second one?” he tried.

“Sure!! I think we have enough leftovers!”

Virgil breathed out a sigh of relief. His relief was short-lived, however, when he saw Roman and Logan downstairs.

Malice is going to make me think I’m getting fucked by all of them! No, I can’t!! Roman’s a Prince! He’s Romance and Creativity! I can’t!!

“Hello my lovers!”

Patton giggled. “Hi Roro! Hi Lolo!”

“Hello darling.”

Virgil started involuntarily shaking. The penis thrusting in his throat was making it harder and harder for him not to puke. Why am I having such a hard time with this? I’m used to this! This is normal! This is all normal! This isn’t even bad! Why can’t I deal with this? When the person in his throat came, Virgil instinctively started to swallow. Unfortunately, with nothing to swallow around like he was used to, he choked on spit and air. The coughing made his already dodgy stomach rebel, and he threw up everything in his stomach on the carpet.
“Virgil!”

Virgil flinched and cowered. “I-I’m sorry sirs!! I’ll c-clean this up!!”

The Light Sides recoiled, horrified at what Virgil was saying. When he started to take off his hoodie, crying, Patton knew he had to intervene.

He gently took each of Virgil’s hands in his own. “That’s okay baby, you don’t have to.”

Virgil froze at the contact. “I know my place, sir. I want to! I’m a good whore! I clean up after myself!”

Patton sucked in a breath at that. “Baby, y-you’re not with the D-Dark Sides anymore.”

Virgil paled when he realized his error. “Y-yes s-s-sir. I apologize f-for saying the wrong thing. Would you like to use me now? I can get undressed if you want, or I can do something else.”

He was confused by the sob that came from Patton.

Patton tried to hold back his tears, he really did! But he knew he wasn’t being very good at it.

“N-no honey, w-we’ll clean th-this u-up. Can you g-go sit on the c-couch for a minute?”

“Yes sir,” That’s easy enough. They must want me over the couch so they can share me. Once he got to the couch, he was confused. They want me to sit on the couch, but I’m not supposed to get my dirty feet on it. He hesitantly sat down like they might, wincing at the pain in his lower half.

He watched as Roman snapped away the vomit, confused when his clothes remained on his body. Logan came over and sat down two feet away from him.

“Can you tell me if you’re having a flashback right now, or do you think we’d actually force ourselves on you?”

Virgil tilted his head. He was confused by the question. “I’m sorry sir, I don’t understand the question?” He started shaking in fear.

“It’s alright Virgil. Do you think we’d hurt you, or are you in a memory right now? You seem a little confused.”

“I-I’m s-sorry s-s-sir!!”

“You do not need to apologize. You do not have to call me sir. We are friends. Boyfriends. You may call me Logan.”

“Yes s- Logan.” Virgil frowned as more memories started flooding back, all at once. From being electrocuted by Malice to the night before filming, the Light Sides and Thomas finding out, healing, them dating…

Virgil grabbed his head and groaned, feeling like he might throw up again but not wanting to.

“Virgil?”

“M sorry sir, my head hurts. I’m just being bad.”

“You’re not. It’s okay, you’re clearly going through a lot right now. Can you tell me what you’re feeling?”
His body felt one of the larger toys, Greed’s favorite, being suddenly shoved into him. He had a full-body flinch and whimpered. Oh! They want me to say what I’m feeling! They get off to that sometimes! Greed always did like watching me tear and bleed.

“I-I feel Greed’s favorite toy in me. The one that’s too big.” Virgil felt his skin freeze when he heard Patton start crying. Wasn’t I supposed to say that? Isn’t that what they wanted? I’m not going fast enough! “No, it’s okay sir! You don’t have to cry! I felt him in my throat too!” Virgil risked a glance over and saw that all three Light Sides were in tears. I hurt them, I hurt them! No! I didn’t want to hurt them! He whimpered quietly.

“You’re safe V-Virgil, I promise it,” Logan said thickly. “You are experiencing a flashback. Do you know what that is?”

“N-no s-sir! I’m s-sorry!”

“You do not h-have to apologize, beautiful moon.”

Virgil was hit with a barrage of memories of Logan holding him, making him feel safe, kissing him, talking to him sweetly. He started crying at the knowledge it was all fake. I want it to be real! I want it to be real! I want it to be real! Why can’t it be real? I want this to stop! STOP!!! IT HURTS, IT HURTS TOO BAD!!! I’M STILL BEING HURT, THIS IS WORSE, IT’S NOT REAL!!!

Logan pulled a struggling Virgil into his arms. “Virgil, please! I promise this is real, not the flashback!”

Virgil was openly crying. “Malice, please stop! I can’t take it, please, no more!! I’ll do whatever you want!! Please stop this dream!! I can’t, I CAN’T!!!”

Roman and Patton flinched when the mindscape violently shook.

“What do we do?!” Patton cried.

Roman grabbed Patton’s hand and pulled him towards Logan.

“Sink out to Thomas’ realm with Virgil! Virgil will be able to tell it’s Thomas!”

A moment later, they all felt a tug from Thomas. Logan tightened his grip on Virgil and focused on the call of their Host. When he rose up, Thomas looked completely ragged. Thomas’ expression changed once he saw Virgil.

“Virgil! Oh my god, what happened?!”

Virgil’s cries stopped, though his breath kept hiccuping. “T-Thomas?”

Thomas smiled. “Hey buddy. You back with me?”

“Y-yes s-sir…” Virgil thought he might vomit again when he saw Thomas freeze and stare at him.

You dumbass!! You said the wrong thing!! He needs to hurt you now. You made him hurt you because you misbehaved! You disobedient little shit!! You just can’t stop forcing people to hurt you, can you? This is why you’re only good as a fuck toy.

Virgil just closed his eyes and waited for his punishment. “You may punish me as you see fit, sir.”
Thomas felt tears prick his eyes. His chest felt like it was a knot, and his stomach was attempting to revolt. “Virge, Virgil, no. Try to remember me. Can you remember me?”

Virgil nodded mutely, the false memories of his Host loving him flooding back and renewing his tears. But his Host was here, and he could feel him.

“I’m scared…” he admitted. It’s Malice, it’s not Thomas, why the fuck would you say that to Malice?! You stupid little whore!

“And that’s okay. We’ll help get you back to feeling okay. Can I touch you?”

“No!!” Virgil screamed, trying to escape Logan’s hold. “NO!!! I’M DIRTY, I’M BAD, I CAN’T MAKE YOU BAD TOO!!! I’M SO GROSS, YOU CAN’T TOUCH ME!!! YOU’RE TOO GOOD!!! NOOOOOO!!!”

Thomas flinched as his eyes quickly filled with tears. “Virgil, please…”

Logan decided to intervene, with Roman and Patton crying next to him. “Virgil, darling, please, can you find and name five things in the room that are red?”

“H-huh?” Virgil asked, confused.

“It’s a grounding exercise. It will help get you grounded more in reality.”

“W-why are you h-h-helping m-me?”

Logan tried and failed to stop tears from leaving his eyes. Dammit!! I’m Logic! They need me to function properly right now! “Because we want to see you well, darling.”

Virgil tilted his head. Why would they want me to feel okay? “D-did you sirs rent me out?”

“No! Gods, Virgil, no! Please, we just want you more here, not there!” Logan shouted as he heard Roman retching behind him.

Patton was trying to stay upright, but was quickly losing strength. He attempted to keep his voice steady.

“Please c-come back to us s-sweetheart. We l-love you so much, and we d-don’t w-want you to suffer anymore.”

Virgil began sobbing. “Please, Malice, stop!! I don’t want this anymore!!! I don’t want the fake people! I want to go back!!! I’ll be a good sleeve, I promise!!! I’m sorry I was bad!!”

Thomas ran over and knelt in front of a protesting Virgil. I’m sorry buddy, but I’ve gotta do this. You can’t keep going like this. He sent a silent apology to Virgil and grabbed his hand. The screaming and crying stopped all at once, Virgil in some kind of shock and the Light Sides holding their breaths.

“This is real Virgil,” Thomas whispered.

Virgil stared at Thomas for a few seconds. “You’re real,” he breathed. “B-but I still feel them… It hurts…”

Thomas’ tears spilled over. “I’m so sorry. I think you’re having a flashback. It’s where you feel things that happened in the past but aren’t happening right now.”
“It tastes bad too… I don’t like it…”

Thomas closed his eyes and took in a shaky breath. “It’ll be okay.”

“I shouldn’t be touching you! I’m gross!”

“You’re not gross, I promise!!”

“But I am! They came on me, I’m gross!!”

Thomas tightened his grip on Virgil’s hands, unwilling to break contact even for a moment. “No. They’re absolutely revolting for what they did to you. You’re not gross at all, and nothing can change that!” he said fiercely, staring directly into Virgil’s eyes.

Virgil’s world felt like it tilted, then melted a little before it reformed. He could still feel and taste everything, but he knew he was having a flashback. He started looking around the room, quickly completing the grounding exercises a few times in his head. When he looked back at Thomas, his vision felt clearer, sharper, more focused.

“T-Thomas?”

“I’m here buddy. Are you back with us?”

Virgil whimpered and nodded.

Thomas felt nearly boneless with relief. “Do you want me to hug you?”

Virgil bit his lip and nodded again, chin quivering. Thomas and Logan delicately transferred Virgil from Logan’s lap to Thomas’, and the Host and Side held on for dear life, both letting out their tears. Logan moved back to help his other two boyfriends calm down.

Virgil only stopped crying when he began falling asleep.

Thomas was alarmed when he felt Virgil becoming limp in his hands. “Virge?!”

“M tired.”

Thomas clutched Virgil to his chest tightly. “I’ll bet. Do you want to stay with me?”

Virgil’s breath starting hitching, his desire from earlier returning full-force. “I w-want my dads,” he whimpered. He buried his face in the crook of Thomas’ neck. “I’m scared a-and I’m h-hurt and I want m-my da-a-ads!” he wailed.

Thomas frowned. “Your dads? You guys have dads?”

Roman knelt in front of Virgil and Thomas. “We’ll take it from here Thomas.”

“Oh-okay?”

Virgil whined and grabbed onto Thomas’ shirt.

“Virgil, sweet love, if you want to see your dads you have to let go of our wonderful Host.”

“I d-don’t want the Dark S-Sides to hurt him.”

“They won’t, I swear it. They’re locked up, and we’ll keep a close eye on Thomas to make sure
he’s okay.”

Virgil nodded and relaxed his grip on Thomas. Roman gently took Virgil from Thomas, lifting the younger Side in a bridal carry. He sweetly kissed Virgil’s sweaty hairline.

“Off to your dads we go!” Roman announced. Virgil snuggled into his chest as a response.

As Roman sank out, Logan was holding Patton, rubbing his back and kissing the top of his head. Both Sides were still crying. The silence dragged on until,

“Dads huh?”

Logan raised an eyebrow. “I’m afraid we cannot disclose that at this time.”

“Is it like, they can’t be revealed unless they want to?”

“Functionally, yes,” Logan quickly answered. Thomas was surprised at the note of worry in Logan’s voice. He decided on a whim that that was a topic for another day.

“So, you guys are dating huh?”

Patton giggled wetly, and Logan cracked a smile. Thomas smiled at their reactions. Success!

Chapter End Notes

The thing about Malice executing mind control is from chapter 11! Did any of you catch onto that?

I hope that also helps answer some things for the folks on our Discord server.

(you were right, it wasn't an accident. it was my idea. figured i'd give our discord folks a little heads up)
Chapter 138

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! We've got a pretty awful nightmare that's italicized in between the lines of tildes (it's not a flashback or memory though), and a few pretty direct discussions of what Virgil went through with the Dark Sides and a bit of what he experienced in the flashback. Nothing terribly graphic, but I do want to warn for that. In addition, there is a character who becomes nauseous and eventually throws up, and mentioned of past nausea and vomiting.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Roman rose up in the Neutral Side, he went straight to the master bedroom, still clutching a trembling Virgil to his chest. He had a foul taste in his mouth and his heart was in pieces, but Virgil needed him to keep it together.

“Saul? Remy?” he called, hoping that they were awake.

Thankfully, he heard heavy footsteps approach the door. A confused and drowsy Saul answered, waking up upon seeing the shaking bundle of hoodie and skinny jeans in Roman’s arms.

Saul opened the door and ushered Roman through. “Rem, babe, Virgil needs help.”

Roman saw a blur of white and black out of the corner of his eye, and he barely kept from leaping and grabbing onto the ceiling when Remy appeared in front of him.

“Coffee bean! It’s okay sugar, tell Remy what happened!”

“Dad!” Virgil cried.

Roman frowned at the strange tone of Virgil’s voice.

“Do you want to be on the bed sweetie?”

Virgil curled in on himself but nodded. Roman gently placed his upset boyfriend on the bed, desperately wanting to hold him when he saw Virgil begin to shiver. Remy beat him to it, sitting next to Virgil and wrapping him up in a hug.

“What do you need baby?” Remy asked softly.

Virgil sniffled. “Mouth tastes gross.”

“I’m sorry baby. Do you know what caused it?”

Virgil leaned against Remy and hid his face in leather and cotton. “Flashback,” he whispered.

It took Remy a second, but once he understood he grabbed Virgil and held him tightly. “Oh sweetie, shhhhh. You’re safe now.”

“And I threw up.”
Remy kissed Virgil’s sweaty hair. “Alright honey, do you want to brush your teeth?”

Virgil whined and pressed against Remy.

“It’s okay babe, we can stay here for a few more minutes.”

Roman felt useless just standing there. Looking over towards Saul, he could tell the Neutral Side felt the same way.

Saul cleared his throat awkwardly. “How are you doing?”

Roman sent him a small smile. “I’m quite alright! I may need to wash my mouth out however.”

“Guest bathroom. There’s stuff in there.”

Roman nodded his thanks and turned back to Virgil.

“My sweet? Will you be alright if I leave for a few minutes?”

Virgil nodded silently. Roman watched him for another moment before going to the guest bathroom and retrieving a toothbrush. He knew where to look due to an unfortunate incident during which he drank too much J. Bird mead.

He brushed his teeth as quickly as he could and returned to the bedroom. Remy and Saul were standing in front of the bed, and water could be heard running inside the bathroom.

“What the hell happened?” Remy whispered.

Roman felt his nausea return as he remembered. “He had a horrific flashback.”

“What caused it?”

Roman flinched. “I do not know.”

Remy hummed. “Listen boo, did you hear how different Virgie bean was talking?”

“I did. Do you know what that is?”

“Not really, but we know he’s not in his usual state of mind. He’s more like a kid.”

Roman nodded, understanding. “That makes sense. I’ve seen him like that before.”

“Treat him like it.”

Saul put a hand on Remy’s shoulder, who deflated slightly.

Roman just nodded seriously. “I will.”

When Virgil emerged from the bathroom, all three men turned to look at him. Virgil flinched and cowered.

“It’s alright, my lovely crow. Would you like to go to bed?”

Virgil bit his lip and surveyed the three older, larger men nervously. “I, um… if you want to?”

“What do you want, little one?”
“The bed is good,” he replied quickly.

The three Sides accepted the answer, knowing they wouldn’t get anything else out of Virgil at the moment. They let Virgil cautiously crawl onto the bed first, and arranged themselves around him protectively, Virgil’s head ending up on Remy’s chest and Saul behind him. Roman stood next to the bed, hesitant.

“Love? Do you want me to stay?”

Virgil visibly flinched. “Y-you don’t h-h-have t-to, you d-don’t want t-to, I kn-kn-know I’m g-gross…”

Roman nearly launched himself onto the bed and started brushing hair away from Virgil’s face. “Nonono! You’re beautiful and lovely and perfect! I simply didn’t want to make you uncomfortable! I am more than happy to stay here with you!”

Virgil’s eyes filled with tears and his lower jaw wobbled. “Promise?”

“I swear on Thomas.”

Virgil’s eyes widened. “Really?”

Roman smiled to hide his heartbreak. “Really really.”

Virgil sent Roman a shaky smile, who inwardly cheered.

“Do you want to take a nap baby?” Remy asked.

Virgil nodded against his chest, and Remy started carding his fingers through Virgil’s hair, lightly touching his scalp. Virgil hesitantly took Roman’s hand, and in a few minutes, Virgil was deep asleep. After several long moments of watching Virgil sleep peacefully, Remy turned to Roman.

“Who would know what caused his flashback?” he asked quietly.

Roman furrowed his brow in thought. “He was with Patton when I saw him. Perhaps he’ll know?”

Remy turned his head to look at Virgil and kiss the top of his head. “If Patton hurt Virgil…”

“Patton would never hurt Virgil,” Roman insisted as loudly as he dared.

Saul reached a hand over and started petting Remy’s hair. “Be calm, darling. Flashbacks can be caused by any number of things.”

Remy sighed, not having taken his eyes off of Virgil. “I know, I’m sorry. I just hate seeing my little coffee bean so scared.”

Roman ran his thumb over the back of Virgil’s hand. “As do I.”

Remy squeezed his eyes shut. “I know you guys care about him. I’m glad you’re able to be there when we’re not.” He sucked in a breath. “I know I shouldn’t be so paranoid about this. I’m sorry.”

Roman focused on the feeling of soft skin in his hand, the bumpy knuckles, and the lithe, relaxed fingers. “It’s alright. I know you care about him too.”

“We do.”
Silence reigned after that, and Roman found himself dozing off, still holding Virgil’s hand.

~~~

Roman watched helplessly as the Dark Sides hurt Virgil, long having lost his voice from screaming obscenities and threats at the Dark Sides. He was chained to the wall, still battered from his failed attempt to rescue Virgil. However, he wasn’t paying any attention to his own injuries as he watched Apathy come with a groan inside of Virgil. When the Dark Side stepped away from Virgil, Virgil collapsed to the ground and coughed, spitting up Apathy’s come. Roman wanted to retch, but he also didn’t want to irritate his throat more than it already was. He had to be strong for Virgil.

“Now now Virgil, you know that only earns you more punishments.”

Virgil turned to glare at Deceit. “Fuck. You.”

“Not quite.”

Rage grabbed Virgil’s wrists and pinned his arms down while Deceit got behind Virgil and roughly plunged into him. Virgil screamed and began crying, pressing into Rage in his attempt to get away. Roman could see Virgil’s blood from where he was cuffed to the wall. There was more of it every second, with every scream from Virgil. Roman wanted to die as his chest caved in and his heart shredded.

Rage grabbed Virgil by the hair and yanked his head up. “Look at Roman!”

Virgil opened his eyes, tears streaming down his face.

Rage smirked at Roman. “Some prince you are! You can’t even protect your own boyfriend!” he taunted as Deceit grunted and shuddered before pulling out harshly.

Virgil’s eyes glazed over before he let them fall shut, the fight leaving his body.

“No!” Roman rasped as loudly as he could with his voice gone. “No! No, stop! Please stop hurting him, I beg of you! Hurt me instead!” Every plea came out as a whisper.

~~~

Roman awoke suddenly and bolted to the bathroom, throwing up in the toilet. He flinched when a hand rested on his back, but relaxed when he saw it was Saul.

He rode out the rest of his dry heaves while Saul knelt next to him, quietly supporting him. Once he was done, Saul offered him a tooth brush to use. Roman cleaned himself up, listening as Saul left the bathroom.

When Roman went back into the room, he was met with raised eyebrow from Remy. He sagged.

“I had a nightmare Virgil was recaptured by the Dark Sides, and I had to watch them hurt him.”

Remy and Saul’s faces turned sympathetic.

“Babe, if you need to go to your boyfriends, I’m sure Virgil would understand. That sounds like a shitty nightmare.”

Roman shook his head. “I’d rather be with Virgil.”

Remy nodded, and Roman took that as his cue to crawl in next to Remy and gently take Virgil’s
hand again, staring at Virgil’s lax face. He listened to him breath for a couple of minutes, Virgil’s pink lips slightly parted, dark eyes darting around behind reddened eyelids. Roman smiled. *I cannot be grateful enough to have Virgil as my boyfriend.*

The four men laid in silence until Remy started petting Virgil’s head again, causing him to stir. Roman watched as Virgil got a little wrinkle between his eyebrows, little snuffling sounds and grunts coming from him. Roman bit back a coo at his adorable boyfriend. Virgil’s eyes cracked open, blinking a few times before landing on Roman.

Virgil smiled. “Hey Ro.”

Roman’s heart quickened at the deeper register Virgil’s voice had taken on. “Hello, my beautiful raven.”

Virgil smiled and blushed, hiding his face in Remy’s chest.

“Hey Rem, hey Saul.”

“Hey coffee bean.”

“Hello little one. How are you?”

Virgil shifted. “I’m okay. I’m sorry I had such a bad flashback.”

“Baby no!”

“You don’t have to apologize, darling.”

“My sweetest love, you needn’t apologize for suffering!”

Roman watched as the visible parts of Virgil’s face turned red. They heard a grumble come from the younger Side, making them all smile.

“How are you?”

“Saul and I can get dinner going, why don’t you two stay here until then?”

To Roman’s relief, Virgil let Remy go easily. Saul ruffled his hair as he got up and got a hiss and a glare from Virgil. When Remy and Saul left the room, Roman raised his arm in invitation. Virgil quickly snuggled against his prince’s chest. Roman just kissed the top of his head and held him, letting Virgil do what he needed to do to feel safe.

///// 

Saul and Remy shuffled around the kitchen, Remy making dinner and Saul providing moral support.

“They’re good men,” Saul said.

“I know.”

“They won’t hurt Virgil.”

There was a beat of silence. “Yeah.”

“Babe-”

“I don’t know that!” Remy exclaimed as he spun to look at Saul. “They could be hurting him right
now! How would we know?! I certainly didn’t when the Dark Sides were fucking torturing him to within an inch of his life!”

“It wasn’t your fault.”

Remy froze, and his face crumpled as tears filled his eyes. Saul wordlessly brought Remy towards him in a hug.

“I-it was!” Remy cried into Saul’s shoulder. “He w-was so h-h-hurt!!”

Saul felt a few of his own tears slip down his face. “We couldn’t have known. The Dark Sides lied to keep him away from us, and Virgil didn’t tell the truth.”

“I f-failed! As a dad, a-as a b-brother!”

“You didn’t. We did the best we could. It was the Dark Sides’ fault for hurting Virgil.”

Remy just cried, occasionally whispering “It’s all my fault” into Saul’s shoulder. Saul tried reassuring him, but he knew this wound would take a while to heal. Remy was able to pull himself together enough to lean back.

“It wasn’t your fault, darling,” Saul said quietly as he wiped tears off Remy’s face. Remy just smiled sadly at him and went back to preparing dinner. Saul sighed, not expecting a different outcome but still upset that Remy blamed himself. Saul silently helped Remy, touching him whenever he was able to, hoping his touch would help ground his intense boyfriend. He was happy to see that, by the end of cooking, Remy seemed to be a little more relaxed. They fixed plates of spaghetti and meatballs with tall glasses of milk and headed back to their bedroom, only to hear Virgil’s voice sounding sad and unsure.

“Yeah, I know you won’t break up with me if I don’t let you fuck me, but won’t you want to break up with me?”

“Never, sweet angel.”

“But what if all I can do is kiss?”

Saul followed Remy, who had picked up the pace to see what was going on.

“I love kissing you, my love!”

“...you promise?”

They rounded the corner just in time to see Roman press kisses all over Virgil’s face. Virgil was giggling and squirming.

“Ro!” Virgil laughed, a blush covering his face.

Roman kept placing little kisses on every inch on Virgil’s face, until Virgil, still laughing, said, “Ro, stop, you’re such a dork!”

Roman stopped immediately and just pulled Virgil onto his chest, despite Virgil still giggling. Roman pressed a gentle, sweet kiss to Virgil’s forehead and looked ready to settle in for more cuddling. Saul cleared his throat at the doorway.

“Are you hungry?”
“Or thirsty?” Remy smirked.

Virgil squawked and Roman just grinned, though both men were blushing. Roman helped Virgil sit up while food was brought over. Remy settled in on the other side of Virgil, who sighed and leaned against him. Once they were done, Remy snapped the silverware, glasses, and plates into the sink. Virgil gave each of the Neutral Sides a long hug, before going back to Roman. Roman and Virgil promised to visit soon before sinking out to Virgil’s room.

Saul pulled Remy into his arms. “Let’s watch bad reality shows until you have to go to work, hm?”

Remy smiled and kissed Saul. “I’d love that, baby.”

Chapter End Notes

Ugh, in dreams it's always those whispering screams (except when it's not, F for respects for my past roommates). It's so annoying to not be able to say anything!

Also, I finally got my J. Bird mead! I went to the opening sale! I've got 3 gallons of mead, or 11.36 liters for you folks using the metric system!! :D

And don't worry, we'll be checking in on Patton next chapter ;)}
Hey folks! We have some mentions of nausea, as well as some pretty negative internal thoughts. Other than that, no warnings, so enjoy!

Also, as some of you know to varying degrees, some awful shit has gone down that I'm recovering from and the meds for it are making me really nauseous and just overall sick, so it's probably gonna be 1 chapter per week for a bit here.

While Roman and Virgil cuddled in Virgil’s bedroom, Logan was getting Patton tucked into bed. They’d showered together, although nothing sexual had occurred; neither of them had felt like it at all. Logan had helped Patton eat after that, since everyone was familiar with emotional exhaustion.

“Do you want me to stay?” Logan asked, preparing to get into bed with Patton.

“Not tonight honey, sorry,” he said apologetically.

“No need to apologize,” Logan assured. “Let me know if you need anything, darling,” he said, nodding at Patton’s phone.

Patton blushed and smiled at the nickname. “I will baby. Thank you.”

Logan smiled back. “Not a problem. Good night, my dear.”

“Night Lolo.”

As soon as the door shut, Patton’s eyes welled up with tears as he remembered Virgil’s tense form and frightened face. He’d been kissing Virgil’s neck for maybe five seconds before Virgil had stopped breathing, but it was five seconds of hurting his protective, loyal boyfriend. I hurt Virgil. I hurt my sweet baby. I’m the center of emotional intelligence, I should have known! I’m so sorry!! He bit back sobs, knowing Logan would be listening from downstairs to make sure Patton was okay after his exhaustion.

Patton recalled the hesitant, unsure looks Virgil had sent them. He’d ignored his instincts and just thought Virgil was a little disoriented after his panic attack, even though his gut told him something was wrong. He’d ignored his gut, and in the process he’d hurt his boyfriend. I should have helped him ground himself instead of bringing him downstairs. I should have checked in more. This is all my fault. He was so scared. He thought we were going to hurt him! He thought Malice was making this all up! Patton couldn’t stop the sobs any more, so he turned to muffle his cries in his pillow. Virgil’s pleading voice kept echoing in his mind, begging Malice to stop, the promises Virgil was making…

Patton wailed into his pillow, the guilt eating him alive, causing a physical pain in his abdomen. Every look and sound and word from Virgil he remembered only increased the pain, his heart shredding as his mind’s eye replayed the terror his shadowling had been experiencing. He knew he could call Logan for help, but he didn’t want to burden Logan further. The only reason he’s sad
and he had to take care of me was because I hurt Virgil! Patton knew that suffering alone and denying the comfort of another would be devastating to him, the heart, but he was also unwilling to allow himself comfort at the expense of his sweethearts.

Patton felt an additional twist of guilt when he thought about the suffering his boyfriends and Host must have gone through.

*My sweet little songbird, you didn’t deserve that!! You didn’t deserve anything that happened to you!! And you didn’t deserve to have someone you trusted make you hurt more!! I’m so sorry!! I’m a terrible boyfriend and a terrible person!! My sweet baby wouldn’t have suffered so much if I had listened to my gut instead of not! And now my baby’s hurting and scared because of me! I made him do something sexual he didn’t want!!*

Patton tried, but he couldn’t make his sobs harsh enough to get his sadness out. He was nearly screaming in an attempt to alleviate just *some* of the pressure, but the only thing he was doing was making his throat hurt.

He felt his heart twist when he recalled what Virgil had said about his own throat.

Patton curled up, holding the pillow to his face and crying into it. He felt like he was being stabbed repeatedly as he cried through the night, unable to fall asleep. He only made himself stop when he heard Logan walking near his door.

“Patton, dear? Are you awake?” Logan called softly.

Patton sniffled and swallowed a few times. “I’m awake baby.”

“Are you alright? You sound upset.”

Patton nearly started crying at that. “I’m okay, I think I’m just coming down with something. Can I have some alone time?”

“You can of course, but do you not want medication and fluids?”

“Not really.”

A pause.

“Darling, I really must insist you at least stay hydrated.”

Patton sniffed. “I will honey, and I have food in here. I just kinda want to be alone right now.”

He heard a sigh from the other side of the door. “If that is what you wish…”

“I promise I’ll tell you if I need anything.”

Patton listened to Logan as he walked away and curled up miserably, his heart aching for Virgil. He wasn’t sure how he’d ever be able to forgive himself for touching Virgil when Virgil really really didn’t want to be touched. Patton whimpered. *I touched Virgil when he didn’t want it. I’m horrible. I don’t deserve them.*

An hour later, more knocking came at his door. “Hey Pat? You good in there?”

*Oh ratatouille. I’m okay sweetie! Thanks for checking!* he called back. *I can do this. I can pretend to be fine. I don’t want them to worry about me.*
There was a pause. “Pat? Can I come in?”

“Not right now honey, sorry. I’ll see you later!”

Patton could see the hesitancy on Virgil’s face through the door. “Okay Pat. I’ll see ya later.”

With Virgil’s sad footsteps echoing away, Patton let himself cry for another hour before getting himself cleaned up. He knew his boyfriends wouldn’t like it, but he used a bit of magic to help the swelling in his eyes and face. *I can’t let them know. I won’t cause them any more suffering.*

/////

“Good day Patton,” Logan greeted.

“Hey baby!”

Patton smiled widely and did what he could to keep up appearances.

Logan walked over and rubbed Patton’s shoulder. “How are you feeling, darling?”

“I’m doing great Lolo! Thanks for asking! I feel a lot better!!”

Logan smiled and leaned forward, kissing Patton sweetly. Patton reciprocated the kiss as best he could. *They won’t want me. Virgil must not have told them yet. He bit back tears as Logan leaned back. Is this how Virgil felt when he thought we were breaking up with him?*

“I am glad you’re feeling better, sunlight.”

Patton forced out a giggle. Logan smiled at him and walked out of the kitchen, Patton sagging a moment later. He sniffled, then started preparing lasagna. *I want my last meal with them to be special. Even if they don’t break up with me, they should.*

Once Patton got the lasagna in the oven, he quickly made garlic bread, wrapped it up in tinfoil, and threw that in the oven as well. He whipped up a salad, just a garden salad with a nice, bright vinaigrette, and he collapsed in his seat.

“You good Pat?”

Patton whipped his head up. “Hey sweetie!”

Virgil was frowning, worried. “Hey Pat. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong!” he replied quickly.

Virgil just raised an eyebrow.

Patton smiled before giving up and resting his forehead on his hands. When he heard Virgil walking over, he froze.

“You don’t have to touch me baby.”

Virgil’s footsteps stopped abruptly. “Okay.” *He doesn’t want me to touch him. Of course he doesn’t, not after yesterday.*

Patton was glad his face was on the table so he could hide his tears. *He doesn’t touch me when he knows he doesn’t have to. How many times have I actually hurt my baby? Patton focused on his*
breathing, not wanting to let Virgil know he wasn’t okay. Virgil sat down next to him, and a moment later Patton heard Adam Lambert begin to sing. Despite his heartbreak, he smiled. *He’s trying to make me feel better with his music. Just quietly being here. I love him so much.* Patton’s eyes dried just in time for the oven to go off. He lifted his head and smiled at Virgil.

“Thank you sweetie.”

Virgil smiled back softly. “Anytime Pat.”

Patton took the lasagna and garlic bread out of the oven and set them up on the table while Virgil retrieved Logan and Roman. Patton took a few deep breaths before going about setting the table. Once everyone was served, Patton slowly ate his meal, trying to put food in a stomach that already felt too full.

“Are you alright sunshine?”

Patton jumped at Roman’s voice, the movement sending his fork to the ground. He tried to catch it, he really did! But he couldn’t stop the descent. As it clattered to the floor he just stared at it, feeling more and more useless by the second.

*I hurt Virgil, I hurt Virgil, I hurt Virgil…*

Patton’s eyes welled with tears as Roman’s uniform came into view. Strong fingers gently lifted his chin.

“Lovebug? What’s wrong?”

Patton’s tears spilled over, and Roman stepped forward to pull Patton’s face into his chest. A hand wove into Patton’s hair while another rubbed his back.

“Shhhh sweet love, it’s alright. We’re here and we love you.”

Patton cried, taking in the feeling of a firm chest and abdomen, smelling roses and cinnamon and fresh air for the last time. *Since the Dark Sides are in Roman’s dungeon, will I be the only one in the Dark Side now? That’ll be so lonely!* He began crying harder.

“Darling, what’s the matter? Is it something to do with your emotional exhaustion?”

With the way Patton flinched, they had their answer.

Virgil bit his lip. “I’m sorry Pat.”

Patton pulled back to look at Virgil. “W-what do you m-mean baby?”

“I mean… I kinda caused your emotional exhaustion.”

Patton was taken aback. “Honey, no! It’s not your fault! I scared you, I hurt you, it’s my fault!”

Virgil blinked a few times. “Huh?”

Patton turned to cry into Roman’s chest some more.

Virgil rubbed his face. “Patton, you didn’t hurt me. I said yes to everything and even asked for stuff. You can’t blame yourself for triggering me.”

Patton sniffled. “B-but you didn’t w-want me to touch you!!”
“Pat, I did. I got freaked out for a few seconds, but you noticed and stopped.”

“I don’t want to hurt you baby!”

“I know Pat. I trust you. You didn’t hurt me, I promise.”

Patton started to calm down, Roman still rubbing his back. “I-I didn’t?”

“No, you didn’t.”

Patton relaxed into Roman’s chest. “Is this how you feel when you think we’re going to break up with you?”

“God, Pat…”

Patton heard Virgil get up and walk over to him, so he wasn’t surprised when he felt his cool fingers on his arm. “You didn’t hurt me, and I’m not leaving you.”

“Nor am I.”

“I certainly don’t have any plans of leaving you, darling.”

Patton did a few breathing exercises while surrounded by two of his boyfriends. Once he felt a little more in control of his emotions, he looked up, and handkerchief presented immediately. He giggled wetly and cleaned his face up. “Thanks Roro.”

“Not a problem, beautiful sunshine.”

When Patton handed the handkerchief back to Roman, Virgil turned the chair and pulled Patton into a slightly awkward hug.

“I love you Pat. I promise you didn’t do anything wrong.”

Patton whimpered quietly as he tilted his head up to look at Virgil shyly. His breath caught at the sight of his dark, handsome boyfriend studying him. He forgot about his distress for a moment as he got lost in the deep gaze of the sweet, protective man.

Virgil wiped a few tears off of Patton’s face, bringing Patton back to reality. “Are you hungry?”

Patton shook his head.

“That’s okay. Wanna go cuddle?”

Patton broke out into a smile and nodded eagerly, a small giggle escaping as his skin tingled in anticipation of long-denied physical comfort. I get to cuddle!!

Virgil chuckled deeply, sending shivers down Patton’s spine. Virgil helped Patton stand and led him to the couch by his hand. They got settled on the couch, Patton laying on his back and Virgil half on top of him. Virgil had his arms curled in front of him on Patton’s chest and Patton had his arms wrapped around Virgil.

“Are you comfy baby?” Patton asked nervously.

Virgil sighed and nuzzled Patton’s chest. “Mhm. You’re very nice to cuddle with.”

Patton giggled. “I’ve got extra padding!”
Virgil snorted and looked up at the warm, loving trait. “I love it,” he said lowly.

Patton blushed and booped Virgil’s nose. They both giggled until Virgil closed his eyes and leaned up. Patton closed his eyes and returned the kiss when it came. They kissed for what seemed like hours, but was only a few minutes. The kisses never became heated; they were comforting, affirming, gentle kisses to let the other know they were okay.

Patton focused on the sensation of Virgil’s lips moving easily against his own, of holding the smaller Side safely in his arms, of being able to hug and kiss his boyfriend at the same time, the weight of Virgil on his body. When they sensed Sides appearing next to them, they reluctantly broke apart to see who it was.

“Okay that’s cute,” Remy admitted. Virgil blushed and ducked his head while Patton blushed and squeezed him.

“What’s up guys?” Patton asked cheerily, feeling much more like himself now that he’d been able to hold Virgil (the kissing might have helped too).

“We just wanted to check on our sweet little coffee bean, but it looks like he’s covered.”

Virgil let out a muffled groan.

“We’ll let you kids get back to your business, we’ll hang out with the Prince and the Doctor.”

Only once their footsteps faded did Virgil lift his head from Patton’s chest. Patton melted at the adorable blush on his face.

“Why don’t we cuddle for the rest of the night? I need to go over some memories anyway.”

Virgil smiled shyly and nodded, snuggling against Patton to get comfortable. Patton brought a hand up to massage and scratch the back of Virgil’s head and neck. Virgil was letting out a steady stream of rumbles, which Patton likened to a happy kitty. He smooched the top of Virgil’s head and gave him another squeeze before waving his hand to turn on the memory channel of the television.

He absently rubbed the back of Virgil’s head and neck until the rumbling stopped and his breathing slowed. Patton looked away from the screen to see Virgil’s peaceful face, free of tears and redness. He smiled, knowing his dark sweetheart was safe and happy with him. When a nasty little internal voice tried disrupting the easy silence, he chanted loudly in his head, Virgil said I didn’t hurt him, I didn’t hurt Virgil, I didn’t hurt Virgil. Nevertheless, he tightened his hold on his sleeping boyfriend, who just snuffled and shifted closer.

Patton closed his eyes and breathed in the scent of lavender and oud. He didn’t realize he was dozing off until he felt someone drape a blanket over them. He blearily opened his eyes to see sunglasses, a leather jacket, and a Starbucks cup.

Remy smiled. “Thanks for taking care of my brother.”

Patton smiled back tiredly. “It’s my pleasure.”

Remy nodded once, turned, and disappeared. Patton tugged the blanket to make sure Virgil was completely covered, kissed his hairline, and pressed his face into the mop of hair beneath him, quickly falling asleep himself.

Chapter End Notes
Patton's not done feeling bad, but cuddles definitely helped!
Over the next month, things were reintroduced very gradually. Virgil found himself occasionally getting frustrated, as his boyfriends weren’t initiating anything physical. He understood they were probably nervous since he’d had that flashback, but having to initiate everything was *way more work than he wanted, dammit*. It took two weeks for any of his boyfriends to make out with him, partly due to his own nerves and partly due to the fact that if his boyfriends seemed at all hesitant, there was no way he’d try anything. Everything came with gentle touches and reassurances.

And with Patton, he hadn’t gotten much farther than innocent kisses.

Whenever he *did* manage to work up the courage to kiss him, Patton usually only kissed him a few times before pulling away and either getting back to whatever he had been working on, or shifting their cuddling to be as innocent as could be. Virgil didn’t want to push Patton at all or make him uncomfortable, so he went with it, but he couldn’t help but wonder if there was something wrong with *him*. If Patton had seen something that wasn’t there before, and didn’t like what he’d seen.

So Virgil stopped initiating things with Patton. He didn’t expect things to start going downhill with his two other boyfriends as well.

When he’d be kissing Logan or Roman, he’d find himself thinking about Patton and start feeling sad, which had a tendency to kill the mood. Roman and Logan would cuddle him and help him feel a little better, but Virgil didn’t have it in him to tell them that it was because he was pretty certain Patton wasn’t attracted to him anymore. He decided to initiate things less with Logan and Roman as well, just to make sure Patton didn’t feel left out and to help make sure he wasn’t making his other two boyfriends uncomfortable.

His resolve to stay quiet and not make things awkward broke when he sat down on the couch next to Patton and Patton scooted *away* from Virgil.

“Patton?” Virgil asked, his hurt clear in his voice.

Patton turned and frowned at him. “Yeah baby?”

“Do you not… like me anymore?”

Patton’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline. “Of course I do honey! I love you!” Patton moved towards Virgil, but Virgil turned his head away.

“Loving someone isn’t the same as finding them attractive,” Virgil whispered.

Patton looked at Virgil in confusion, not understanding why Virgil thought he wasn’t attracted to him anymore. The moment of silence seemed to confirm it for Virgil. Patton watched as his shoulders slumped and he nodded to himself.
“I’ll just… go, I guess.” Virgil stood to leave.

“Baby, wait, please!” Patton grabbed a little bit of the hoodie fabric in his fingers. “Why don’t you think I’m attracted to you anymore?”

Virgil sniffled, hiding his eyes behind his bangs. “You won’t touch me,” he said quietly, voice hoarse. “And you don’t like kissing me.”

Patton swallowed thickly. He hadn’t been touching Virgil and he’d stopped kissing him as much. He knew Virgil had said he wasn’t hurt by Patton, but it was Patton who’d been touching him when he went into that terrible, all-consuming flashback. And now I’ve gone and hurt my sweet boyfriend all over again.

“Honey, I—” Patton cut off. He did like kissing Virgil, but he couldn’t stop thinking about Virgil frightened and crying beneath him, and the image made him sick with guilt each and every time, so he always had to stop sooner than either of them wanted. He didn’t want Virgil feeling obligated or expected to touch him in a way he didn’t want.

He could practically hear Logan’s voice. If one does not communicate in a relationship, misunderstandings are inevitable.

“I promise I’m still attracted to you sweetie,” Patton began. That was very true, as Patton took a moment to appreciate Virgil’s beauty. “I just don’t want to hurt you or make you scared again.”

Patton pulled a little on the hoodie sleeve, and Virgil sat down next to him. Patton made sure not to scoot away.

“Then why don’t you like being around me? Being around me doesn’t make me scared. And you didn’t hurt me, I told you that,” Virgil groused, slightly frustrated.

“I know sweetie, but… it was me who was touching you and kissing you while you were scared and didn’t want it.”

Virgil grunted in irritation. “I told you, I did want it, I just got triggered. And that’s not your fault, it’s the damn trauma. You didn’t cause any trauma.”

Virgil pressed against Patton, and Patton raised his arm, ready to hug Virgil. Virgil snuggled in against his chest and Patton’s heart soared. I didn’t realize how much I’d been missing this!

Patton placed a chaste kiss to the top of Virgil’s head. “I’m sorry I’ve made you feel so horrible honey. I was just… being overprotective, I guess.”

“Please don’t be overprotective again. I’ve missed you.”

Patton hid his face in Virgil’s dark hair. “I’ve missed you too baby.”

Virgil’s voice came out broken. “Then why have you avoided me?”

Patton squeezed Virgil as lightly as he could. “I didn’t want to hurt you or scare you or make you feel like you had to do something you didn’t actually want.”

Virgil shifted in Patton’s hold. “The only one pushing me is myself. I probably shouldn’t have asked to try… that. Clearly, I wasn’t ready for it.”

“It’s not your fault baby! You’re trying new things, this is all so new to you!!”
“I know, it’s just annoying. And then thinking you didn’t like me anymore…” Virgil’s voice began wobbling at the end.

Patton carefully wrapped his arms around Virgil and nuzzled the top of his head. “I’m so sorry honey.” And he was. I didn’t want to hurt Virgil, and by trying not to, I hurt him even more. I never want Virgil to feel scared or forced when he’s with me. But I’ve made him feel unwanted.

“I… don’t know how to fix this, baby. I promise I want you. Is there any way I can prove it to you?”

Virgil huffed. “Isn’t this how porn starts?” He snuggled against Patton. “Not right now. Let’s just cuddle maybe? I mean, if you want to?”

Patton tightened his arms around Virgil. “I’d love to baby.”

Patton did his best to keep the images of Virgil shaking and pale from his mind, and he was mostly successful. Virgil fought valiantly against the cruel voice in his head that tried to tell him Patton was uncomfortable. Together, they managed to have a semi-relaxing cuddling session that made them feel marginally better about themselves. When Roman went into the kitchen and they heard the fire alarm beeping five minutes later, they reluctantly untangled themselves from each other. As they stood, Virgil placed a hand on Patton’s bicep.

“Pat?” he asked nervously.

“Yeah honey?”

Virgil looked down and chewed his lip before looking back up. “Can we kiss?”

Patton melted at the shy question. “I’d love to baby,” he answered quietly.

Virgil smiled and closed his eyes, leaning up. Patton met him in a tender kiss, reciprocating, taking the lead when Virgil let him. He rested his hand against Virgil’s forearm and rubbed his thumb back and forth while Virgil’s other hand was placed on his shoulder. Patton reveled at Virgil’s groan when the shorter Side began massaging his shoulder. They were cut short once again, although this time is was by an impressive string of expletives from Roman.

Virgil pulled away, eyes sparkling with amusement. “Better go save our prince.”

Patton giggled and kissed the tip of Virgil’s nose, making them both giggle.

Virgil leaned up to whisper in Patton’s ear. “Let’s continue this later,” he rumbled. Patton blushed and nodded quickly, finally moving when he heard something fall and Roman swear again.

“Language mister!” he called.

“¡Ayudame!”

///// After dinner, Patton was tidying up his room a bit; he’d admittedly fallen behind over the past month. When he heard knocking on his door, he smiled despite some nervousness settling in his stomach. He opened the door to find a bashful Virgil.

“Hi sweetie!”

“Hey Pat.”
Patton smiled at his adorable boyfriend. “Wanna come in?”

Virgil smiled and nodded at Patton. Patton stepped to the side, letting Virgil come in at his own pace. Virgil placed his hand over Patton’s and shut the door, leaning up to kiss Patton a moment later. When Virgil put his hands on Patton’s shoulders, Patton took the opportunity to wrap his arms around Virgil.

When Virgil laughed Patton pulled back and bumped their noses together.

“Are you ticklish?” he teased.

Virgil blushed but shook his head. “Kissing you always includes a hug.”

Patton smiled widely. “I love that!!”

Virgil snorted and leaned back up, the kiss beginning to get heated. Patton carefully pulled Virgil against his body, clutching him when Virgil moaned and unconsciously curled his fingers into Patton’s shoulders. Patton took a risk and swiped his tongue along the seam of Virgil’s lips. Thankfully, Virgil let out a high-pitched moan and parted his lips, meeting Patton’s tongue with his own.

After a few minutes of the kiss steadily becoming more intense, Patton pulled back and kissed Virgil’s forehead.

“Do you want to move anywhere?”

“Bed.”

Patton pecked Virgil’s lips. Virgil took Patton’s hand in his and pulled Patton towards the bed, coyly smiling at him all the while. Virgil laid down and tugged, encouraging Patton to get on top of him. Patton hesitated, but climbed over Virgil, not resting any of his weight on the smaller side.

He touched Virgil’s face, running his fingertips over his features. His cheekbones, his eyebrows, the dip of his temples, were all fascinating to Patton. Patton met Virgil’s eyes, searching for any discomfort, uncertainty collecting in his chest. When Virgil smiled and nodded, some of the uncertainty fled and he placed a sweet kiss against Virgil’s lips.

Virgil responded by wrapping his arms around Patton’s neck and pulling him in. Patton made a surprised sound against Virgil, but relaxed into the kiss; Virgil taking control did something for Patton. Patton ran his fingers through Virgil’s hair, massaging his scalp and playing with his hair. He used his other hand to reacquaint himself with Virgil’s angular body. With the moans and movements beneath him, Patton decided that Virgil was doing alright.

After a few minutes, however, when Patton went to go kiss and nibble at Virgil’s neck, Virgil gasped. Although he moaned soon after, Patton felt like a bucket of ice water had been thrown over him. All he could see was Virgil hurt beneath him, not breathing and body as rigid as granite. He changed his kisses from passionate nibbles and sucks to gentle kisses.

Virgil seemed to sense the change in Patton. “You okay babe?”

Patton smiled in what he hoped was a convincing manner. “I’m okay honey. I just want to see how you’re feeling?”

Virgil pointedly shifted his hips. “I’m doing great, but I don’t think you are.”

Patton sighed. “I’m sorry baby, I’m attracted to you, I promise, I just remembered how scared you
were last time and that kinda…” he trailed off.

“Ruined the mood?”

“I’m sorry baby.”

“Hey,” Virgil said as he booped Patton’s nose. “What would you say if I tried apologizing for needing to stop?”

Patton smiled, embarrassed. “I’d tell you no need to.”

“Ditto.”

Patton smiled more easily, laying next to Virgil and lifting up his arm. Virgil shook his head.

“Actually, can I hold you this time?” Virgil asked nervously.

Patton’s heart melted for the second time that day. “I’d love that honey!”

Virgil shifted up on the pillows and raised his arm. He chuckled when Patton dove underneath it and snuggled against his chest. Virgil wove his arms around Patton.

Oh.

Virgil understood why his boyfriends were always so excited to hold him. He felt like when Patton was in his arms, Virgil could protect him from the world and hold him together against his own mind. Virgil cautiously placed a kiss on top of Patton’s head, smiling at the content sigh he heard from his boyfriend a moment later. Virgil tried squeezing Patton, nervous that he’d hurt Patton by accident, but Patton just nuzzled Virgil. Virgil huffed out a laugh at his precious boyfriend.

“I love you Pat.”

“I love you too baby.”

////

After breakfast the next morning, Virgil excused himself to his room to help Thomas choose his outfit for the day. He noticed none of the other Sides left the kitchen, but brushed it off. As he helped Thomas choose an outfit for his meet and greet (dark colors, a little baggy, nothing that would draw any attention to himself), he could feel a bit of disharmony from the kitchen. Keeping an eye on Thomas, he got off his bed and wandered downstairs, the voices stopping once he got off the final step. He walked into the kitchen, hair standing on end and stomach dropping to the floor.

They’re talking about me, I made Patton uncomfortable, I’ve made all of them uncomfortable. They don’t like me anymore, I’m too much work, I’m still ugly and scarred, I look sick, I make them stop. Oh god, am I getting fat? I don’t think so, but what if they liked me when I was really skinny?

When Virgil walked into the room, Logan and Roman were looking at him seriously while Patton was sending him a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes.

Logan nodded at Virgil. “Please take a seat. I believe we have some things we need to discuss.”

Chapter End Notes
Ayudame is Spanish for "HELP ME RIGHT NOW", and in my experience is usually said with annoyance or desperation.

Now what on Earth could make Patton so uncomfy he can't smile properly?
Hey folks! There's pretty frank discussions of sex, different kinds of sex, and boundaries in the first part of this chapter. There's also pretty negative self-talk throughout the chapter, including one line that's graphic enough to warrant tildes around it. There's a pretty bad spiral and panic attack that happens too. Let me know if I missed anything!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Like… like what?” Virgil stammered.

“Nothing too bad sweetie!” Patton chimed in, though the light in his eyes was dull. “We just want to make sure that everything’s going okay!”

“I thought it was…?” Virgil offered.

“Please have a seat,” Logan said, gesturing to a chair.

Virgil obediently sat down and wrapped his arms around himself, trying to keep from falling apart. If they don’t break up with me right now, they’re going to tell me what I need to do so they don’t. I can lose weight, I can hold still if they need me to, I can do it, I just can’t lose them! Please God no!

“Are you alright Virgil? Your body language would seem to indicate you’re uncomfortable.”

Virgil looked up at Logan, shaking. “I’m okay, can we just get this over with?”

Patton put a hand over Logan’s folded ones on the table. “I think the way you worded things might have sounded worse than what you intended.”

Logan blinked in surprise. “Oh.” He turned to Virgil. “I apologize for worrying you.”

“It’s fine, can you say what you were gonna?”

“Yes I can.” Logan paused for a moment. “We’re worried about you, darling. We don’t want you feeling like you have to be intimate with us simply because you have been in the past. With your recent flashbacks, we would like to assure you that we understand you may need a fair amount of time to recover before engaging in sexual intimacy with us. Re-experiencing a trauma can be traumatic in and of itself.”

Huh?

“In addition, we do not mind if you decide that sexual intimacy is not something you want. Do you understand?”

Virgil’s mind was completely blank. He truly had no idea how to respond to that. “Uh, what?”

Logan’s brows knitted together slightly as his eyes widened. “Did you not realize this? I thought
we were quite clear.”

Virgil shook his head. “Uh, no, you were, I was just… not expecting that right now.”

“Oh. What were you expecting?”

Virgil ducked his head and played with the sleeves of his long-sleeved t-shirt. “I thought you guys were gonna say I had to do something different or something, I don’t know.”

Roman frowned and lowered his head to catch Virgil’s gaze. “Angel?”

Virgil offered a shaky smile as his pulse slowed. “I’m fine, I think my brain was being an asshole.”

You’ve put on weight, they signed up to deal with you when you were skinnier.

Without moving his head, Roman said seriously, “I will beat up your brain for you.”

“Good luck with that.”

“I don’t need luck.”

Virgil snorted. He saw Logan adjust his glasses out of the corner of his eye. Oh no, here it comes...

“I apologize, we had just been discussing how to bring it up when you walked in. Roman and Patton seemed opposed to me starting the conversation.”

A breath gushed out of Virgil. That’s what they were talking about, nothing else.

Virgil screamed over his own thoughts as they raged at him, and smiled when Roman rubbed his back. Patton resumed breakfast and served up pancakes, eggs, and fruit. After breakfast, Logan adjusted his tie.

“Do you feel the need to discuss sexual boundaries Virgil?”

Virgil nearly choked on his milk. “What?!”

Logan continued, unfazed. “You’ve experienced a particularly awful flashback and what appeared to be age regression recently. I was wondering if any of your boundaries have shifted?”

“Oh! No, I’m still good.” He bit his lip before continuing. “Actually, I’ve been wanting a bit more lately.”

Roman smirked. “I can certainly provide that.”

Virgil met him head on. “I’ll hold you to it,” he said lowly. The tips of Roman’s ears turned pink as his smirk turned into a grin.

Logan was smiling softly at them. “I am glad to hear that Virgil. If there is anything you’d like to discuss, just let us know.”

“I will.” Virgil smiled as he thought of the past few months with his boyfriends. There were some valleys, but more peaks than valleys. And they’re always so awesome with making sure I’m okay. They’ve been great with asking for permission so far...

“Oh, actually?” Three sets of eyes turned towards him at once. Virgil fidgeted in his seat. The conversation’s over, I don’t have to do this, why am I doing this?
Because you can't get enough of self-sabotage?

Fuck off. We haven’t talked about this, and we’ve talked about other stuff.

“There’s something I kinda don’t-” Virgil dropped his head and tangled his hands in his hair.
“Fuck, okay, I really don’t want to do it.”

“Do what, love?” Roman asked.

Virgil did a few breathing exercises before blurting out, “I don’t want to have an sex right now.”

It took a moment for the three Light Sides to translate what Virgil had said, but once they did they had different reactions.

“I’m so proud of you honey!!!”

“I am glad you felt comfortable enough to share that with us.”

“You never cease to amaze me, my gorgeous raven.”

Virgil blushed and ducked his head, still feeling a bit fragile. His boyfriends’ words were helping, but he could feel himself close to breaking. He was feeling very vulnerable and needed…

“Do you want a hug baby?” Patton asked.

Virgil nodded, stood, and wrapped his arms around Patton’s shoulders. Patton held him while he swayed slightly, rubbing his back while Virgil worked on feeling safe again. Virgil laughed to himself when he realized how much of himself Patton put into his hugs. After a few minutes of silently hugging Patton, Virgil pulled away sheepishly.

“Thanks Pat. I’m feeling better now.”

“Anytime baby! I love hugging you!”

Virgil pecked Patton’s lips and pulled away completely. Logan was standing next to them.

“A variety of coping mechanisms is generally most beneficial.”

Virgil huffed out a laugh as he hugged Logan. Logan quickly secured Virgil against his body, largely unmoving save for the occasional squeeze. Virgil fell into almost a meditative state, the only sounds being Logan’s even breathing. The gentle warmth from Logan’s body was enough to make him a little drowsy, and by the end of the hug Virgil’s back muscles were much more relaxed. His mind was feeling more balanced and smooth, and was not as rough and chaotic as before.

“Thanks L,” Virgil said shyly as he kissed Logan.

Logan smiled and rested his forehead on Virgil’s, looking into his eyes. “Not a problem,” he said quietly.

Virgil smiled, gave him another quick kiss, and turned to Roman. Virgil just walked up and gave his prince a hug. Although this hug was the shortest, Roman put everything he had into it. He was squeezing, rubbing, swaying, moving his face on Virgil’s shoulder to nuzzle at different spots. Virgil found himself getting swept away in Roman’s passion. Virgil pulled away just enough to stare into Roman’s eyes, he couldn’t hold back the kiss that came. It was heated and passionate, lasting only a few seconds, but turned Virgil’s brain into mush.
Roman kissed his forehead softly. “Feeling better, shadow?”

There were a few seconds of silence while Virgil’s brain came back online. “Uh-huh!”

Roman smiled and brought a hand up to caress Virgil’s face. “Wonderful. I look forward to tonight, my dark nightingale.”

Virgil watched as Roman walked away. The bastard knows what he’s doing. At some point during the hug or kiss, Patton and Logan had gone back to their rooms as well. With no witnesses, Virgil let out a sappy smile and sighed contently.

/////  

A few days later, after a post-makeout nap with Roman, Virgil woke up and groaned. Roman snored and snuffled as he woke up.

“Love?”

“We’re so gross right now.”

Roman raised an eyebrow and looked down at himself. “Whatever do you mean?”

“I mean we’re both sweaty and need to shower.” Virgil grimaced when his own smell hit him. Today was a hell of a day to forget to put on deodorant.

“We do both need to shower. How would you like to achieve that, my lovely boyfriend?”

Virgil looked at Roman, who was definitely joking.

Well, I’m not joking.

“Let’s go shower?”

Roman’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline. His mouth was moving like a fish, but no sound was coming out.

Huh. I’ve made Princey speechless, and all I had to do was offer to shower together. Good to know.

Roman cleared his throat and met Virgil’s eyes. “Love, we certainly don’t have to if-”

Virgil grabbed the front of Roman’s uniform and smashed their mouths together. He led the surprised prince in the kiss, aggressively introducing tongue and twisting the fingers of one hand in Roman’s sweaty hair. Roman responded, moaning and pulling them closer together with a hand on Virgil’s lower back. Virgil groaned as he ran his hand over firm muscles, hidden away by a thick uniform.

God I want that.

Far too early for Roman’s preferences if the whimper was anything to go by, Virgil broke the kiss.

“I want you so fucking bad,” Virgil growled.

Roman swallowed and nodded. Virgil got up from the bed and walked around to the other side. He extended his hand to Roman who took it. Virgil suddenly felt shy and looked down, his anxiety spiking as his stomach and chest clenched.
“Love?” Upon not receiving an answer, Roman continued softly. “We do not have to. We can stop at any time.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked at Roman, who was still seated on the bed. He closed his eyes and breathed in slowly through his nose.

*I’m safe, Roman won’t hurt me. He’ll stop if I ask him to. He won’t get mad.*

*Besides, you’ve gotta show him the mess your body still is.*

Virgil cringed. *I know I’m disgusting, leave me alone. My boyfriends still like me.*

*You’re a Side, and you’ve still managed to hold onto scars? Pathetic. You must be really desperate for attention.*

Roman covered Virgil’s hand with his own. “Angel, we don’t have to. I promise.”

Virgil tried screaming over the voices in his head. He took several deep breaths and opened his eyes. Roman’s cognac stare was concerned and loving. Virgil sent a shaky smile.

“I’m alright Ro, I just had to fight my brain for a second.”

Roman nodded. “Do you need any help?”

Virgil hunched his shoulders slightly. “Can we try?”

Roman searched Virgil’s face. “Perfect crow, you needn’t do things you’re not ready for just for my sake. I’m quite content with the way things are now, I promise.”

Virgil smiled more fully and brought Roman’s hands up to his mouth, placing gentle, open-mouthed kisses on the backs of each.

“I know. I just had a moment. I still want to shower with you. Can we try?”

“Only if you’re sure.”

Virgil just smiled and tugged on Roman’s hands, urging him to his feet. Roman stood closely to Virgil and smiled at him. Virgil wrapped his arms around Roman, breathing in his heady rose and cinnamon scent, the smell of fresh air barely there since he’d been working with Logan in his room all day. Virgil kissed him, almost innocently.

When they parted, Roman scritched the back of Virgil’s head. “May I suggest something?”

Virgil felt his nervousness start rising up again but nodded.

“We may shower unclothed, but we will not have sex. Would that be alright with you?”

Virgil felt his shoulders relax. “Yeah,” he breathed out in relief.

“Wonderful, love. Does that ease your anxiety?”

In response, Virgil pulled on Roman’s hand and started walking towards his bathroom. Roman followed behind him, carefully watching his nervous love. Once they got into the bathroom, Virgil flipped up the dimmer switch, keeping the bathroom just slightly lit. He appraised his *incredibly* handsome boyfriend, knowing the well-defined muscles that lay just beneath the white, red, and gold fabric.
Roman moved his hand to rub Virgil’s upper arm. “Beautiful?”

Virgil bit his lip and stepped back, nodding. He shrugged off his hoodie, feeling suddenly exposed. He’d worn t-shirts before, but never in this context.

*It’s okay, Roman said we’re not having sex, this is fine-*

~~~~~~~~~

He’s going to push you down and force you. Try giving him a blowjob, maybe then he won’t make you bleed.

~~~~~~~~~

Virgil shivered in the bathroom, but looked up at Roman. Roman was studying him.

“Are you alright?”

Virgil forced a smile on his face. “Just cold. You’ll have to warm me up.”

Roman smiled and lifted his fingers to his many buttons. “My turn?”

Virgil just nodded, still smiling. As Roman started undoing his buttons, Virgil could feel any arousal from earlier disappear completely.

*I don’t want this. I don’t want to do this anymore.*

*You’ve already started. Just suck him off, shower, and get it over with. If he wants to fuck you, you know what to do.*

*I know.*

Roman shrugged off the top of his uniform, leaving him in a tight, form-fitting red undershirt.

“Can you take off your shirt first?!” Virgil blurted out. He stopped. “I’m sorry, I just think it might help? If you have your shirt off first, I mean.”

Roman softened. “Of course, dearheart. Do you want to stop?”

Virgil shook his head vehemently. “No. I want to keep going. I do.” And he did, he *wanted* this, he was tired of his brain trying to make him uncomfortable and miss out on things, so he was going to *push through dammit.*

*I started out wanting this, and I’m going to go through with it. And I’m not gonna just stop. How horrible with that be for Roman?*

“Alright. Tell me if you do. Say the word, and I’ll snap and we’ll both be clothed and we’ll stop that very instant, I swear.”

Virgil melted for a moment, moved to near-tears. He leaned up and kissed Roman sweetly.

*Thanks Ro. I know.*  
*He’d stop if I asked him to, but how is that fair to him?*

Roman smiled, kissed the tip of Virgil’s nose playfully, then slowly took his shirt off for Virgil, letting Virgil admire Roman’s body inch by inch. Virgil’s mouth would normally be watering, he was *trying* to get aroused again, but his fear was making it impossible. He was trying to scream
over his brain, but his brain was winning, sending him all kinds of scenarios.

He’s going to hurt me, he’s going to hurt me, he’s going to hurt me...

With Roman’s body suddenly now unveiled, Virgil’s throat felt tight, like he couldn’t breathe. Roman was looking at Virgil, so Virgil quickly ripped off his shirt.

And immediately wrapped his arms around himself to cover himself, beginning to hyperventilate.

“Angel? What’s wrong?”

He can see the scars, they’re so faded but they’re still there, won’t he be disgusted? I’m so gross. My body’s so tainted. And the scars are barely there, what if I’m just making it all up? I could be. Maybe I’m just overreacting. I’m still here, what they did wasn’t that bad. Oh god, he’s gonna see how gross I am, how much I’m making it up. No! Please, no! Please, I just want him for another day! Please just give me another day with him!

Virgil heard a snap and flinched, surprised when he suddenly had clothes on again. He couldn’t stand the sight of me.

Virgil fell to his knees and began sobbing.

“Virgil! It’s okay! We’ve stopped, we won’t do anything!”

He continued to cry, his breaths coming in short gasps. I fucked up, I fucked everything up, I ruined it, my only chance, now they’ll all know...

“Please, can you focus on my voice? Can you nod if you can hear me?”

Virgil froze. Shit!! He needs to be able to move me to the position he wants me in! Virgil loosened his body so Roman could maneuver him how he wanted, still crying, not wanting what was about to happen to actually happen, but knowing he had no choice if he wanted boyfriends after this. There, it’s the least I can do. I’m even kneeling and he’s standing, maybe he won’t fuck me. I might get lucky and he might just use my mouth. This is good, this is good, he’ll do what he wants, and it’ll be easy to clean up because it’s tile! And it’s Roman, he’ll probably be nice afterwards. Maybe. Doesn’t matter, let’s just get this over with.

Chapter End Notes

Hey folks!! You all have been so sweet with the slower updates!! Just so y’all know what to expect, work has picked up, so while I can write bits and pieces here and there during the week, I get the bulk of writing and editing done on the weekends, which usually means 1-2 postings per week. Some cop decided to be an asshole, which brought a lot of my trauma showcased in this fic either out or close to the surface, so writings been even slower thanks to him. Just so y’all know what to expect and why!! Thank you again for being so sweet about the slower updates!! <3
Chapter 142

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! We've got a few instances of some pretty negative self-talk throughout the chapter. There's quite a bit of it in the beginning of the chapter, and then one section in the second section. Stay safe folks!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“It’s alright Virgil, you’re safe, I promise sweet angel,” Roman assured as he knelt next to Virgil.

Virgil’s breath kept hitching as he tried to calm down his sobs, even with his horror increasing. No, please no, it’s going to hurt. I don’t want things with Roman to hurt, I want them to be good!!

“Shhhhhh love, it’s alright, you’re safe. Can I touch you?”

Virgil nodded as he kept crying. He knows he can, why would he ask? I can do this, I can do this…

Virgil couldn’t stop the flinch when Roman touched his face, and reached out to grab his prince’s wrist as it was pulled away.

“P-please, Roman,” Virgil begged, not daring to look up at him for fear of angering him further, “I w-w-want you t-to touch m-me.” I have to let him do what he wants, I can’t lose him! I can’t!!

Roman hesitated for a moment, then slowly brought his hand to Virgil’s face.

This is it, maybe he just wanted to be sitting down when-

Roman started gently wiping away the tears. Virgil was shocked into silence, his hiccuping breath being the only indication he was still upset. Roman twisted his wrist artfully, and a soft handkerchief appeared in his hand. Roman continued cleaning Virgil’s face, who was still in stunned silence.

“There you go, beautiful bat, you’re safe, it’s okay.”

Virgil bit his lip and looked down, causing Roman’s hand to move away from his face momentarily. Virgil started panicking before Roman took his hand and tenderly kissed the back of it.

“I love you Virgil. Can you do a few breathing exercises for me love?”

Virgil obediently completed the breathing exercises until Roman seemed satisfied.

“There you go, you’re doing so well love. What would help you right now?”

Virgil looked at the floor. Tile is hard, tile will hurt more. The bed is harder to clean, but it’ll hurt less. And Roman would probably prefer a bed anyway, being the Romantic Side.

“Bed?” Virgil asked, voice breaking.
“Alright. Do you want me to stay with you or would you like to be alone?”

“Stay, please!” Virgil cried, lurching forward to grab Roman but stopping at the last second. Roman frowned and took Virgil’s hands in his own.

“I’ll stay, I promise shadowy sparrow. Do you want to move to the bed now?”

Virgil started sobbing again and nodded. It’s happening, it’s finally happening.

Roman stood slowly, encouraging Virgil to stand up with him but never pulling. Virgil followed Roman to the bed and froze a few feet away from the bed, all the muscles in his body locking up.

“Love? We don’t have to. I can conjure a chaise lounge or a couch for you if you’d prefer.”

Virgil shook his head as more tears fell. “Th-the bed is f-fine.” I don’t want to do this. I don’t want this.

“Okay. Do you want to get on the bed first or shall I?”

Virgil sucked in a few quaking breaths. “W-whatever you w-w-want.”

Roman nodded and laid down on the opposite side of the bed. Virgil followed once Roman looked like he was settled and laid on his back, hoping Roman would use his mouth if he laid on his back and had his clothes on. Just like Deceit when we were in a relationship. That’s what he liked. And he said he’d stop but he never did. But Roman’s different. He won’t hurt me like that. He’d stop. But I can’t make him stop.

“Can you tell me what’s wrong, love?”

Virgil shook his head. “N-no, it’s f-f-fine.”

Roman frowned, trying to work through his heartbreak. “Clearly not. Is there something I can do that might help?”

Virgil’s cries increased in volume. I want him to hold me again. I don’t want it to mean sex. It always meant sex with Deceit. I don’t want that. I just want the love. Not the sex, not the pain, not the blood, not the feeling of gross afterwards. I want the love and the soft feeling, just one more time. Virgil’s heart twisted in his chest. I know it won’t happen, but just… one more time. Please.

Virgil wept for the lost softness and warmth and safety from Roman.

“Oh my stars, my perfect love, what makes you continue to cry?”

Virgil sniffled back snot that had built up. “I’m fine, it’s okay.”

“No you’re not, and it’s not. Do you want me to hold you?”

Virgil let out several powerful sobs and nodded. At least I can be held before he uses me. It won’t be the same, but-

Virgil’s thoughts were cut off as powerful arms delicately wrapped around him and pulled him onto a strong chest. Virgil instinctively curled his arms in front of him, like he always did when they cuddled. Roman’s right arm laid over Virgil’s side, with his hand resting on Virgil’s forearm. He was using the fingers of that hand to gently brush up and down Virgil’s arm. Roman’s left hand
had moved to cradle Virgil’s head against his chest.

*I can have it again. This is perfect. I want this to last forever. It might be my last time, I need to make it count.*

Roman pressed a chaste kiss to the top of Virgil’s head. Virgil started calming down quickly, surrounded by the safety and warmth and scent of his heroic prince. He tried to find evidence that Roman was going to use him, but he found none. It was just like any other time Roman had held him.

*He’s not going to use me to get off?*

Roman used the fingers on his left hand to massage the back of Virgil’s head. Virgil allowed himself to relax completely, letting out a steady rumble.

*I like this. This is nice. Can it just stay like this?*

*You don’t want to have sex?*

*No, I do, I just want it to be like this.*

As his internal voice laughed cruelly at him, Virgil focused on the feeling of Roman’s chest beneath him, the sound of his breathing and muted sound of his heartbeat beneath his ear. The arm around him and the hands soothing him had his eyes growing heavy, and soon he found himself dozing off.

“Virgil?” Roman whispered.

Virgil didn’t know why, but he didn’t let Roman know he was still awake.

He felt Roman gently press his face into his hair. “I’m so sorry, my sweet. I love you. I *never* want to hurt you, and I’m so sorry I did tonight. I will endeavor to prove, for the rest of my life, that I will *never* raise a finger to you. I will *never* force you. I am happy with you, regardless of if we are ever sexually intimate. And that you are safe. I vow to you to demonstrate that and *only* that.”

Virgil let the words crash into his brain, expertly staying perfectly still but unable to stop the steady stream of tears. After being twisted and torn and pounded, his wounded heart was being filled. It was a good feeling, Virgil decided as he fell asleep.

///// When Virgil shifted on Roman’s chest the next morning, he felt arms tighten around him briefly.

“Good morning, my dark prince.”

Virgil blearily blinked up at Roman before yawning and stretching. He quickly snuggled back into the chest beneath him, savoring the warmth and comfort. Roman held Virgil to his chest and kissed the top of his head.

Virgil inwardly cringed as he remembered last night. *Holy shit, what the fuck was that? Goddamn, one step forward, two steps back. That was like me a year or two ago, what the fuck?*

“How are you feeling?”

Virgil groaned. *Oh god, he saw my body.* “Embarrassed.”
Roman clutched Virgil close. “Please don’t be embarrassed love! It’s not your fault!”

Virgil growled. “But I acted like I did a long time ago! I should be better, I am better, I shouldn’t have done that because I’m doing better!”

“Hush, dark knight. I believe Logan and Dr. Picani said that recovery is not linear, yes?”

Virgil buried his face in Roman’s firm chest and groaned. “I know, it just pisses me the fuck off.”

“I’m so sorry, angel.”

Virgil sighed. “It’s not your fault. You didn’t do anything wrong. My head just went backwards for a bit, that’s all.”

Roman ran his fingers through Virgil’s hair, untangling any knots he found. “It’s not your fault either.”

Virgil just sighed and settled against Roman. Roman squeezed him and kept running his fingers through Virgil’s hair, both men content to bask in the other’s presence.

“I’m glad I still get to cuddle with you,” Virgil mumbled thoughtlessly.

Roman let out a wounded sound and pulled Virgil closer. “Of course you can!! What would make you think you couldn’t?!”

Virgil hunched his shoulders slightly, causing Roman to loosen his grip.

“M sorry, my brain was just being an asshole last night.”

Roman sighed and nuzzled Virgil’s now tangle-free hair. “I know, my sweet. Is it something you believe regularly?”

Virgil furrowed his brow and thought for a moment. “I don’t think so? I guess I don’t really think about it normally, either I ask or you offer.”

“I am heartened to hear that, my love. Was there something in particular that made you think you wouldn’t get any more cuddles from me?” Roman’s voice cracked a little at the end as his hands clenched reflexively on Virgil.

Virgil closed his eyes. This won’t be good. “Just the usual, that since I offered I had to let you go through with fucking me however you wanted because it’d be mean to make you stop, and then once you did I wouldn’t get any more cuddles from you that were so nice and safe and wouldn’t lead to sex. And I was gonna miss the cuddles so b-bad.”

Roman gasped sharply, and Virgil felt him start crying.

He pushed slightly away from Roman’s chest to look up at him. “Shit! No, I’m sorry, please don’t cry, it’s okay!”

Roman shook his head. “No, no my sweet. It’s not. The fact that what the D-Dark Sides did made you think that.” Roman froze. “Love, you said, “as usual.” Have you ever done something with one of us that you didn’t want because you didn’t think you could stop?”

Virgil went cold. “No Roman, I promise! Either I’ve said something or I froze up and you guys noticed. Nothing’s happened with you guys that I didn’t want.”
Roman studied Virgil’s face, bringing a hand up to gently caress him. Though Roman was still crying, he was doing his best to focus on Virgil.

“I love you, my raven.”

“I love you too Ro.”

Roman’s chest still shook with muted cries and tears were streaming down the sides of his face. *My god, what did those fiends do to my beautiful raven to make him think such horrendous things? To make him think we’d ever want to hurt him so? If I could, I would run them through, show them justice with my sword, never let them-

Virgil curled up on Roman’s chest and nuzzled it, hoping to distract Roman from what he could tell were increasingly dark thoughts. It seemed to work, because although Roman kept crying Virgil felt a lot of tension leave the prince’s body.

“I’d never… I’d never…”

“I know Ro.”

They laid together for several more minutes until Roman’s sobs died down.

“I apologize, my dark knight. Y-you’re the one suffering and I-”

“Nope! You tell me all the time that it’s okay if I have feelings or whatever, so the same goes for you!”

Roman chuckled wetly, wiping his face. “I s-suppose,” he sighed, squeezing Virgil. “You know you can always tell us to stop and we will, no questions asked?”

“I know you’d stop.” *But that would be mean of me. I can’t do that to you guys. I don’t want it to hurt for you either.*

Roman sighed in relief, kissing the top of Virgil’s head. “I am glad to hear that, beautiful crow. Last night, when you thought you had to-” Roman’s voice cut off.

Virgil quickly jumped in. “I think that was just a flashback or something. I know you guys would stop.”

Roman swallowed loudly and nodded, breathing in lavender. They stayed together until Logan knocked on their door for breakfast. When Virgil looked up, Roman planted an exaggerated, wet kiss on his forehead.

Virgil grimaced and wiped his face. “Gross dude.”

Roman just smiled and planted a smaller, more delicate kiss to Virgil’s face.

“Gross dude.”

Roman let out a string of high-pitched scoffs. Virgil just snorted and stretched.

“One of the many reasons I enjoy spending the night with you.”

Virgil playfully swatted his chest. “Come on you dork, let’s go get breakfast.”

/////
Virgil sighed as he walked into Roman’s room, not looking forward to what was going to happen next. Emotional vulnerability. Blech. He bit his lip and did a few breathing exercises before he stepped through the mirror. He was deposited safely in a waiting room and strode back to the office. He almost didn’t jump when Dr. Picani tried to sing his rendition of “Immortals” by Fall Out Boy. As soon as the doctor wrapped up and greeted Virgil, Virgil had to focus to keep his feet on the ground.

“Can I have a comfort item?”

“Sure!”

Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish when the basket was pushed over.

“What’s on your mind Virgil?”

Virgil smiled at the doctor. “The usual. I keep freaking out whenever I try to do more with my boyfriends.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “Like what?”

Virgil sighed, closing his eyes for a moment. “I tried showering with Roman, and having sex with Patton. Neither happened because I freaked the fuck out.”

Before Dr. Picani could get another word in, Virgil blurted out, “And I still haven’t gotten off!!”

Dr. Picani spotted a few frustrated tears before Virgil buried his face in the flying dolphin fish.

“I’m so sorry Virgil.”

Virgil sniffled miserably. “I’m sorry, I know that’s weird and TMI and shit…”

“Not at all! I think that’s a very valid reason to feel frustrated!”

Virgil wetly huffed into the doll. “To say the least.”

Dr. Picani smiled sympathetically. “Do you want to talk about that?”

“Yeah, let’s start there.”

“Alright! What happens when you lose your erection?”

Virgil blushed. “Um, I can’t get off?”

Dr. Picani waved his hand. “Sorry, I should have been more clear! I meant what happens before and during? What kinds of thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations are happening for you?”

“Oh! Uh…” Virgil pulled his head up a bit, face still bright red. “I feel like I’m, um, close, and then it starts going away.”

“Okay! And what thoughts or emotions are you having before and when that happens?”

Virgil thought back, cringing as he recalled how frustrated he’s been. “I kinda get anxious, like I’ll be thinking, “Finally, it’s here! I’m finally gonna be able to do it!”. But then it’ll just… go away.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “It sounds like you’ve really built up having your first wanted orgasm, and once you get close you get pulled out of the moment by thinking about how close you are. Does that sound about right?”
“Yeah! And I’ll try to do grounding exercises, but I’ll still lose it.”

“Okay! It sounds like you might need another grounding tool to help you out and keep you in the moment. Do you fantasize when you masturbate?”

Virgil almost choked, but he cleared his throat. “Yeah. About my boyfriends,” he mumbled, ears on fire.

“Alrighty! Is there another sense you can incorporate to help you stay in the fantasy, like a scent or items of clothing of theirs?”

Virgil blinked in surprise. “Huh. I didn’t think about that.”

“Do you think it might help?”

“I’m not sure, maybe.”

“Okay! Why don’t you give that a try and see how that goes? We’ll chat more next time if that doesn’t work!”

Virgil nodded in agreement, going over how he was going to ask his boyfriends for their clothes so he could jerk off to them when Dr. Picani continued.

“Do you want to talk about what happened with Roman and Patton?” Dr. Picani asked gently.

Virgil flinched and bit his lip. “Yeah, I guess I have to.”

“You don’t have to actually! That’s the cool part about therapy!”

Virgil quirked a smile at that. “Okay.”

Dr. Picani softened his face. “We can talk about them if you want. Let me know if you want to stop talking about them, okay?”

Virgil nodded in agreement. I don’t want to, but if I don’t it’ll never get fixed. I have to do it, I have to have sex with them, I have to talk to Dr. Picani, they’re going to fuck me, oh god it’s going to hurt, I don’t want it to hurt-

“Virgil?”

Virgil jumped at the sudden question, throat tight.

Dr. Picani smiled softly. “There you are. Do you want to do a grounding exercise?”

Virgil nodded quickly, blinking back tears. Dr. Picani led Virgil through two grounding exercises before Virgil felt safe.

“Feeling better?”

Virgil was still shaking, but nodded. “Is it bad if I just want to be around my boyfriends?”

“Not at all! Want to call it early today so you can go to them?”

Virgil nodded, a tight whimper escaping him.

“Alright Virgil. Let me know if you need anything, okay?”
Virgil smiled forcefully. “I will. Thanks doc,” he said thickly.

Dr. Picani bid Virgil goodbye, and hoped the frightened Side would find his boyfriends soon.

Chapter End Notes

I got more J. Bird mead. :)


When Virgil appeared in Roman’s room, his heart broke when he realized the prince was working in the Imagination with Patton.

_I can’t interrupt him just to deal with my bullshit. I’ll be fine. I can deal with this, I’ll be fine…_

Virgil kept repeating that line in his head as he made his way down the stairs, arms wrapped around himself and breath beginning to hiccup.

_I’ll just wait for one of them to stop by the living room or the kitchen, then I can be around them. God, I’m so fucking needy, I hate myself._

Virgil barely resisted the urge to scratch away his skin in anger and grief. His head was hanging low, so he jumped when he realized Logan was reading on the couch.

Logan had noticed Virgil walk down the stairs, arms wrapped around himself and obviously distressed. He put a bookmark in and closed the book he had been reading on his lap.

“What’s wrong moonlight?”

Virgil’s eyes were wide and wet as he stared at Logan. Logan waited patiently for Virgil to feel comfortable enough to speak. After a few moments, Virgil sucked in a breath.

“I-I… Therapy was rough today.”

Logan nodded. “Would you benefit from physical contact?”

Virgil’s lips quirked at that. “Yeah star.”

Logan smiled softly at the nickname and set the book aside as Virgil sat down next to him. Logan wasted no time in wrapping his arms around his shivering boyfriend and pressing a gentle kiss to the side of his head.

“What’s wrong moonlight?”

Virgil nuzzled Logan’s neck as he hugged him. Logan would give the occasional squeeze in an attempt to help keep Virgil grounded. The heady, floral scent of lavender and oud was filling Logan’s nose, and he couldn’t get enough. So he pressed another kiss to the top of Virgil’s head for good measure.
Virgil jumped and yelped before hiding his face in Logan’s shoulder. Logan just raised an eyebrow at his Host.

“What can we help you with Thomas?” Logan asked evenly.

Thomas still had his fists mashed up against his face. “They were right! Analogical is fricking adorable!!”

“Someone, anyone, please kill me,” Virgil groaned.

Logan just smiled and pecked Virgil’s head, earning him a small hiss.

“That didn’t help Lo.”

“My apologies.”

Virgil lifted his face up to glare at Logan, though the effect was somewhat ruined by the dark blush covering his face. Logan smiled at Virgil before turning back to Thomas.

“Was there something you required?”

Thomas sighed, smiling. “I just wanted to check on you guys and see how you were doing, but it looks like you’re doing alright!”

“Oh my god.”

“Indeed we are Thomas.”

Thomas giggled. “I’ll let you two get back to your snuggling.”

“That would be appreciated,” Logan said while Virgil groaned.

Once they felt Thomas go back to his realm, Virgil pressed closer to Logan. Logan rubbed his arm.

“Are you alright, darling?”

Virgil sighed. “Yeah, just embarrassed.”

“There’s nothing to be embarrassed about. Thomas did not see us engaging in coitus or what I believe is referred to as “sucking face”.”

Virgil let out a surprised bark of laughter. “How did you-”

Logan held up a notecard. “Flashcards.”

Virgil snorted. “Of course.” He wound his arms around Logan’s shoulders. “Maybe we should employ some hands-on learning?” he asked lowly.

Logan’s hands found their way to Virgil’s waist. “I would not be opposed.”

Virgil took in dark, espresso eyes before closing his own and kissing Logan. The kiss started out innocently enough, with Logan following Virgil’s lead and keeping his hands right where they were. Virgil shyly swiped his tongue over Logan’s lower lip. When Logan parted his lips, Virgil added a little more heat to the kiss, not quite in a place where he felt up to anything more. Logan
allowed Virgil to lead the kiss, savoring the sound, feel, and taste of his cautious, sweet boyfriend.

After a few minutes, Virgil pulled back and placed a few small kisses against Logan’s cheek. Logan couldn’t stop the joyous smile that broke out across his face at the tender action. Virgil and Logan kissed a few more times before Virgil wrapped his arms around Logan’s waist again and nuzzled his shoulder, getting back into a position to cuddle. Logan breathed in the smell of Virgil’s hair, noting he must have used a bath bomb from Roman recently due to the scent of bergamot orange.

“Would you like to lie down before dinner?” Logan offered.

Virgil nodded and hummed happily. Logan loosened his hands and arms and started to lay down, reassured when Virgil followed him easily.

Virgil sighed, content, both holding and being held by Logan. When his nerd brought a hand up to scratch the back of Virgil’s head and neck, let out satisfied rumbles. Despite the amused puff of air he felt in his hair, he couldn’t stop the steady stream of rumbling.

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Lo.”

With the feeling of another chaste kiss, Virgil began to drift off to sleep. He never quite completely fell asleep, but he felt significantly more rested when Logan began gently rubbing his arm to wake him up for dinner. Virgil rubbed his cheek against Logan’s firm chest and squeezed his arms around the slim waist, not wanting to stop cuddling. Logan humored him for a few more minutes before sitting up. Virgil grumbled, but sat up with Logan.

“Shall we attend dinner?”

Virgil stretched and groaned when his back popped. “Yeah.”

///// A few days later, Virgil was taking a cold shower after yet another failed attempt to climax by himself. He’d panicked when asking Patton for an old cardigan and only said it was for grounding. After getting the cardigan and setting it on his bed, he’d dragged himself back to Patton’s room and fessed up about what it was actually for, shamefaced and embarrassed. Patton had just smiled sweetly, hugged him, and wished him good luck. Virgil had to resist the urge to scream into his pillow when he got back to his room.

At the moment, he was glaring down at himself.

I’ve done literally everything I can think of. I did the grounding thing, I did the fantasy thing, I did the lotion thing, and you still won’t chill? Fuck you.

He sighed and turned off the cold water. Once he dried off and got himself looking presentable, he stepped into his bedroom, intending to help Thomas finish an application for a new project. Instead, he caught sight of the cardigan sprawled on his bed. Fresh tears sprang to his eyes.

I’m never going to be able to get off. I’m too broken. I’m unlovable. They shouldn’t love me. They shouldn’t have to put up with me, with how broken I am. I’ve been ruined by what the Dark Sides did to me. I’ll never be able to get off.

Just as Dr. Picani had instructed, Virgil had tried keeping the cardigan close and smelling it when
he felt that he was about to lose his erection.

Why can I only get off when the Dark Sides are hurting me?

Because you enjoyed it.

Virgil clapped a hand over his mouth to stifle his sobs. He brought his other arm around his stomach as he fell to his knees.

You’ve been trying to deny it for so long, but you can’t any more. Do you even love the Light Sides, or are they just what you think you should like?

Virgil sobbed, feeling his heart tearing apart in his chest. Am I that fucked up? I love them, I love them so much. That can’t be fake, can it?

It is. You know it’s wrong to love what the Dark Sides were doing to you, but you just can’t help but love it. You’ve been trying to convince yourself this entire time that you don’t love what the Dark Sides did, and that you instead love the Light Sides, but we both know you’re lying to yourself.

Virgil pushed up his sleeve and pressed his nails into his skin, intending to drag his nails down his arm.

I’m about to cut.

He froze, eyes widening as he stared at his arm. The shock broke him out of the thought spiral he had been stuck in.

I’ll never be better. Tears pricked Virgil’s eyes. I can’t function on my own. I need help.

Virgil slowly pulled his hand away from his arm, then yanked his sleeve back down. He checked on Thomas quickly and saw that Logan had Thomas working on the application. Virgil sent a quick burst of anxiety to make sure Thomas stayed focused and started walking towards Roman’s room. Patton had needed to take a nap since Thomas was planning an evening with his friends, so Roman was the only Light Side available.

Once he got to the grand doors, he raised a fist to knock and hesitated.

What if he gets tired of me constantly needing attention? What if he can’t deal with me anymore? What if I’ve finally worn him out? What if-

Virgil nearly latched onto the ceiling when the door swung open.

“Greetings, my gorgeous love! How fares thee?”

What Virgil meant to say was, “Fine”. What came out instead was, “I still can’t get off,” with a few traitorous tears.

Roman softened his features. “Love…”

Virgil hung his head in shame.

“No no no, none of that, my sweet,” Roman assured. “May I touch you?”

Virgil nodded miserably. Roman gathered Virgil into his arms and started swaying slightly back and forth.
“What if I can never get off?” Virgil asked thickly.

Roman gave him a little squeeze. “I would be sad for you, as this is clearly something you want, but it would not lessen my opinion of you.”

Virgil sniffled, hating himself for how such a simple thing could make him feel better about such a huge problem. He turned and rested his cheek against Roman’s strong pectorals.

“I’m feeling a little better now.”

“Wonderful! Would you like to come in?”

Virgil breathed in cinnamon, roses, and fresh air. “Yeah, that sounds nice.”

Roman let Virgil pass by him as he held the door open. Virgil grabbed Roman’s hand and silently led him to the bed.

“Mind if I work from your room for a bit?”

“Not at all, my love!”

Both men got on the bed. Roman paused when Virgil resisted being pulled onto his chest.

“Love?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked up at Roman through his eyelashes. *Roman loves holding his boyfriends, it’s a protective prince thing. Will he be offended if I ask?*

Roman brushed the backs of his fingers against Virgil’s cheek. “What troubles you, my sweet?”

Virgil smiled nervously. “Can I try something with you? Like, with holding you?”

A sappy smile grew on Roman’s face. “Of course, angel.”

Virgil felt a light blush cover his cheekbones. “Can I put my arms around you?”

“Please do!”

Virgil wrapped his arms around Roman’s torso and laid down, resting his head on Roman’s shoulder. Roman similarly held Virgil and pressed a tender kiss to his forehead, causing a string of rumbles to be emitted from Virgil.

*How is this so good every time?*

Virgil let himself soak up the sensation of cuddling with Roman for a few more seconds before he brought his awareness up to Thomas’ realm to help him with paperwork. He winced when he saw how distracted Thomas had gotten. Over the next hour and a half, he and Logan had Thomas focus on getting his application done so he could stay on schedule with his other projects.

Once Thomas had finished and gone to the kitchen to get a healthy snack, Virgil came back down to Roman. Roman was imagining new video ideas now that his mind was free, and was staring up at the ceiling in wonder. Virgil decided now would be as good a time as any to admire Roman’s neck and face. Virgil’s eyes traced along powerful tendons up to a strong jawline. Roman’s face looked like it was sculpted from stone, yet was still impossibly expressive.

*How can I resist kissing that perfect jawline?*
Roman’s starry eyes turned to him, still imagining. Virgil let himself be brought in for a fiery, passionate kiss that could only be described as Roman. Virgil used the arms still around Roman as leverage to pull himself closer, a pleased groan emanating from his prince. He allowed the kissing to continue for a few more minutes until the building arousal became impossible to ignore.

*Dr. Picani said that I probably needed more to ground myself and stay in the moment. Maybe having my boyfriends with me will help?*

He smiled to himself. *Let’s test that theory.*

Virgil arched his back and felt his cock twitch in his jeans. Roman had a hand in Virgil’s hair and another one rubbing up and down his back. Following his instincts, Virgil pulled back from the kiss to suck and nip at Roman’s jaw and neck. If the moaning was any indication, Roman didn’t mind.

Virgil felt heat pooling in his lower abdomen. He pulled back to ask breathily, “Can we try, um… some stuff?”

Roman stared down at Virgil with dark eyes. “Absolutely. Do you want me to lead, or would you like to?”

Virgil chewed on his lip, arousal and heat making his mind foggy. “Can I try stuff and you tell me if it’s okay or not?”

“Absolutely!”

Virgil kissed Roman aggressively, sensing Roman letting him take over. Virgil’s hands roamed Roman’s body, and he felt victorious which his hips started twitching erratically.

*You’re hurting him.*

Virgil gasped and pulled back, curling into himself. His arousal was quickly fading, replaced by horror.

Roman let him go immediately. “Little storm?”

Virgil started hyperventilating as he looked into Roman’s eyes and studied his beautiful face.

“I’m sorry…” he wheezed.

“You did nothing wrong my angel. May I touch you?”

Virgil felt his skin try to leap off his body, so he shook his head.

“Okay. Can you look around the room and name five things that are red?”

Virgil’s eyes darted around the room. His lips quirked despite his distress. “I think it might be harder to name 5 things that aren’t red in here Princey.”

Roman let himself laugh at that. “While that may be, can you choose five?”

Virgil squeezed his eyes shut and whimpered. “I hurt you…”

Roman ached to grab his love and hold him, but curled his fists in the comforter instead. “You did no such thing, I promise. I was quite enjoying myself as a matter of fact.”
Virgil cracked his eyes open. “You promise?”
“I swear it. You did not harm me.”

Virgil watched Roman for a moment longer before closing his eyes again and letting out a sob. “I’m sorry. I ruin everything.”

Oh, how I wish to gather my love into my arms! “Nay, my raven. It’s rather sweet that you’re so concerned for my well-being.”

“But I’ve been having a lot of issues lately.”

Roman was at a bit of a loss. Normally, he’d reach out, brush his fingers over a cheekbone, tangle his fingers in soft hair, something. But he couldn’t.

I must rely on my words. “My dark songbird, would you abandon me if I were to struggle?”

Virgil’s eyes shot open. “What?! No, of course not!! What would make you-” he narrowed his eyes. “That was smart for you.”

“Thank you! Wait-”

“But still, I know I haven’t been able to do a lot lately.”

“Would you leave me if I couldn’t be sexually intimate with you?”

Virgil sighed. “No, but you’re better than me.”

“I strongly disagree.”

Virgil scooted over and curled into Roman’s chest, powerful arms winding around him. “I know.”

Roman let a moment of silence pass before speaking. “You are so much more than what the Dark Sides said you are.”

Virgil gripped a piece of Roman’s uniform in his hand as tears sprang to his eyes.

Roman continued. “You’re so smart. Unbelievably loyal and courageous. Witty enough to keep pace with Logan and myself. Sweet and gentle with those who are safe to be vulnerable around. You’ll put yourself through incredible discomfort just to avoid the possibility of hurting someone’s feelings. Not to mention drop-dead sexy.”

Virgil whined and hid his face in gold and white. Roman huffed out a laugh and kissed Virgil’s hair once, then twice just to be sure. Virgil settled on Roman, and Roman went back to dreaming for Thomas, content to be holding his now-calmed love in his arms.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again for your patience!! Y’all are awesome!!
Virgil continued working from Roman’s room as needed for the rest of the day. When he wasn’t focused on Thomas, he was thinking and planning.

*My brain was an asshole, but I can deal with that. Having Roman there and touching me *did* help to keep me grounded, and I got so close! I’ve gotten close with the others before, and now we’ve talked about sex.*

Virgil was yanked out of his thoughts when Thomas panicked. He’d accidentally triple-clicked and highlighted the entire document he’d been typing in, and had subsequently erased everything with an “f”. With Logan’s help, Virgil got Thomas to hit “Undo” and get all of his work back. When Virgil relaxed again, trying to catch his breath, Roman kissed his head.

“Be still, my love. You’ve saved the day.”

Virgil snorted, still panting. “You’re dramatic.”

“Why, thank you for noticing!!”

Virgil smiled and tilted his head, kissing Roman squarely on the lips. He had to break frequently since he was still calming down, but Roman didn’t seem to mind. Kissing had the effect Virgil was looking for; he started feeling safe and secure again, and making out with his prince helped take his mind off what had just happened. He pulled back to stare into Roman’s warm, sparkling eyes. Virgil just rested against Roman’s shoulder, getting back to work and checking on Thomas to make sure he was okay.

When Patton knocked on Roman’s door for dinner, Virgil yawned as he stretched and sat up, Roman keeping a hand on his lower back all the while.

Virgil looked over and smirked. “See something you like?”

Roman smiled darkly. “Always,” he rumbled.

Virgil blushed and kept himself from kissing Roman again, knowing he’d probably make both of them late to dinner if he did. *Besides, I have something I need to do.* He felt his skin prickle from anxiety as he thought of how to ask his boyfriends if they were ready.

Roman escorted Virgil down to the kitchen, all the while Virgil noticing how Roman’s chest was slightly puffed out. He couldn’t help but imagine what Roman would look like without his uniform covering his torso.
Once he got into the kitchen and saw Logan and Patton smile at him in their own ways, his nerves flared but he managed to smile back.

Will I have to let them do whatever they want when we have sex? No, no, they said enthusiastic consent only and stuff, and they said they’d stop if I asked or if I said ‘red’. But that’d still be so rude of me! How can I tell them to stop when they’re already hard? Even the Dark Sides would say they’d be in pain while they were waiting for their turn, and they don’t admit that shit! I wonder what Logan and Patton look like without shirts on? Without anything on? Logan’s fit, Patton’s so strong and soft, I’ve seen Roman without his shirt on-

“Honey?”

Virgil jumped slightly. Both Logan and Patton were looking at him with concern. Apparently thinking about my boyfriends naked is distracting. “Sorry guys I— I’m going to ask to have sex tonight, maybe I should tell them the truth?

Virgil was certain his ears were on fire. “I was wondering how you—” his voice cut off and he had to clear his throat. “How you guys look?”

Both Logan and Patton tilted their heads in confusion.

Virgil squeezed his eyes shut. “Naked,” he whispered.

He heard Roman walk up behind him. “That’s quite sweet, angel.”

Virgil tilted his head down. “W-whatever.”

There was a pause. “May I touch you?”

~~~~~

Oh god, this is how it happens, he’s going to bend me over the table and fuck me dry. It’s going to hurt, it’s going to bleed. I wanted everything with them not to hurt! I don’t want it to hurt!! I have to. I told Logan and Patton I was thinking about them naked, and I didn’t follow through with Roman earlier. I have to let them get off in me. Virgil bit his lip and nodded.

~~~~~

“Roman, don’t.”

Virgil’s head snapped up at Logan’s voice. He heard Roman freeze behind him.

Logan’s intense gaze was focused on Virgil. “Do you want Roman to touch you?”

Virgil opened his mouth to respond, but no sound came out. *Shit shit shit, they won’t have sex with me tonight if I can’t convince them.*

He smiled sadly. “I do, I just got nervous for a second.” Not a complete lie.

Awwwwww, you must miss getting fucked properly by Deceit.

“You don’t have to if you’re nervous, my dark knight.”

Virgil turned around and wrapped his arms around Roman’s neck as he pressed into him. He smiled in what he hoped was a seductive manner.
Roman searched Virgil’s face for a moment before tentatively placing his hands on Virgil’s waist. Virgil sighed happily and rested his forehead against Roman’s strong chest. Roman brought his hands and arms up to embrace Virgil.

*I like this touch. I like being touched by my boyfriends. That means I want to be touched by all of them, and it’ll help me stay in the moment.*

Virgil allowed himself to relax in Roman’s arms for another moment before looking back up at him.

“Can I kiss you?”

Roman smiled and nodded. Virgil kissed him sweetly, slowly building up the kiss until he brushed his tongue along Roman’s lower lip, who pulled back.

Before Virgil could panic too much, Roman said, “Let’s save some for after dinner, hm?”

Virgil’s cheeks heated up. *You have no idea.* “Yeah, definitely.”

“Wonderful,” Roman rumbled, “I look forward to it.”

Virgil just smiled and kissed Roman once more before stepping back. As Logan and Roman set the table, Patton came up to Virgil with a tentative look on his face.

“Did you want to kiss him sweetie?”

Virgil’s eyebrows shot up. “Yeah, I just panicked for a second but I got over it. I’m okay Pat.” He tried to send a reassuring smile Patton’s direction, but though Patton smiled back Virgil knew he could tell something was different.

Dinner passed relatively normally, everyone falling into a comfortable rhythm. At the end, just as Roman was about to leave the table, Virgil straightened his back.

“Hey, uh Ro?”

Roman paused. “Yes, precious bat?”

“Can we talk? All of us together?”

“Of course!”

When Virgil looked at his other two boyfriends, he Logan watching him evenly and Patton looking with slight worry.

Virgil cleared his throat. *You’ve got this, you can do this, let them come in you and might get to come too.* “I was uh…” He shook himself. “I wanna try… having sex.” Despite his increasing discomfort and anxiety at the thought of three men fucking him, he felt some hope that he’d finally be better.

Patton reached over and took Virgil’s hand in his. “Are you sure honey?”

Virgil smiled. “Yeah. I want this. Really bad. I want you guys. I want to feel good and make you feel good.” His heart was pounding against his ribcage.
Patton smiled softly. “Okay baby. What would you like to try?”

An image came unbidden into Virgil’s mind of Logan. Hot, lithe fingers wrapped around his length, coated in lube. A dark, espresso gaze studying him intensely. Logan’s soft lips gently kissing Virgil’s face as he was brought to ecstasy.

Virgil had to breathe deeply before he was able to speak. “Anything we talked about.” He laughed nervously. “I’m not really sure what I’m doing here, so I thought maybe we could try some stuff out and see if I like it and if it makes you feel good?”

“I’m okay with that. Logan, Roman?”

“Certainly.”

“I’m on board that train!”

Virgil snorted. I’ve still gotta convince them. Maintaining eye contact with Patton, he brought their joined hands up and kissed Patton’s. It had the desired effect: Patton blushed and giggled, and Virgil smiled like a dork.

Logan was watching his boyfriends with soft eyes. “Do you know when you’d like to try Virgil?”

Virgil looked at Logan through his eyelashes. “I was thinking… tonight?”

Both of Logan’s eyebrows shot up. “Are you certain? We do not have to.”

Virgil forced a shy smile onto his face. “I want to. I want you guys.”

Patton melted. “Okay honey. If you’re sure.”

“I am,” he confirmed quietly.

Patton lifted Virgil’s hand to his mouth and kissed it, returning the gesture. Virgil felt joy bubble up as Patton giggled again.

“Shall we review our boundaries?” Logan asked.

“Yeah, probably should.”

Logan nodded and folded his hands in front of him. “Very well. Virgil, if at any point you are uncomfortable with something, let us know and we will stop. You can either tell us you would like to stop, use the color lighting system, or tap one of us several times if you are unable to speak. Do you remember the different colors?”

“Uh, green is keep going, yellow means hang on, and red means stop?”

“Correct. Out of the activities we’ve discussed in our previous conversations, are there any in particular you would like to try?”

Virgil’s face caught on fire. “I, uh- I’m cool with whatever we talked about. This is so new, I just need to actually see what it’s like, you know?”

Logan sent Virgil a small smile. “I understand. As always, consent can be withdrawn at any time. If you consent to something and want or need to stop, inform us and we will respect your consent.”

Virgil’s smile dimmed somewhat. “I know.” But I can’t stop you.
Roman’s large, warm hand settled on Virgil’s back. “We’d never violate your consent, my raven.”

Virgil turned to Roman. “I know Ro. I trust you guys.”

Roman glowed. Virgil ducked his head and heard Roman chuckle.

“When would you like to try intercourse?”

Virgil nearly jumped. Always the taskmaster. “I mean, why not right now?”

Logan’s eyes became dark. “I would not be opposed.”

Virgil swallowed and tried to return the dark look. He heard Roman stand up behind him and felt soft lips against the back of his ear.

“Shall we go to my chambers?” Roman whispered lowly.

Virgil shivered, his arousal from earlier returning. “Yeah,” he croaked. He stood, Patton letting his hand go. He was spinning a moment later, Roman’s hand now on his lower back and another hand on the side of his face while being passionately kissed. Virgil tried to keep up, but Roman put his all into the kiss. It was all Virgil could do to hang on for the ride. Roman pulled away, far too quickly in Virgil’s mind, and stared into his eyes. The contrast between the intensity of the kiss and the tenderness of Roman’s thumb brushing over his cheekbone had his head spinning.

“I love you,” Roman whispered.

Tears sprang to Virgil’s eyes. “I love you too Ro.”

Roman smiled and stepped back, taking Virgil’s hand and gently guiding him away from the table. Virgil heard two chairs slide against the floor and had to take a few calming breaths, knowing two aroused men were following him.

He wasn’t sure what happened, because in the next second he was in front of Roman’s door, Roman turning to face him. Virgil quickly slapped on a smile.

Roman caressed Virgil’s face again. “Would you like to come in?”

Roman, Patton, Logan, Roman, Patton, Logan…

“Yes,” He cleared his throat and lowered his head, looking up at Roman through his eyelashes. “Yes, your Highness.”

Roman’s eyes darkened. “Fuck,” he said right before he pulled Virgil into another one of his wildfire kisses. Virgil whimpered and his knees nearly buckled.

The kiss ended when he felt Logan press up behind him, causing him to breathe carefully so as to not panic. “Don’t want this to end too early,” Logan rumbled. Virgil shivered when he felt Logan’s erection.

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We talked about letting them fuck me, does that count? Will they just use my throat? I said I didn’t want to, but we still talked about it, and I said I was fine with whatever we talked about. I don’t want it, I don’t want to. I’m going to be so sore, and I don’t want it to hurt, I don’t want anything with them to hurt.
Virgil’s mind supplied images of the Light Sides holding his head still as they used his mouth, of Virgil face down on the huge mattress and bleeding while the Light Sides fucked him, of them holding him close and telling him how much they loved him while he tried to catch his breath through the pain.

Patton pulled Roman into a messy kiss, both men bright and happy and laughing in the mere seconds they parted. Virgil felt the knot in his chest loosen at the sight, his heart warming.

Logan’s fingers traced the sides of Virgil’s hips. “Let us entertain ourselves in Roman’s room while they’re occupied, yes?”

Virgil nodded and kissed Logan before his genius could detect his anxiety. Virgil felt a smile against his lips as Logan expertly led the kiss and crossed the two of them over the threshold into Roman’s room.

I want to have sex with my boyfriends, I do! Maybe I can get them off with my hand? That would be good right? Or maybe they won’t be too rough with my mouth? I can deal with that, that’ll be fine.

Virgil relaxed slightly, the only stimulus being Logan. Logan was running his hands up and down Virgil’s body, touching the sides of his hips but nowhere else below his waistband.

Yet.

Virgil’s arousal faded completely when he heard Roman and Patton enter the room and walk by him, fingertips grazing his lower back.

It’s going to hurt, they’re all going to fuck me, they’re going to force me, they’re each going to take a turn and it’s going to hurt so bad.

Virgil felt his muscles lock up as Logan stepped away towards the bed, lightly holding Virgil’s hand in his own. Virgil scrunched his eyes shut as the rest of his body froze, adrenaline coursing through him.

“Darling?”

Virgil couldn’t have responded even if he’d known what to say. He sensed Logan stepping closer.

“It’s okay Virgil, you’re safe.”

The only thing that moved in Virgil was his breath violently hitching.

“Shhhhh, it’s okay.”

Virgil wanted to say something, but he couldn’t. He couldn’t move, he couldn’t think, he was completely still.

“You’re safe, we won’t hurt you, we’ve stopped. We’re not going to do anything sexual tonight, my moon.”

When Logan tentatively wrapped his arms around Virgil, Virgil melted into Logan’s chest. He whimpered before he started weakly crying.
“Shhhhhhh, we’re not upset. You’re okay, I promise.”

*How broken am I that I can’t even have sex with my boyfriends? How can I be a good boyfriend if I’m *this* scared of having sex with them? They’re supposed to keep me grounded in the moment, what the actual fuck is wrong with me?*

Virgil barely registered his other boyfriends trying to talk to him as their voices faded and he cried. He vaguely felt himself walking, then laying down on something soft, feeling numb all over. The few times he managed to open his eyes, his vision was dark and had a red, orange, and brown hue to it, everything looking fake. He registered people shifting around him and a blanket being draped over him. The last thing he remembered before he was overcome by darkness was a weight next to him and the scent of lemon.

Chapter End Notes

Whew, I'm glad to see y'all made it to the end! Virgil tried, but those gosh darn brain weasels hit him pretty hard, and he ended up derealizing at the end. We'll see the consequences of what happened next chapter! And don't worry, I *promise* we're getting close to something big!!
Chapter 145

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! We have some age-regression throughout the chapter, some vague mentions of Virgil's past with the Dark Sides throughout the chapter, and a few mentions of sex. I believe that's it for trigger warnings, but as always let me know if I missed anything!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil stirred as awareness returned to him. He blinked his eyes open slowly, warily taking in his surroundings. He first sensed that he was on a ridiculously soft bed with luxurious pillows and blankets. He tried and failed not to flinch when he saw Logic sleeping next to him.

*It’s okay, it’s okay, Logic is a Light Side! The Light Sides won’t hurt me! Why is he so much older? Is that a Light Side thing?*

Virgil sensed someone behind him, so he shifted a little to see if they were awake, and when he didn’t feel anyone move, he slowly rolled over. He saw Morality and Creativity curled up together and asleep. As he was rolling back towards Logic, he was startled by a snore and jumped. He froze when Logic snuffled in his sleep, then began waking up. Despite knowing that the Light Sides were better than the Dark Sides, his experience in the Dark Side over the past few years had him shaking.

*I miss Remy and Saul. They were always nice to me.*

He sniffled just as Logic opened his eyes.

“Virgil?” Logic whispered. At another sniffle, Logic rolled onto his back and grabbed his glasses from off the nightstand.

“Darling, are you alright?”

Virgil nodded, wide eyes trained on Logic. He flinched when he felt movement behind him.

Logic noticed. “You’re safe. It’s alright, the only Sides in the room are Roman, Patton, and I. We won’t harm you.”

Virgil scrambled for a response. “Yes sir.”

He whimpered when Logic visibly flinched backwards.

“It’s alright Virgil. Do you know where you are?”

Virgil nodded, not wanting to give the incorrect answer.

Logic sighed. “That’s good. Roman, would you mind turning the lights up a little?”

“Of course!” Creativity’s slightly-deeper voice boomed from behind Virgil. Virgil jumped and whimpered again, gripping the blankets tightly in fear.
“Shhhhhh, it’s okay Virgil, you’re safe here,” Logic murmured softly.

Virgil looked into Logic’s eyes and saw a cool exterior. He thought he saw warmth, but he couldn’t be sure. Although he did notice the small smile when the room brightened slightly.

“There you are, moonlight. How are you feeling?”

Virgil swallowed, wanting to be able to answer the older Side. “Good, sir.”

Virgil drew back when he saw Logic’s eyebrows furrow slightly.

“Darling, you needn’t call us that. We’re your boyfriends-”

“You’re my boyfriends?!” Virgil blurted. He stared in awe at Logic. He’s kinda old, but he’ll be nicer than the Dark Sides! And Creativity and Morality are my boyfriends too?! Wow!! I’m so lucky!!

“We are indeed, I’m not certain how you could forget-” Logic’s eyes widened slightly. “Are you experiencing a flashback?”

Virgil tilted his head. “Sir, may I ask what a flashback is so I can answer your question?” Wait, why does my voice sound so weird? It’s really low.

Logic’s face twitched. “You may, and you do not need to call me sir. You may call me Logan. A flashback is where one re-experiences a past event through any combination of the senses. Do you feel that you’re not completely present at the moment?”

Virgil frowned and took stock of himself, not truly understanding the question. “Um, I think I’m present?”

“Do you feel, see, hear, or smell anything that doesn’t seem to fit your current setting?”

Oh god, I don’t know! I don’t know what he’s asking!! How do I answer? I don’t know what he’s asking! It’s so weird and I don’t know the words!

Virgil’s eyes filled with tears as his throat tightened. Remy and Saul didn’t ask me any hard questions! They never hurt me! They were never mean! I wasn’t scared of them! “Um, I don’t think so?” I want my dads! I miss them! I want them back!! Why can’t I have my dads anymore?! I’m so bad I can’t be in the Neutral Side, but now I’m in the Light Side?! I don’t understand!! I want my dads!!

“I am very glad to hear that.”

Virgil flinched when Creativity spoke up behind him. “Virgil, love, can you tell us how old you are?”

Even though Logic looked surprised and confused, Virgil knew better than to not answer. “I’m seven, sir.”

Logic’s eyebrows shot up, but Creativity just shifted a little closer to Virgil.

My dads would hold me if I got scared or upset or if we just wanted to. I want good touches back! I want to feel good touches again!! I haven’t had any good touches since I got taken away from Remy and Saul! Deceit’s lying!! I didn’t wander in there!! I want dad cuddles!!

Virgil tore himself out of his mind when he felt more movement behind him. Though he didn’t
dare move, he saw Logic’s- Logan’s eyes look past him, watching something going on behind him. When Logan looked back at Virgil, he smiled.

“Would you like a stuffed animal Virgil?”

Virgil gasped. “I can have a stuffed animal?!”

Logan smiled, but Virgil noticed his eyes growing shiny. “There is a stuffed animal that is a cartoon spider named Lucas. Would you like me to summon him for you?”

Virgil nodded eagerly, choosing not to believe it was real until he saw it but he felt so excited! When Logi- Logan moved his hand and presented the stuffed spider, Virgil smiled widely.

“Oh wow!!”

“You may take it if you wish.”

Virgil looked between Logan’s face and Lucas skeptically. “Do you want me to do anything for you, s- Logan?” he asked carefully. He saw Logan’s chest hitch, but other than that he was impassive.

“No darling. The only question I have is whether or not you’d like to hold Lucas. There is not a wrong option available.”

Virgil chewed on his lip for a moment and stared at Logan. “M-may I have L-Lucas p-please?” he asked, voice thin and tentative.

Logan’s heart shattered as he smiled and set Lucas down in front of Virgil. Virgil looked at it for a moment before locking eyes with Logan and slowly picking it up, hands shaking. When he held the soft, furry object and brought it to his chest, he closed his eyes and nuzzled the stuffed spider below him. He smiled despite his fear and sighed happily.

“Awwwwwww!” Morality squealed relatively softly behind Virgil. Virgil blushed and buried his face in the spider below him. He chanced a look up at Logan, who had a… soft look. The gentle smile and kindness from before reminded him of his dads, and his eyes filled with tears. He hid his face again and started sniffling.

"I want my dads! I want nice cuddles and nice touches! I don’t want any more gross touches! Virgil started crying in earnest as he recalled what cuddles from his dads felt like. He remembered arms around him, and a body supporting him, kind words being whispered in his ear and hands gently rubbing his back and arms.

“What’s wrong darling?”

It took a few moments for Virgil to be able to stop crying enough to speak. “I d-don’t w-want anym-more… I m-m-miss nice t-touches!!”

Virgil heard two gasps behind him and Logan suck in a breath harshly through his nose. After a few moments of silence from the other three Sides, with the only sound coming from Virgil’s crying, Morality spoke.

“What kind of touches do you miss sweetie?”

“O-ones that d-don’t make me f-f-feel so gross. I’m s-sorry, I kn-know I sh-should be grateful f- for th-them!”
“It’s okay sweetheart, and you don’t have to feel grateful for things that make you feel bad. The Dark Sides were lying.”

Virgil’s breath hiccuped. “D-Deceit s-said that I w-went over t-to the D-Dark Side because I w-wanted to. I d-don’t think I did.”

“I don’t think you did either baby. You said you missed cuddles. Are there any other kinds of touches you miss?”

Virgil squeezed Lucas. “I l-like hugs too. And when m-my dads r-rubbed my back.” His crying intensified.

“Little moon, would you like me to hold you?”

Virgil was stunned into silence. He raised his eyes in awe. “You wanna do that?” He flinched. “I’m sorry! W-what do w-want m-me to do?” he asked as fresh tears flowed down his face.

“Nothing, absolutely nothing. And yes, I do want to hold you if it would make you feel better.”

Virgil nodded. “I w-want you to hold me, b-but-” he was cut off when Logan gathered him into his arms and pulled him onto his chest. Logan’s arm were firm, but not forceful. Virgil nearly cried in relief when he felt a hand slowly rubbing his upper back.

“Shhhhh Virgil, it’s okay,” Logan murmured. Virgil took a few deep breaths to calm down his crying. He nuzzled into the firm chest beneath him. It was leaner than Remy’s and smaller than Saul’s, but he could ignore that for now.

He doesn’t want any gross touches!! I can get cuddles! Virgil shivered at the cold of the room.

The hand on his back stopped moving. “Are you uncomfortable?”

“N-no, just c-cold. But it’s okay, I’m f-fine with only one blanket!”

“There’s no need to suffer needlessly. Roman, if you would?”

“Of course!”

Virgil felt the weight of a large quilt settle over him. He pressed closer to Logan, who resumed rubbing his back. The combination of warmth, weighted blankets, a stuffed animal, and kind touches had Virgil drifting off into a restful sleep.

///// Virgil felt the familiar softness of Lucas next to his face, so he pressed his face into it and quietly rumbled.

“Good morning Virgil.”

Virgil looked up at Logan and smiled.

“Mornin’ L.”

Logan smiled softly down at him. “How are you feeling?”

Memories of the previous night’s attempt at sex, and blurrier memories from later, resurfaced. Virgil curled up on Logan’s chest.
“Embarrassed,” he mumbled. He felt his skin crawling when he thought about how they almost
had sex and the touching that would happen and what the Light Sides wanted-

“There is nothing to be embarrassed about, I promise.”

“Kay.”

Virgil felt off, and when he searched his feelings he still felt small. *Dangit. At least I remember
stuff now.*

“Are you okay honey?” Patton asked gently.

*I can’t let them know. They shouldn’t have to deal with a kid, they signed up to deal with a grown-
up.* “Yeah, I’m okay.”

“Your voice sounds a little different. How old do you feel right now?”

Virgil curled his shoulders in as tears sprang to his eyes. “I’m s-sorry!”

“Oh no baby, it’s okay! We don’t mind you being younger! How old do you feel sweetie?”

Virgil bit his lip as he thought hard for a few moments. “Seven?”

“Okay! Do you remember who we are?”

Virgil nodded, and felt Logan let out a sigh of relief.

“I am so glad to hear that, moonlight,” he whispered.

Virgil just held Lucas more tightly.

“How does breakfast sound? We can bring it up here once I’m done cooking! Breakfast in bed!”

Patton offered brightly.

Virgil snuggled against Logan’s chest. “That sounds nice.”

“Would you like me to keep holding you?” Logan asked softly.

Virgil whimpered and clutched Logan’s shirt. The thought of Logan leaving made Virgil feel
scared and incredibly sad. *This is so stupid, I’m not 7 anymore! I’m old! I shouldn’t be so sad about
Logan leaving me alone!* Logan held Virgil closely.

“Shhhhhh, it’s alright, I’ll stay.”

Virgil let the tears that had fallen dry, not wanting Logan to know that he’d gotten so upset at the
thought of being alone. He felt movement behind him.

“We’ll be back soon, little storm,” Roman promised.

“Okay.”

Logan started massaging the back of Virgil’s head, causing quiet rumbles to emit from the Side.
Virgil began dozing off, lulled to sleep by Logan’s presence and safety. Far too soon for Virgil, the
door opened and he smelled waffles and coffee.

Logan rubbed his shoulder. “Wake up Virgil, it’s time for breakfast,” he said softly.
Virgil hissed and pressed into Logan. He felt a puff of air on his head.

“Come now Virgil! All princes, big and small, need to eat to be big and strong!” Roman declared.

“I’m not small!” Virgil protested. “I’m big, I shouldn’t be acting like this!”

“It’s quite alright Virgil. Traumatic age regression is a common coping mechanism, and we do not judge you for it.”

“And you’re adorable when you’re small! And when you’re big!” Patton chirped. “How do you feel about chocolate chip waffles with bacon and coffee?”

Virgil lifted his head to look at the tray of food. There was enough for all four of them to eat. “That sounds good,” he said, not wanting to show how excited he was.

Patton beamed. “Great! Let’s dig in!”

Patton got everyone situated before they began eating, and Virgil waited for everyone else to start before slowly taking a bite of waffle. When he saw that no one was paying any attention, he ate as quickly and quietly as he could. Once the Light Sides started finishing their meal, Virgil noted that although they seemed relaxed, their conversations were much more kid-friendly than normal.

As Virgil sipped his coffee, the bitterness much less palatable than normal, he felt himself getting older.

“Did you like your breakfast sweetie?”

Virgil met Patton’s eyes and smiled. “Yeah Pat, it was really good. I think I’m older now.”

“Okay! How old do you feel?”

Virgil frowned as he thought. “I think 15? So pretty close to normal.” He took out his phone and frowned. “I should get to work soon.”

“Okay! Let us know if you need anything!”

Virgil smiled shyly at Patton. “I will Pat. Thank you.”

He sent Patton a two-finger salute as he sank out to his room, where he promptly fell face-first onto his bed and groaned.

_Goddammit, they want to date an adult, not a sometimes-child. They don’t deserve to put up with this shit._ Virgil turned himself over and focused on Thomas, trying not to dwell in self-pity for the sake of his Host. When Thomas had to choose which bag he was going to take, Virgil couldn’t stop the anxiety he had over the rainbow pin on his grey bag. He felt shame and gratitude when Thomas chose the brown messenger bag. Virgil had to pull back frequently while Thomas was driving, as he was causing his Host to drive far below the speed limit.

_I’m being so fucking stupid. Thomas has been driving for years and he’s been out for years and he’s got great friends and he doesn’t get too much shit about it._

Virgil focused on his breathing while he tried a few grounding exercises, although he couldn’t quite remember how to do them and his breathing was difficult to get under control even as he focused on it.

_I’m fine. I can deal with this. I’ll be back to normal soon, I just need to wait this out._ He curled up
on his bed and kept his distance from the front of Thomas’ mind as much as possible, though Thomas was still exhausted by lunchtime. Virgil declined lunch when Patton knocked on his door, his stomach too upset from the amount of largely uncontrolled anxiety he was trying to keep from Thomas. Virgil focused on holding Shelly and Lucas and trying not to push Thomas back into the closet. He grabbed more coffee from downstairs and drank it, feeling older the longer the day went on.

When he went downstairs, he was greeted by a spaghetti dinner.

“Hey sweetie! Feeling better?”

Virgil softened. “Yeah Pat, I am. Back to normal, less worried about Thomas being out of the closet.”

Roman approached him and opened his arms, and Virgil gladly walked into them and hugged his royal boyfriend. They hugged for a while, and then Roman lead Virgil to his chair and kissed the top of his head. Logan rubbed Virgil’s back when he sat down, and Patton served up an extra-large portion for Virgil.

Virgil fought back tears as he looked around the table. They’re too good for me. I’m so lucky. I love them so much.

I have to make sure they get something out of this too.

Chapter End Notes

Virgil got cuddles! Did you spot the thing that helped him age up a bit?

Happy birthday T!!
Hey folks! We've got a frank conversation about boundaries near the beginning of the chapter, and the second half of the chapter is pure steaminess! Within it, there is thigh touching, pretty detailed descriptions of arousal, and more that makes it toe the line between steaminess and sexy times!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JASPER!!! Everyone wish the beta who's made this whole thing possible, who's helped keep me sane through shit, and who's helped keep me going a big ol' happy birthday!!!

After Virgil and Logan had finished cleaning up dinner, Logan took Virgil’s hand and kissed it.

“How are you feeling today, darling?”

Virgil’s ears turned bright red. “Uh, better. I, ah, feel like myself again.” He cleared his throat after stammering as the blush spread to his cheeks.

Logan smirked. “I am glad to hear it, moonlight.” His face became serious once more. “Would you feel up to talking about what happened last night?”

Virgil ducked his head and hunched his shoulders. “‘M sorry,” he mumbled.

“Do not apologize Virgil. You’ve nothing to be sorry for. We simply wish to avoid frightening you in the future, that is all.”

Virgil nodded and smiled but refused to meet Logan’s eyes.

“Would you like a hug?”

Virgil just wrapped his arms around Logan in response. Logan returned the hug, holding Virgil gently but securely. Virgil hid his face in Logan’s shoulder, breathing in fresh lemon and gentle lilac, savoring the feel of arms around him and a body pressed against his. The warm weight of Logan’s head against his grounded him, and allowed him to be lost in the hug. They embraced silently, both men quietly soaking up the affection, until Virgil pulled back and nodded.

Logan took Virgil’s hand and led him into the living room, Virgil’s fear causing him to smell copper the closer they got. Out of the corner of his eye, Virgil saw Roman and Patton already seated on the couch, leaving space for Virgil on the couch or armchair, whichever his preference was. The thoughtfulness made tears sting his eyes.

When he and Logan were near the couch, he sat down on it, leaving room for Logan next to him and holding his hand. Logan took the hint and raised his arm when he was seated, Virgil tucking himself under it and wrapping his arms around a slender waist so he could cuddle with Logan.

After a tender kiss to Virgil’s hairline, Logan spoke. “Do you know what went wrong last night?”
“I… I think I…” Virgil closed his eyes. “I’m sorry, it’s hard.”

“I know sweetheart. Take your time,” Patton assured.

After a few deep breaths, Virgil tried again. “I love you guys so fucking much.” He swallowed as he got choked up. “I just panicked. I… I feel safe around you guys, I really do.” He allowed a small smile when Logan kissed his hair. “I think I freaked myself out because we agreed to do stuff we talked about, but we talked about toys and… other stuff, and I didn’t know if that counted when you said that we would do what we talked about.”

Logan squeezed Virgil while Roman jumped in. “Love, dark angel, if you said you didn’t want to do something sexual then we’d consider that not an option.”

“I am so incredibly sorry that we were unclear,” Logan said. “If you have said previously that you do not want to do something, then we will not do it.”


“And we will endeavor not to cause a similar reaction in the future,” Logan vowed. “I know.”

Patton shifted in his seat. “Was there anything else about last night that scared you or didn’t work?”

Virgil gripped Logan more tightly as his fear ratcheted up. I can’t tell them I’m scared of pain. They’ll never use me to get off then, and how’s that fair to them? “No, I don’t think so. I think I just got scared that we’d do something that I said I didn’t want.” That’s true at least.

“Okay sweetie. Let us know if you think of something else, alright?”

“Yeah, I will.”

The four Sides cuddled for a few more moments until Roman felt the need to speak. “Shall we watch a Disney movie?”

Logan and Roman good-naturedly bickered over what they’d watch while Patton and Virgil exchanged amused smiles. A few minutes and fingersnaps later, they were settled on the couch in their onesies, Virgil still holding onto Logan with Roman’s arm over his and Logan’s shoulders. Patton was happily tucked against Roman. As safety and warmth seeped into Virgil’s bones, he thought back to before he had kissed any of his boyfriends.

They were so happy. They loved just being around me when I couldn’t handle touch, and when we cuddle they’re so relaxed. They’re happy with me. I’ll get to having sex with them at some point. They really won’t care how long it takes.

~~~~~

A few days later, Logan and Roman were in Thomas’ realm helping him with testing out new recording equipment. Meanwhile, Patton and Virgil decided to have a relaxed night in. They had just finished playing a few rounds of Mario Kart, in which they let each other win and had to declare a tie because they both kept driving off the edge of the map, and were currently cuddling on Patton’s bed, arms wrapped around each other. Patton would frequently press little kisses to the top of Virgil’s head, making him rumble. Virgil nuzzled the thick chest below him, loving the softer edges to his strong, slightly larger boyfriend.
Virgil looked up at Patton’s kind face illuminated by the fairy lights strung up around his bed, and he smiled. The dim lighting was just right; he was able to see everything, and the lights weren’t too harsh on his eyes.

_Perfect._

Virgil leaned up and kissed Patton sweetly, rubbing his side. Patton had kept his arms wrapped around Virgil in a hug, making both men smile into the kiss. They stayed like that for a few minutes, leisurely enjoying each other’s bodies and lips, until Virgil shyly licked Patton’s lower lip. Patton opened his mouth eagerly, the two Sides starting out slowly and building heat until they barely took a break to breathe.

Virgil was running both hands up Patton’s front, and Patton’s hands were wandering all down Virgil’s back and sides. Patton’s hands on him were making him arch his back and moan into Patton’s mouth, and he felt evidence of Patton’s arousal. The firm hands were leaving trails of fire in their wake, and each movement had the heat in his veins building. Touching Patton’s rounded stomach and his soft pectorals was making him unbelievably aroused, and he realized that he wanted more desperately. _Damn shirts, separating me from Patton. The assholes._

Virgil pulled back with a gasp.

“Pat?”

“Yeah sweetie?” Patton asked breathlessly, eyes slightly glazed over.

“Can I have more?”

Patton smiled and rubbed Virgil’s upper arm. “Of course you can honey. What do you want?”

Despite his nerves he took a deep breath and asked, “Shirts?”

Patton kept smiling and rubbing Virgil’s arm soothingly. “Do you want us to take our shirts off?”

Virgil nodded, biting his lip. Patton kissed him tenderly and retreated. “We can if you want. How do you want us to remove our shirts?”

_I hated it when the Dark Sides made me take off my own clothes like I wanted to._ “Can we take them off each other? I-” A sudden burst of anxiety made him hide his face in Patton’s shoulder, a lump in his throat starting to form.

Patton quickly started rubbing Virgil’s back. “Shhhhhhh baby, it’s okay. We don’t have to, it’s okay.”

Virgil took a few calming breaths, focusing on the scent of vanilla and the loving arms around him. He removed his face from Patton’s shoulder and looked up at him. “I’m okay, I just got nervous for a second.” He sent a small smile. “I still want to. I really do.”

“If you’re sure. We can go back to cuddling if you want,” Patton assured, searching Virgil’s eyes.

“I’m sure. Is… Can we take each other’s shirts off? I don’t… I’d like it that way.”

Patton nodded, knowing they were dancing around some very delicate wounds for Virgil. “You or me first?”

Virgil responded by slowly trailing his hands down, making sure to have his fingertips graze
Patton’s nipples. Patton’s little gasp had his cock twitching and gave him enough confidence to pinch the hem between his fingers. He raised his eyes to Patton’s, slowly lifting the shirt at his nod and smile. He bit his lower lip again, a combination of excitement and nervousness making his heart pound. As every inch of skin was revealed to Virgil, his breathing got heavier, and soon he was nearly panting. When he got to Patton’s armpits, Patton raised his arms and Virgil quickly tugged the shirt off and threw it to the side.

Virgil stared in awe at his boyfriend’s body. The occasional freckle dotted soft curves, the skin reminding Virgil of sugar cookies.

Better have a taste.

Keeping eye contact with Patton, Virgil lowered his head and kissed Patton’s chest. The little squeak Patton let out reassured Virgil, and he focused his attention on kissing, licking, and sucking on Patton’s soft skin. Vanilla was filling his sinuses, the heady scent keeping him grounded and narrowing his focus to Patton. Gasps and moans from above let Virgil know he was doing a good job, and the entire experience was making him painfully hard.

Taking a risk, he kissed one of Patton’s nipples and licked it. The pleased cry had him graze his teeth lightly on the nub before placing a few little sucks on it. He repeated the same process on the other side, rubbing his thumb over the wet, stiffened peak. Patton’s pleasure was consuming him, so he surged up to kiss Patton, who met him eagerly. The kiss was a little sloppier than Patton’s typical kisses, and Virgil felt a small surge of pride. Patton’s hands were touching Virgil all over, and despite the clear desperation Virgil noticed Patton was keeping his hands above Virgil’s waistband.

Virgil regretfully broke the kiss. “You can touch me lower if you want, just not on front.”

Patton nearly whimpered as he kissed Virgil again, lightly tracing over Virgil’s ass before settling on his thighs, squeezing and rubbing. The touching had Virgil whimpering in need, his skin on fire.

Patton pulled back enough to kiss Virgil’s forehead. “What do you need baby?”

Virgil took a few moments to clump his scattered brain cells together into something usable. “Can you take my shirt off?”

Patton smiled at him and kissed him lightly. “Absolutely honey. Let me know if you get uncomfortable, okay?”

Virgil nodded quickly, wanting to get back on track. Patton took the bottom of Virgil’s long-sleeved t-shirt in his hands and waited until Virgil nodded again. He started pulling the fabric until Virgil placed a hand on his.

“Sorry, I just… the scars. There’s- they faded? And there’s not as many anym-more?” Virgil stammered.

Patton tilted his head slightly. “That’s okay baby. No matter how many scars you do or don’t have, I can’t imagine a world where I’m not attracted to you.”

Virgil chewed on his lip, and Patton rubbed his forearm.

Virgil didn’t look Patton in the eyes. “It still happened,” he whispered. “I’m not making it or how bad it was up.”

“I know sweetie. I know. It’s okay. Even if you didn’t have any scars, that doesn’t say how bad it
was. I know you’re not lying.”

Virgil smiled and kissed Patton, the kiss as sweet as sugar but passionate.

“I love you,” Virgil whispered against swollen lips.

“I love you too baby,” Patton whispered back.

They stared into each other’s eyes before Virgil smiled and took one of Patton’s hands in his own. He slowly brought it downwards and pressed it against the bottom of his shirt. Patton took the cotton in hand and started drawing it up, moving a little faster than Virgil and keeping his eyes on his inexperienced lover. Virgil raised his arms over his head like Patton, but since the shirt was long-sleeved, it got stuck. Virgil lowered his hands while they both giggled and Patton worked the sleeves off Virgil’s arms. Patton set it gently to the side and caressed Virgil’s face, kissing him tenderly.

They were both on their sides, so when Patton wrapped his arms around Virgil again it made their bare chests touch. Virgil let out a series of surprised moans and whimpers at the sensation, and when Patton tried to pull back to ask if he was okay, Virgil pressed forward with a whimper, begging for more contact.

Patton happily obliged.

He kept his hands tracing lines up and down Virgil’s back, slowly moving lower as the minutes passed. His heart shattered at the scars he felt, but he focused on making sure Virgil felt good and safe and unjudged. Virgil was letting out all kinds of needy, high-pitched sounds, which Patton returned. Patton traced a hand around to Virgil’s stomach, then up across his chest and to his shoulder. At Virgil’s wordless encouragement, Patton used his fingers to tease a nipple. Virgil gasped into the kiss, allowing Patton to press little kisses all over Virgil’s face.

“Doing so well for me baby, so good. You’re so beautiful. You make the cutest sounds.” When Virgil whined and blushed at the compliments, Patton tweaked the reddened nipple. “So proud of you, you’re doing so good.”

Patton switched which nipple his hand was working on and wrapped his lips around the already-hard peak. He sucked and flicked his tongue, drawing cries from the man. A gentle and clearly restrained hand rested at the back of his head, petting the hair there. Patton grazed his teeth over the areola and revelled in the keen he heard. He kissed the nipple lovingly before he switched.

With every touch to his bare skin, and especially to his nipples, Virgil felt like lightning struck and was going directly from his nipples to his groin. The intense sensations were making his head spin in an incredible way, and he didn’t know when it would slow down.

Patton wasn’t sure how long they stayed like that, him exploring the rest of Virgil’s bare torso with his hands and mouth, but when he heard a thinner whimper he quickly pulled back.

“Sweetheart?”

Virgil was panting, eyes wide open and unseeing for several long moments before they refocused on Patton.

Virgil smiled dopyly. “Hey Pat,” he drawled.

“Yeah, I’m feeling good. It feels really good Pat.”

“I’m so glad!! Were you feeling overwhelmed honey?”

“Yeah, right when you stopped it got… a lot.”

“That’s okay baby! Do you want to cuddle?”

Virgil just wrapped his arms around Patton and nuzzled his shoulder. Patton snapped to get them both back into shirts, wrapped his arms around Virgil, and kissed his head.

“Good night Virgil. I love you.”

“Night. Love you too Pat.”

Chapter End Notes

*inhales deeply*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JASPER!!!
Hey folks!! A few warnings: In the beginning of the chapter, there's a bit of steaminess. Once dinner starts, it becomes consensual sexytimes. There are negative thoughts, anxiety, flashbacks (primarily tactile flashbacks), and references to pain during sexual assault. Stay safe folks!!

Virgil woke slowly, unconsciously rumbling as a hand ran through his hair and an arm held him securely to a soft, warm chest. He stirred when a quiet giggle reached his ears. Virgil smiled and nuzzled the chest beneath him.

“You’re so cute,” Patton cooed.

Virgil craned his neck up to hiss more directly at Patton, but the hiss died in his throat. Patton’s light brown eyes were filled with adoration and love. A light blush made his faint freckles just that much darker, and the golden light from the morning sun made him glow.

Just like an angel.

He leaned up and pecked the corner of Patton’s lips, not wanting to inflict his morning breath on his boyfriend. Patton giggled and kissed Virgil’s forehead. Virgil scrunched up his face in mock annoyance. When he opened his eyes again, Patton’s ethereal face took his breath away.

“I love you,” he breathed.

Patton’s eyes became slightly glossy. “I love you too baby.”

Virgil smiled softly and resituated himself on Patton’s chest, curling up and sighing happily. They laid there for a while, Virgil occasionally shifting and Patton pressing little kisses into Virgil’s hair. For a moment, the entire world was warm and soft and safe and filled with love. Virgil breathed in the scent of vanilla and home, and Patton lazily rubbed Virgil’s arm. Eventually, Patton’s alarm went off and began playing *The Rainforest Rap*.

Patton squeezed Virgil. “I think it’s time to get up, sweetie.”

Virgil groaned in protest.

“Come on cutie pie, it’s time to get ready for breakfast! We’re having Poptarts today!” Patton gasped. “*Poptarts for my little Poptart.*”

Virgil snorted. “You’re such a dork. I love you.”

“I love you too! Time to get up!”

Virgil hissed weakly but sat up and stretched. Patton trailed a hand down to Virgil’s lower back and kissed his cheekbone.
“I’ll see you downstairs!”

Virgil smiled and gave his two-finger salute as he sank out. He quickly showered and got ready for the day before he made his way into the kitchen. There was a pile of assorted cold Poptarts, and Patton was working on toasting others. Roman was rubbing Patton’s lower back and intermittently grabbing his ass. Patton would jump and squeak, then giggle. Virgil looked to Logan and saw amusement on his face.

God he’s so sexy.

Virgil walked over and wrapped his arms around Logan’s neck. Logan looked surprised, but was smiling. Virgil wasted no time in kissing him, licking his way into Logan’s mouth and tasting the faint peppermint there. Logan was resting his hands chastely on Virgil’s hips, but that was the only chaste thing about him. Virgil’s knees nearly buckled at what Logan’s tongue and hands were doing. Goddamn, my nerd has some fucking moves.

Virgil jumped when Roman cleared his throat behind him. “Breakfast is ready.”

Virgil narrowed his eyes at the little smirk on Roman’s face. He walked up to Roman and poked his chest. “What, you jealous?”

Roman’s smirk just grew. “Perhaps a little.”

Virgil stepped into Roman’s personal space, grabbed him by his hair, and pulled him into a bruising kiss. He nipped Roman’s lower lip and pressed against the larger man, asserting control. Roman whimpered into the kiss, one hand resting on the back of Virgil’s neck and the other just above his waistband on his back. Virgil did his best to keep his movements unpredictable, encouraged by the helpless sounds his prince was making. He loosened the grip he had in Roman’s hair and pulled back, looking Roman in the eyes.

“Better?”

Roman’s eyes were slightly glassy and he had a wide, carefree smile on his face. “Yes, my love,” he replied huskily.

Virgil blushed. “Um, well good.”

Roman let his fingers trail along Virgil’s lower back as Virgil walked to his chair, which he wasn’t going to complain about.

Breakfast passed smoothly, conversation light, then formal as Logan went over the schedule for the day. Despite Thomas having a lot of work to do, it was mostly unstructured so there was some freedom to the day. As the four of them helped clean up their dishes and went back to their rooms, Virgil appraised their forms.

God, I love them so much. Virgil felt his eyes sting as Roman turned back to smile at him. I would do anything for them.

Virgil grabbed Shelly off his desk and flopped onto his bed, closing his eyes to focus on Thomas. As he worked throughout the day, he soaked up the time he got to spend with his boyfriends. Every second, he watched them as much as he could without being creepy, and he made sure to kiss them as often as possible. He was proud of himself for wearing only his t-shirt the entire day and not flinching when Patton accidentally brushed his lower back.

Virgil was watching the bordelaise sauce and the carrots that were being braised in lime juice,
tarragon, and honey while Patton finished searing off some t-bone steaks. Virgil’s mouth was
watering at the different smells, lime juice one second and potatoes baking in the oven the next.
Patton set the steaks on a cutting board to rest just as the oven went off for the potatoes. He quickly
got them out and put the blue cheese compound butter on the countertop to soften. Virgil helped set
the table and poured glasses of Kentucky traminette wine while Patton took over finishing the
sauce and carrots. Virgil was almost successful in sneaking a mushroom.

“GREETINGS, MY LOVES!!!”

Virgil grinned at Roman’s bombastic entrance. “Hey Ro. Excited for steak?”

“How on earth could you tell?!”

“No idea.”

With Virgil busy fixing the rest of the table, Roman pulled Logan into a kiss the moment the dark-
haired man stepped into the kitchen. Virgil laughed to himself at their antics while Patton busied
himself with plating the food.

“Dinner’s ready!”

Roman flew away from Logan and into his seat, Logan stumbling a bit. Logan huffed and
pretended to be put out, though the quiet smile on his face as he looked at Roman out of the corner
of his eyes told another story.

Virgil relaxed, laughing along with the conversation. He kept himself at one glass of wine, wanting
to stay sober.

I love them so much. I want to make them as happy as they make me. Virgil felt his heart swell with
love at the sound of Logan’s free laughter. They deserve it. God, they deserve it.

After dinner, Patton brought out orange slices that he had candied. The sharp citrus flavor cut
through the heavy food they had been eating and refreshed them. Virgil shamelessly checked out
Patton.

I’m more in the mood for vanilla.

Virgil took Patton’s hand in his and maintained eye contact while slowly pressing open-mouthed
kisses to his knuckles. Patton’s face was turning redder and his eyes were turning darker.

Much better.

Patton was breathing heavily and staring right back at Virgil, Logan and Roman silently watching
them. Virgil stood up so he was over Patton.

“Can I kiss you?”

Patton nodded quickly. Virgil smirked and laid a hand against Patton’s neck, kissing him sweetly
but quickly deepening the kiss. When he felt Patton push a hand against his chest, Virgil pulled
back immediately.

Before Virgil could ask what was wrong, Patton asked, “How much wine did you drink tonight
baby?”

Virgil smiled at him. “Just one glass. I wanted to stay sober.” He bit his lip, suddenly shy. “Want
to go upstairs?"

Patton smiled brightly. “Sure!”

Virgil turned to Logan and Roman, who had been watching with widened eyes. “You guys too?”

“If you’ll have us,” Roman said lowly, eyes going between Patton and Virgil.

Virgil smiled timidly. “Yeah.”

Patton stood then, pressed against Virgil with a hand on his waist. “What would you like to do baby?”

Virgil hooked his arms behind Patton’s neck. “I want to try having sex again.”

Patton’s eyebrows twitched. Before he could ask, Virgil interrupted him. “Yes I’m sure, and I think I’ll be okay since we, uh, talked about the thing that set me off last time.”

Patton wrapped his hands around Virgil’s lower back loosely and kissed him gently. Virgil didn’t try to push the slow pace, knowing Patton needed the reassurance as much as he did.

After a few minutes of soft kisses, Patton pulled back and kissed the tip of Virgil’s nose. Virgil huffed out a laugh. He opened his eyes to Patton’s beautiful face.

“God I love you,” Virgil breathed unconsciously. Patton’s eyes filled with tears.

“I love you too baby.”

Patton led them away from the table. “Where do you want to go honey? It’s up to you.”

Virgil tilted his head. “You guys don’t have a preference?”

Logan walked next to Virgil and started gently scritching the back of his neck. He smiled when Virgil closed his eyes and arched his neck into the touch.

“We will be quite content wherever you feel comfortable, my dear. There’s really not a situation where we will be dissatisfied.”

Virgil blushed fiercely, Logan kissing his temple. Virgil turned his head to kiss Logan properly. Logan had no qualms about taking command of the kiss, turning Virgil into a pile of mush within a matter of seconds. When they parted, Patton decided it was his turn with Logan, two sets of glasses clicking together.

Virgil heard a whine come from their prince. He walked through two of his boyfriends to grab Roman’s sash and pull him into a kiss. Roman made a surprised sound into Virgil’s mouth but recovered quickly, resting his hands on Virgil’s waist and returning the kiss. Virgil was quickly intoxicated by roses and cinnamon, swept away by the passion of their connection. Roman’s tongue was far more coordinated than his own, and he whimpered as shockwaves were sent throughout his body. Roman pulled back, chuckling when Virgil tried follow him with a mewl.

“Shhhhh kitten, we have all the time in the world. I promise, I’ll take my time bringing you pleasure,” Roman rumbled as he stroked Virgil’s face with the backs of his fingers. Virgil closed his eyes and nuzzled Roman’s hand.

“Such a sweet kitten.”
He laughed when Virgil opened his eyes to glare half-heartedly at him.  

“I’m sorry love, you’re just too adorable.”

Roman kissed the wrinkle between his eyebrows when Virgil hissed at him, then kissed him properly on the lips when Virgil tilted his head up.

“You never answered our question, little cloud.”

“Huh? Uh, what thing? What question?”

Roman preened. “Where would you like to try, sweet crow?”

Virgil blinked a few times. “Your room? I think your bed is the only one big enough for all of us.”

“Alright, my love. Shall we?”

Virgil responded by kissing Roman again. He broke the kiss, smiling sweetly with a blush covering his face, and gently pulled Roman by the hand out of the kitchen, making eye contact with the two Sides behind them.

Virgil had to let go of Roman’s hand when they got to the stairs, and Logan took the opportunity at the top of the stairs to kiss Virgil again. Roman felt his heart swell when the two serious Sides broke apart and smiled softly at each other. Through a series of smiles, kisses, and a few giggles, the four Sides made it to Roman’s bed. They let Virgil set the pace, knowing there were still wounds that were healing. At the moment, Roman and Logan had their hands on each other and were watching their boyfriends while Patton made sure Virgil knew he was loved.

Despite being half-hard in the kitchen, Virgil had felt anxiety ratchet up as soon as they began ascending the stairs. *I feel good, I’m safe, they feel good. They’re not going to hurt me, I’m safe, it’s okay. They’ll stop if they know they’re hurting me.*

**But what if they don’t stop?**

*I won’t let them know, I can’t keep hurting them. They deserve this. I’d do anything for them.*

After a few more moments of making out with Patton, Virgil steeled his nerves. *Time to get this show on the road.*

Virgil sat on the edge of the bed behind him and tugged lightly on Patton’s hand. Instead of straddling him like Virgil was expecting, Patton sat next to him with a hand on his waist, searching his face carefully.

“Feeling good?”

Virgil smiled bashfully, the blush returning, as he kicked off his shoes and toed off his socks. Patton started rubbing his side, trying to help keep him grounded. Virgil grabbed the hem of his shirt and curled in a little on himself, all three boyfriends noticing.

“Sweetheart?”

“S-sorry, I- can we sit here for a little bit and kiss? I think I need to go kinda slow I guess and I gotta stop trying to go faster.”

“Of course honey. We’ll only go as fast as you want, I promise. And tell us if you need to stop,
okay?”

Virgil leaned in and kissed Patton slowly. “I will,” he murmured against vanilla-tinged lips. Patton wrapped his arms around Virgil’s shoulders and pulled him into another sweet kiss. Virgil jumped a little when he felt movement on the bed behind him, then jumped again when lips, teeth, and tongue started caressing his neck. He moaned wantonly into Patton’s mouth, his thoughts and fears fizzling out at the attention. Roman was pulling out all the stops to ensure Virgil felt good, making sure to be gentle and stick to just grazing his teeth over delicate skin. Logan was massaging the back of Roman's thigh while watching them, which Roman found to be rather distracting.

Virgil was moaning and whimpering at the combined sensations, helpless to the onslaught. He was trying to simultaneously press into Patton while pushing his neck against Roman. Fire was licking down his nerves from where Roman was kissing and licking and nibbling at his neck, and goosebumps were erupting from his skin where Patton was touching him. The intimacy of the kiss was enough for Virgil to be lost in time, whining when Roman and Patton pulled back. Before they could ask about going more slowly or stopping, Virgil grabbed the bottom of his shirt, and with a final breath, tugged it off over his head. He panted, still recovering from the onslaught of just a moment ago, and his three boyfriends were silent.

He turned to look at them nervously, only to see wide, dark eyes wandering over his body.

He swallowed. God, they think I’m hideous, they think I’m making it all up. “Like- like what you see?” he asked timidly.

When three sets of intense eyes turned on him, he couldn’t help but flinch a little.

“Absolutely.”

“Very much so.”

“You’re so beautiful, baby.”

Virgil’s face burned red. Time to get this going, I’ve made them wait long enough. He started scooting up the bed backwards pulling Patton with him. When he got to the top, he laid down and took the hem of Patton’s shirt in between his fingertips, eyes silently questioning. Patton nodded and smiled while Roman and Logan settled in next to them, slowly working each other’s clothes off. Virgil tried pulling Patton’s shirt off, but with Patton over him it was a little difficult. Patton just giggled and took his own shirt off.

“Can I touch you honey?” Patton asked quietly.

Virgil realized none of his boyfriends had touched him since he’d taken his shirt off. His eyes pricked with tears at the thoughtfulness.

“Yeah Pat. Can… can I…”

Patton knew what he was asking. “Go ahead baby.”

Virgil ran his hands over Patton’s shoulders, down his arms, and back up again, the feeling somewhat familiar but still new. Patton leaned down and kissed him gently, one hand cupping his cheek and the other resting on his collarbone before slowly trailing down. After a few minutes, the hand began roaming all over his upper body, teasing his nipples, brushing over his forearm, squeezing his shoulder. The touches felt good, so good, but Virgil’s mind could only focus on how many men were in the room and how he had to have sex with them
When Patton pulled back to start kissing his neck, Virgil interjected, “You can go lower.” As Patton raised his head and opened his mouth, Virgil said teasingly, “Yes I’m sure.”

Patton smiled at him and kissed him tenderly. He went back to Virgil’s neck, slowly moving down to nibble and suck at his collarbone, and oh my god that feels so good. Virgil’s hips gave a little thrust up, and he felt a smile against his shoulder. Patton slowly worked his way down to a nipple, right as his hand reached Virgil’s waistband. He kissed around the nipple as he brushed over Virgil’s thigh. He started massaging it when Virgil pressed into his hand and he laved attention on a rosy nipple. Roman was watching them with rapt attention, Logan attempting to continue bruising Roman’s neck while getting his uniform off.

Despite the loving way Patton touched him that sent heat to his groin, Virgil’s chest was tightening with anxiety. Whispers of pain sparked around his body, his memories fighting him as he fought to pretend that sex could be anything but pain. I love them, they deserve this, I can’t keep hurting them. I’ll be good for them. I can be quiet.

Virgil bit back whimpers of terror, carefully tilting his head towards Patton so Logan and Roman couldn’t see his face. I have to do this, I want to be good for them, they deserve it. His body reminded him of the pain that always came with sex. He clenched his jaw as tears escaped down the sides of his temples. I can do this, I can do this, I can be good. I’ll be good for them. I have to tell Patton can touch me on... more. If I’m good enough, maybe they’ll still love me after this. A soft whimper escaped at that thought as his chest clenched with anguish.

The three Light Sides, despite being caught up in each other, heard the barely-audible whimper and stopped. Patton looked up at Virgil’s face and his heart stopped.

“Sweetheart?” When Virgil didn’t respond, he started moving off him. “It’s okay baby, we’ll stop, you’re safe...”

Virgil shook his head as more tears flowed down his temples. “It’s okay, I’ll hold still, I’ll be good. I promise I’ll be good, please don’t-”

Patton leapt off him, a shaking hand covering his mouth. He knocked into Roman and Logan a bit, who were just as pale as Patton.

They hate me, they think I’m disgusting, they hate me, they’re going to leave me because I can’t be good for them. I fucked it up, I fucked it all up, and now I’m going to pay for it. Virgil curled on his side away from his boyfriends, buried his face in his hands, and began weeping. I’m going to lose them. No, I’ve already lost them. This is it, I’m going back to the Dark Side, I’ll be alone, I’ll never see them or touch them or hear their voices ever again. He felt his chest tearing in two. I’ll never hear them say they love me ever again.

“S-sweetheart, talk to me baby, please. I l-love you,” Patton stopped at the harsh sob that ripped through Virgil’s entire body. “Honey, please. What do you n-need? How can we help?”

It took Virgil a few moments to compose himself enough to speak. “Y-y-you d-don’t have t-t-to.”

Patton frowned and bit his lip in thought. “Is it okay if Roman gets clothes on you?”

Virgil cried but nodded. They can’t stand to see my hideous body anymore. I can’t blame them. They’re not getting anything out of it. He whined when he felt his hoodie in addition to his t-shirt on him. They want to see as little of me as possible. I’m so gross, I’m revolting, they don’t love me anymore. Virgil felt his mind breaking.
“Baby, baby no, please, it’s okay, you’re safe, we won’t h-hurt you,” Patton begged.

“Dark knight, we wouldn’t raise a finger to you.” Roman squeezed a silent, tearful Logan. He knew all their hearts ached at hearing the sobs pouring from their beloved.

Patton crawled a bit closer to Virgil. “Sweetie? Do you want a hug?”

Virgil froze in his cries, breath hiccuping. “Y-you w-w-want to? Y-you don’t h-have to, I kn-know-” he broke off into sobs again.

“I do want to hold you, I swear I do. I love you so much, and I like hugging you, and especially if it makes you feel better I want to do it even more!”

Virgil slowly turned towards them, and their hearts shattered at the smudged makeup. “Y-y-you promise? I d-d-don’t w-want to f-force you…”

“You’re not forcing me at all,” Patton said firmly, fiery eyes leaving no room for argument.

“B-but I’m gross… a-a-and I keep h-hurting you b-by stopping…”

Patton tilted his head. “By stopping? Baby, it doesn’t hurt us when you stop.”

Virgil looked down, chest hitching more strongly. He looked up at Patton shyly and nodded. Patton gingerly gathered Virgil into his arms, giving Virgil plenty of space to tell him to stop or say no.

Once he held his sweet, hurt boyfriend against his chest, he asked quietly. “How’s this?”

Virgil grabbed a piece of Patton’s shirt, not wanting to ever let go, and buried his face in it, beginning to bawl again.

“Oh baby, it’s okay! We can stop!”

Virgil shook his head and pressed into Patton. Patton realized the cries he was hearing were different. He focused, and picked up on two emotions: relief, catharsis. “Oh sweetheart… We’re not going to break up with you. We love you so much. We’ll never stop loving you. We don’t care if you never have sex with us. That would never make up want to break up with you.” By the increase in volume of sobs, Patton knew he was on the right track. He looked at Roman and Logan to encourage them, and they began murmuring their own words of comfort. After a half hour, Virgil’s cries pattered out, and he slipped into sleep. Roman summoned a warm washcloth and handed it to Patton, who gently cleaned off Virgil’s face. It took them all an hour to fall asleep, pained by what Virgil had just gone through. Patton fell asleep after each of his boyfriends, watching Virgil’s shoulders slowly move up and down as Patton tried to hold him together, hold him tight enough so he’d never feel ever again that they didn’t love him.

“I love you, Virgil. That will never change,” Patton whispered into soft, lavender-scented hair before he too succumbed to sleep.

Chapter End Notes
link, and it'll send you to the video on Vimeo! https://vimeo.com/381462862
Virgil awoke slowly, first noticing how much his throat, chest, and face hurt. He felt tears fill his eyes once more at the memory of the previous night.

* I made them stop, I hurt them. He looked over the exhausted figures of the Light Sides. Why are they still so nice to me? They’re only still dating me because they’re being nice and they might still be able to get something out of me. * He carefully untangled himself from Patton, freezing when the moral trait snuffled and snored, only relaxing after Patton had settled for a few minutes. I hurt them again, I made them hurt. I’m no better than the Dark Sides. * He thought back to every time he’d had to make them stop touching him or kissing him, every time he’d made them upset, every time he’d made them cry.

Virgil moved off the bed slowly, not wanting to wake any of the Sides, silent tears running down his face, nausea swirling in his stomach. He saw the clock read 11 A.M. I don’t belong here. I never belonged here. Thomas, I’m so sorry.

As soon as Virgil was off the bed, he prepared to sink out.

* Stop stalling, come on, you know where you belong. You’ve never belonged here, with them. Stop being a selfish fucking coward and do what you need to already.

Virgil bit his lip so hard it bled, closed his eyes, and sank out of Roman’s room, chest hitching in fear.

When he felt himself appear in a familiar but dusty living room, he opened his eyes.

* Just like last time. Except dustier.

Virgil scanned the Dark Side living room, finding it empty. The only sign of life were the footprints he and the Light Sides had left months ago, and even those were covered in a thin layer of dust. His eyes inevitably landed on the filthy mattress with chains, and memories flooded back to him. Listening to idle chatter and an old TV as he was hurt, the many “business” meetings, the days and weeks of being chained to the mattress with barely a reprieve, the pain, the disgust, the horror, the dissociation...

Virgil came to on his knees before the mattress, vomit covering his thighs.
Goddammit.

He shakily snapped as much as he could off himself, though his pants were still damp and had a disgusting odor wafting off them.

If I’m going to be staying here from now on, more tears joined the tracks on his face, I’m going to have to get over this. He reached out to touch the mattress, but his hand involuntarily jerked back, like a primal reflex. He brought his fists down onto his thighs in frustration, grimacing at the stickiness.

Okay, so this might take a while. Virgil was determined to push through and get over it. So start with something else. He winced at his hands. Maybe the kitchen. At least there’s a sink in there.

He walked towards the kitchen and immediately started crying. I miss them! God, I miss them so much!! I want my boyfriends back! I want my dads!! I don’t want to be here!! I miss them already, and I’m going to miss them so much more!! I’m never going to see them again!! He cried into his hands, trying to muffle the sound somewhat.

Why bother? No one’s going to hear your voice ever again.

Virgil had to lean against a wall for support. He wasn’t sure how long he stayed there, crying uncontrollably.

I have to keep going. I’ve got to keep moving. Thomas is going to need me today. I need to get my shit together before he wakes up.

Virgil sniffled miserably, biting down on a knuckle to control himself a little better. He froze when he saw the shackles. He’d been beaten within an inch of his life when he’d outgrown them and the Dark Sides had to replace them. Virgil fought to keep moving his legs forward, even with a flashback in full swing.

Sink, need the sink, need the sink, I puked, need the sink.

He tripped over himself as soon as he reached the sink. When he felt cold metal on his bare skin, he was thrown into another flashback.

Virgil had a cloth over his face and was restrained on the adjustable chair in the Room, reclined so his feet were slightly above his head. He wasn’t entirely clear on what he’d done to earn a punishment and was wracking his brain for anything that he could have done to deserve it.

‘I thought I’ve been good!!’

Virgil jumped in his restraints when a gloved hand brushed across his cheek. At the movement, he was slapped.

“Tsk tsk Virgil, you’re already in trouble and you still choose to misbehave? Don’t worry, I’ll just add it to your tab. And to think, we were going to give you a break since it’s your 10th birthday! That’s a big accomplishment! It’s your fault you ruined this!!” Virgil heard Deceit take a deep breath. “Goodness, you are quite skilled at getting people angry with you. I’ll get things back on track. Do you know what you did to deserve this today?”

Virgil started trembling. ‘I can’t lie, but I don’t know what I did, and I can’t not answer!’ “U-um, I d-didn’t get you s-s-sirs off fast enough?”
He heard Deceit gasp behind him. “You think we’d be punishing you over something so petty?” Virgil heard the hurt in his voice. “That deserves its own.”

Virgil was wondering what that could mean until water started getting poured over his face. He thrashed and gasped and choked for what seemed like an eternity.

‘I’m drowning! I’m drowning! Help, someone help me, please!! They’re drowning me!! Help, dads help!! Help me, please, dads!! Dads, where are you?! I want my dads!! They’ll save me!!’

After an indeterminate amount of time, the water stopped pouring over his face and the cloth was removed. Virgil gasped desperately between his coughs, trying with every last survival instinct to get oxygen into his system.

“Now that you can talk and have had time to think, do tell us exactly what you did to deserve your punishment and we’ll only punish you for moving when you’re supposed to be still.”

Virgil’s oxygen-deprived brain was too busy trying to get water out of his lungs to even process what Deceit was saying.

“Pity. You’ll be punished not only for each time you’ve moved, but for each time you don’t answer or answer incorrectly. Do you agree to these very fair terms?”

Virgil understood what Deceit was saying, but couldn’t remember how to speak fast enough before Deceit spoke again.

Deceit sighed. “Oh well. I suppose we’ll have to continue on with this. If this doesn’t work, we’ll need to move to other punishments. We are keeping score, Virgil. And don’t worry, we’ll be entirely fair.”

An hour later, Virgil was almost too weak to cough. He was unchained from the table and rolled onto his side to help with getting water out of his lungs. Once he seemed to be mostly done coughing, the hands left him and he limply fell back onto the table.

The Dark Sides were standing over him and glaring. Deceit looked disappointed.

“You only lasted an hour before you gave up? Pathetic. Useless.” He chuckled. “Well, not entirely useless. What do you think, are you eager to get the rest of your punishment out of the way? You did rack up quite a number.”

Virgil could only let out a soft whimper in response between coughs.

“Sounds like he wants it bad then! Rage, why don’t you do the honors?”

“Fuck yeah.”

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Virgil shot up off the floor he’d been laying on. He coughed uncontrollably, still feeling like he was drowning. He forced himself to try to breathe through the coughing, mindful of how raw his throat already was.

Okay, kitchen is a no. Bathrooms in one of their rooms? Virgil dry heaved at the thought of going into one of their rooms. I’ll need a place to sleep, and the living room is not an option.

Virgil slowly climbed the stairs and bypassed Greed, Apathy, Jealousy, Rage, and Malice’s rooms,
flinching as he walked by the open doors and saw parts of the various rooms. He limped a few times as his body recalled what had occurred, feet twinging and other areas of his body screaming in pain.

He hesitated outside of Deceit’s room. *I don’t want to go, I don’t want to…*

*Get OVER yourself. This is the room that’s going to be the cleanest and not have as much stuff in it.*

*I don’t want to!*

*Tough shit. Go, stop being disgusting, clean yourself up and pretend to have a shred of dignity.*

Virgil sobbed and pushed the slightly-ajar door open. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t make himself cross the threshold.

*I can’t do it. God, I’m so weak!*

He collapsed at the end of the hallway, back against the wall and sobbing.

*Oh god, I want to be back in the Light Side! I miss the Light Sides so much!! And my dads, I need my dads, dads, help, please!!!* If he focused, he could feel phantom arms wrapping around him in a loving hug before they were replaced by a tactile flashback. He stayed curled up there for several more hours, crying for the lost love he’d previously had and knew he’d never get again.

He unconsciously sank out and reappeared in another area of the Mindscape. He was confused when he had to squint due to the bright light.

*No, no, please God no, don’t let them have me in the Room.*

“Virgil!”

Virgil flinched and curled up more tightly, risking a glance up. He paled and muffled a scream when he saw Deceit standing over him.

“No, no, it’s okay darling, I won’t hurt you!”

Virgil whimpered weakly as a larger Side loomed over him.

Saul quickly kneeled down to be less intimidating. “Shhhhhhh little one, it’s okay, it’s just me here.”

Virgil lifted his head up and looked at Saul before dissolving back into tears. *Who is it?! Deceit and Malice can transform!*

“Darling, please, tell me what’s wrong. Please tell me how I can help.” Saul’s heart shattered into a million little pieces when Virgil curled up into an even smaller ball. “Oh little one, it’s alright, I won’t hurt you.”

*Little one… Only Saul calls me that. And I don’t think they’ve heard Saul call me that.*

He cautiously looked back up, crying. “S-Saul?” he rasped.

Saul swallowed past the lump in his throat at Virgil’s fear and suffering, and identified the stench of vomit wafting off of him. “It’s me, little one. You’re safe now.” He looked Virgil over. “Goodness, you’re trembling. Do you want a hug darling?”
Virgil uncurled for a moment before recoiling and shaking his head.

Saul frowned at the behavior. “Alright sweet one, let me know. Can you tell me what happened?”

Virgil sniffled. “I w-went to the D-Dark S-Side. I thought I belonged there!”

“Oh god, Virgil…”

“A-a-and w-w-we tried to have s-sex. I guess w-we w-were having it? I th-think-”

“Who?” Saul interrupted, blood running cold and hot at the same time. If they hurt him…

Virgil flinched and cowered, and Saul felt horrible.

“I’m so sorry little one. Who were you having sex with?” he asked more gently.

Virgil’s crying started intensifying again. “The L-Light S-Sides!”

“Okay, okay. Did you not want to?”

Virgil shook his head. “I w-wanted t-to, but then I g-got scared! A-and I want to!”

“Did they stop?”

Virgil buried his face in his hands and sobbed. Saul’s stomach dropped, expecting the absolute worst.

“I d-didn’t w-want t-t-to!” Saul got ready to murder the Light Sides until Virgil continued. “B-but th-they stopped. I d-didn’t want to m-make them s-stop! It’s mean!”

Saul’s head fell forward. “Thank god,” he breathed. He took a moment to calm his racing pulse, then looked back at a still-weeping Virgil. “What would help right now? Do you want a hug now that you’ve talked?” he tried.

Virgil pushed against the ground with his feet, seemingly trying to burrow into the wall. “No! I’m gross! You can’t touch me!!”

Saul gently raised his hands in surrender. “Alright little one, I won’t touch you. Why do you think you’re gross?”

“I w-was in the Dark Si-ide!”

“Sweetheart, that does not-”

“I’m gross!”

“Okay! Would you like to take a shower? I can run your clothes through the laundry and set out new ones for you?”

Virgil nodded miserably and moved to stand. Saul slowly stood with him, prepared to catch the younger Side if he collapsed. Though shaky, Virgil seemed mostly steady on his feet. Saul walked with Virgil to the bathroom to make sure he got in safely and quietly went about setting out a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and mouthwash.

“I’ll walk in and set down your clothes quickly. Is that alright?”
Virgil nodded, worrying a bleeding spot on his lip. Saul sighed, knowing Virgil would feel better once he was clean. “I’ll be back in soon, but take your time.”

“Oh okay,” Virgil replied meekly.

Saul walked out and closed the bathroom door behind him. He walked down the hall to his and Remy’s bedroom, going to their dresser and rooting around. He settled on some grey socks with green flowers on them, purple sweatpants, a white t-shirt, and a black pullover sweatshirt.

*Remy would be so much better at choosing clothes. He’s so good with Virgil.* Saul’s eyes watered a bit with the love he felt for his partner. He shook his head, focusing on Virgil.

*He’ll need tea. I think chamomile is the calming one?*

Saul quietly went in and out of the bathroom, placing the clothes on the closed lid of the toilet. He microwaved some lavender-chamomile tea, remembering Virgil liked lavender. Just as he was heating up a few buttermilk biscuits, he heard the door to the bathroom open. A red-eyed and pale Virgil came out, hair mostly dry and dressed in the warm, comfy clothing Saul had laid out for him.

“How are you feeling darling?”

Virgil wordlessly shrugged, eyeing the chairs but not sitting down.

“Darling?”

“Am I a Dark Side?”

Saul blinked in surprise. “No, I don’t believe you are.” Only then did Saul notice Virgil’s knuckles were white where his hands gripped his arms.

“I… I feel like I am. I feel like I don’t belong here,” Virgil’s voice broke as tears built in his eyes once more. “I don’t deserve you guys. I-” Virgil sobbed. “I was going to miss you guys and the Light Sides. And-” he cried a few more times before composing himself enough to speak, “—love.”

“Oh goodness, Virgil…” Saul walked up to him. “May I?”

Virgil threw his arms around Saul’s shoulders and bawled. Saul immediately wrapped him up in a bear hug and swayed them back and forth slightly.

“Shhhhhhh, oh Virgil, it’s alright. You’ll never lose our love.” Saul let the thick sweater soak up the tears he shed. He let Virgil cry out his sorrow, knowing there would be even more the anxious man would hide the moment he had a chance. Sure enough, after 15 minutes, Virgil pulled back, trying to put on a brave face. Saul rubbed his arms, smiling encouragingly. Virgil turned and slowly sank onto a kitchen chair, cautious and wary.

Saul held back his worry for the time being and set some tea and biscuits in front of him. “Here you go. Have as much as you want, little one.”

Virgil devoured two biscuits and chugged his tea, famished and dehydrated. Saul set a small glass of milk in front of Virgil while he prepared another mug of tea.

“Darling, it’s just after 6 AM, how long have you been awake?”

Virgil frowned. “I’m not sure, maybe since 11?”

“Gods, you poor thing.”
Virgil shrugged and tucked into another biscuit, curling in his shoulders slightly.

Saul sighed, letting the subject drop for the time being. “Would you like to stay awake until Remy gets back?”

Virgil nodded quickly, eyes becoming shiny.

They eventually retired to the couch, Virgil not wanting to risk falling asleep before Remy got there. Saul had an arm around Virgil’s shoulder, holding him close. When Remy rose up, hair a bit less in place than the last time Saul had seen him, Virgil perked up and then withdrew.

“Hey babes! What’s happening?”

Saul squeezed Virgil’s shoulder and rubbed his arm.

Virgil sighed. “I thought I belonged in the Dark Side.” He sniffled, beginning to shake. “I don’t want to talk about it, I’m sorry. Saul, can you tell Remy? After we sleep maybe?”

“Of course.”

Saul, Remy, and Virgil headed back to the bedroom. They let Virgil crawl in under the covers while they got ready for bed.

“Is he okay?” Remy whispered.

Saul sighed and thought for a moment. “He’s hurting very badly. But he has many people who love him dearly.”

Remy nodded. “Do I need to murder any bitches?”

“No one new.”

Remy nodded. They finished getting ready for bed and walked out, Virgil almost completely asleep. He opened his eyes into slits to look at them.

“Hey sugar,” Remy said quietly as he crawled into bed. “Need some help sleeping?”

Virgil just curled into Remy’s chest and nuzzled him. Remy wordlessly summoned Lucas and gave him to Virgil, who grabbed it and pulled it to his chest. Saul settled in behind Virgil and kissed his head.

“Goodnight, darling.”

Virgil sighed contently, and drifted off.

Chapter End Notes

Hey folks!! I’m glad you made it!! Just to help this video be more visible, here’s the link to it again! It's the walkthrough I made on Sims 4 of the Light and Neutral Sides of the Mindscape! It's just shy of 20 minutes long! https://vimeo.com/381462862

AND! Did you notice that Virgil was rocking the aspec flag colors when he got clean and comfy and safe? Virgil's not aspec, but I wanted to give y'all a shoutout!! I myself
am grey-aro!
Once Remy assured Saul that Virgil was asleep, Saul relayed to Remy what had happened. Remy went through a wide range of emotions, all while struggling to make sure he didn’t wake Virgil up.

“My sweet baby thought he wasn’t going to see us again??!”

Saul looked down at Virgil. “Yes.” He held Virgil a little tighter.

Remy buried his face in Virgil’s hair. “Oh sugar… No wonder he was crying!”

Saul hummed.

“Saul.”

Saul looked up at his tearful partner. He wordlessly wiped away a tear that had fallen.

“It’s not your fault.”

“My sweet baby suffered so much…”

“It’s not your fault.”

“I know.” Remy kissed Virgil’s hair. “I just wish I could have done something.”

“I know darling. Me too.”

Saul took the opportunity to kiss Remy’s forehead. Saul offered a small smile when Remy looked up at him, eyes showing a spark of life.

“Can’t wake up our bean.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it.”

Remy huffed out a laugh while Saul kissed him, both men parting when Virgil shifted and snuffled in his sleep. Remy brushed Virgil’s bangs out of his face and settled back in, eyelids finally drooping. Saul turned his attention back to his sleeping brother. He was glad he couldn’t feel Virgil’s bones through a sweater anymore, but he had to wonder how the Light Sides could have caused Virgil to get so upset.

Saul consciously relaxed his muscles. I’ll deal with that tomorrow.
Just as he was falling into a much-needed sleep, he sensed someone rise up.

“Oh thank god!!” Patton breathed.

“If you wake the baby I will strangle you,” Remy grumbled without opening his eyes.

Saul and Remy both opened their eyes when Patton sniffled.

“Shit.”

“Remy. Patton?”

Patton wiped at his face with his sleeves. “I’m sorry fellas. My sweetie- Virgil, he… he wasn’t doing so hot last night, and I was so worried, and now he doesn’t feel safe w-with us?”

Saul internally cursed when Patton’s lower jaw wobbled. “That’s not what happened last night. I can’t say what he’s thinking or feeling, but I know there’s more to it. That’s his story to tell.”

Patton nodded, breathing deeply a few times while wiping away stray tears. He smiled shakily at Saul. “Thank you, really. Let him know we’re here for him? And that we’ll take care of motivating Thomas for the time being? His passive influence will be enough while he rests.”

Saul nodded. “We will.”

Patton stood there for a moment longer, watching Virgil sleep soundly with Lucas. “Thank you guys for taking care of him.”

Remy nodded at Patton wordlessly, a silent, protective exchange going on between them. With a final look at Virgil’s red, swollen face, he slowly sank out, shoulders slumped. Remy sighed, closing his eyes and frowning.

Saul frowned along with him. “What are you thinking babe?”

Remy let out a long breath through his nose. “They tried to have sex with him. He’s obviously not ready.”

“Darling…”

“No. He’s not ready. And this isn’t the first time. Why do they keep pressuring him?”

“I don’t think they are. Virgil says he initiates everything. He didn’t talk about what exactly happened this time, but odds are he tried to this time as well.”

“Yeah well, there are ways to pressure someone into having sex besides being overt about it.”

Saul sighed. “You know how Virgil thinks. And Virgil has talked about how slowly they move with him and how patient they’ve been.”

“But what if-” They froze when Virgil grunted.

Remy continued in a softer voice. “What if they tell him how patient they’ve been, how slow they’ve been going, like it’s some charity?”

“Bae, I love you, but I do believe dreaming up the worst possible scenarios is Virgil’s job.”

Remy growled in frustration. “I don’t have anything to prove they’re not manipulating him or
guilting him into sex.”

“And you have exactly the same amount of evidence that they are.”

Remy kissed Virgil’s hairline. “I’ll talk to him tomorrow morning.”

“Ask Virgil about your concerns? Novel approach for you.”

“Remind me again why I’m dating you.”

“I look good in tight shirts.”

“Fuck yeah you do.”

///// 

Virgil frowned and shifted as he woke up, slightly disoriented.

“Hey sugar.”

Virgil rumbled deep in his chest. He gripped the sleep shirt in his hand and nuzzled Remy.

“I’m here baby, it’s okay. How are you feeling?”

Virgil’s rumble turned into a hum. “Mmmmmm, I’m good. I feel good now.”

“I’m so glad to hear that sweetie. Do you feel like some food?”

Virgil groaned and pressed into Remy.

Remy snorted. “Come on coffee bean, it’s almost 1.”

Virgil shot up, eyes wide. “Shit!!”

Remy and Saul sat up with him, concerned.

“What’s wrong sugar pie?”

“Thomas!!”

Saul extended his hand before pulling it back. “It’s alright darling. Logan, Roman, and Patton have been motivating him while you’ve been resting.”

“But I need to keep him safe!!” Virgil exclaimed with wide eyes that were glazing over as he looked into Thomas’ realm.

“It’s okay darling, he’s safe.”

Remy and Saul hovered behind Virgil, until his rigid back loosened. “Fuck.”

“Language.”

“One, English. Two, you’re a hypocrite.”

“Bite me.”

“Only if you say please.”
“Bitch.”
“Jerk.”

Remy ruffled Virgil’s hair. As expected, Virgil let out an impressively vicious hiss.

They let Virgil get ready in the bathroom while they made breakfast egg muffins. Remy measured out the ingredients and Saul diced up the food, only slicing himself once. The muffins were nearly done baking by the time Virgil came out, dressed in his normal clothes.

“How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. “Fine.”

Remy frowned. “What about last night?”

Virgil curled in on himself. “I don’t wanna talk about it.”

“That’s fine honey. I… I’m sorry sweetheart, I’ve gotta ask. Are the Light Sides hurting you?”

Virgil’s head whipped up, eyes wide. “What?! No!!”

Remy was unfazed. “Are they making you feel guilty for not wanting to have sex? Do they tell you about how patient they are or how slow they’re going or-”

“NO!! The only times they talk about that is when I’m nervous about going too slow, and they say that whatever pace I want to go is fine with them!”

“How do they say it?”

“Not in a way that’s making me feel bad!”

“Okay sugar, I’m sorry. I had to ask. I need to make sure you’re safe.”

Virgil looked down panting. “Yeah. Yeah, I know.” He silently walked over to a chair and slouched in it.

Saul sat next to him, ready to rub his back.

Virgil flinched. “I don’t wanna be touched.”

“Okay darling. I won’t.”

Virgil relaxed again, Saul and Remy’s hearts breaking at what had caused it. Lunch passed normally. Before Virgil left for the Light Side, Remy and Saul each gave him a hug.

“You’ll be back down, you hear?” Remy said thickly.

“I will Rem.”

With a final squeeze, Remy let go of Virgil and smiled weakly at him. “Take care sugar.”

Virgil smiled and sent them a two-finger salute as he sank out. Remy leaned against Saul.

“I’m worried Saul.”
“I know love.”

Remy sighed and started cleaning up the kitchen.

Saul put his hands on Remy’s and kissed him. “Go to sleep. I’ll clean up here.”

Remy smiled and kissed him. “I love you.”

“I know. I love you too.”

Remy kissed Saul again, slapped his ass, and went back to their shared bedroom. Saul smiled and shook his head and cleaned up the kitchen. By the time he got back to their bedroom, Remy was already asleep. Saul just smiled and crawled in, eyes raking over the form of his passionate lover. He threw an arm over Remy and joined him in sleep.

////////

As Virgil rose up in his room, he sighed deeply. *Welp. I guess the Light Sides get to deal with me now. I’m so f*cked up.*

Virgil shook himself and went into his bathroom, fixing his hair and makeup a bit before heading towards his door. He smiled at Shelly and picked her up off his desk.

“Hey old girl,” he said, stroking her thorax. “What do you think, should I stop stalling?”

He zoned out for a few minutes, transfixed by running his fingers over Shelly’s bumpy plastic. His hand moved automatically, mind blank and vision unfocused. He jumped when someone knocked on his door.

“Honey? Are you back in your room?”

Virgil took a few deep breaths to get his heart back under control. *I totally f*eked out on them. They weren’t doing anything wrong. I f*eked out and couldn’t give them what they wanted. I hurt them. I scared them.* He set Shelly back down as he called back.

“Yeah. I… yeah.”

“Can I come in sweetie?”

Virgil responded by unlatching his door with a wave of his hand. He’d been practicing his abilities to try to get anywhere near the Light Sides’ ability level, but it was slow going.

Patton slowly opened the door, and smiled widely when he saw Virgil. “*Baby!!*”

Despite the anxiety filling his chest, Virgil cracked a smile at his sunny boyfriend. “Hey Pat.”

“Hi sweetie!! I’m so glad to see you!!”

Virgil grimaced and looked down. “Yeah, I’m sorry for leaving in the middle of the night like that, I should have left a note or something.”

*So then they can know they don’t need to worry about trapping you in the Dark Side?*  
*Shut up.*

*You’ll never feel their love again. This is just a facade.*
Virgil swallowed around the lump forming in his throat.  
“No, baby, it’s okay! We’re just glad you’re okay!”  
Virgil nodded, not looking up. He sensed Patton’s energy soften.  
“Chocolate chip…”  
Virgil’s breath hitched at that. “Can we go downstairs? Please?”  
“Of course baby.”  
Virgil shoved his hands inside his hoodie pockets and gripped the material there. He swallowed compulsively, cursing the tears that overflowed onto his face.  
*They’re going to say goodbye to me, they’re breaking up with me, I’ll never feel their love ever again…*  
Virgil curled up on the couch miserably, bringing his knees to his chest. Patton sat down next to him, hovering but not touching him.  
“Sweetie?”  
“C-can you summon the others?”  
Patton raised his hand in a gentle summon. Virgil’s breath hitched and he whimpered. He felt Patton move next to him.  
“Sweetheart, what’s wrong? Are you scared?”  
*They’re planning on fucking you before they send you back.*  
Virgil flinched and curled in tighter as Roman and Logan rose up. He sensed Roman rush over.  
*Someone’s eager to get started!*  
Roman froze as Virgil let out a particularly pitiful whimper.  
“Sweet love, what’s wrong?”  
“I don’t know, he was okay in his bedroom, but he’s gotten more scared!” Patton cried.  
*Listen to how much you’ve hurt them. You’ll never get a hug from them again. You don’t deserve hugs.*  
“I-I’m s-s-sorry.”  
As Roman and Patton jumped to apologize, Logan put up his hand to silence them. Logan’s heart shattered when a pitiful whine emanated from the shaking ball of black and purple plaid, but he knew he had to forge ahead.  
Before Logan could speak, Virgil’s weak voice came through. “I h-hurt you g-guys. You d-don’t deserve that. I l-love you s-so much!”  
“We know you do,” Logan said evenly, “Can you clarify why you believe you’ve harmed us?”
Virgil whined and clenched his body.

“It’s okay Virgil, we simply want to know why you believe you’ve harmed us.”

Virgil sucked in a breath. “I m-make you hard a-and th-then I d-d-don’t let you use m-me to f-finish.”

Logan swallowed down the stomach acid that had lept up his throat. “Virgil, darling, you are not harming us by stopping.”

“Aren’t I though?!” Virgil exclaimed. “I get you hard, and then you have to deal with my stupid, panicking mess so then it hurts!”

Logan’s eyes widened in alarm. “Are you having a flashback, moon?”

Virgil shook his head. “I make you hurt by being a fucking tease!”

“Darling-”

“I belong in the Dark Side!”

The Light Sides were stunned into silence while Virgil dissolved into tears.

“Sweetie, you don’t belong down there,” Patton said gently.

“I d-don’t w-w-want to go b-back!! It was h-horrible!!”

Patton’s tears finally broke free and ran down his face. “I know it was honey. I’m so sorry. Can I give you a hug?”

Virgil shook his head. “I h-hurt you!”

“No you didn’t baby.”

“My gorgeous raven, you’d never cause us harm by telling us to stop!”

Virgil let out a few heart-wrenching sobs, voice cracking. “But it hurts!!”

Roman opened his mouth, but Logan rested his hand on his shoulder. “What hurts, darling?”

“W-when you get h-hard a-a-and someone m-makes you k-keep it that way!”

Logan closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. “My sweet moonlight, is that another way the Dark Sides harmed you?”

Virgil just nodded and continued crying. Logan was at a loss, and judging by his boyfriends’ faces they were as well.

“A-and I kn-knew I w-was evil b-because I h-hurt you w-with sex, so I w-w-went back t-to the D-Dark Side. And I-I’ll go back, I promise!! I j-just kept throwing up a-and panicking and I th-think I accidentally w-went to the Neutral Side?”

Patton let out a choked sound before covering his mouth with his hand. Logan reached over and grabbed his other hand for support.

Roman sat on the other side of Virgil, whose breath kept hitching. “Sweet angel, you didn’t hurt
us. Goodness, you certainly haven’t sexually assaulted us!”

Virgil kept crying. Roman’s heart shattered in his chest.

“May I touch you, love?”

Virgil’s cries stopped, but he uncurled and placed his feet on the ground, shoulders hunched and head sagging.

“Go ahead,” he said, defeat evident in his voice.

Roman frowned at the tone and how his shoulders and arms kept twitching. “Angel-”

“Go ahead,” Virgil said, voice dead.

Roman reeled backwards. “No…” he whispered, horrified.

Patton ached to reach out and touch his sweet, hurting boyfriend. “Sweetheart, what do you think we’re going to do?”

Virgil’s breath hitched. “You’re gonna send me back to the Dark Side and maybe let them back in, but first don’t you want t-” Virgil’s spell broke as he sobbed. “-t-fo f-fuck m-me to s-see w-what it’s l-l-like and to g-get w-w-what you’ve w-worked for?” He whimpered. “I’m going to miss you.”

Those words broke Patton. He began to cry just as Virgil hunched forward and sobbed out, “I don’t w-want to!! I w-want m-memories of you guys t-to b-be g-g-good!!”

Patton wiped at his face and tried to get his feelings under control. “Th-they w-will be baby!! We’re n-not going to-” he cut off as sobs overtook him.

Roman looked over his boyfriends. Logan was lost, opening and closing his mouth repeatedly. Roman squeezed the back of the couch in his hand while he took a few deep breaths. My dark angel, I am so sorry we made you feel unsafe around us. That we made you feel unwanted or evil.

“My love, Virgil, we don’t want to… have sex with you right now, and we are absolutely not going to make you go back to the Dark Side.” He was confused when Virgil whined and hunched over, but he pushed forward. “We love you, and we’re not going to harm you. We are not going to leave you because you let us know that you want to stop during sex.”

Virgil began whimpering again. “But it hurts…”

Logan stepped in. “Are you referring to unresolved physical arousal?”

Virgil just nodded, cries ramping up.

“Darling, I can promise you that you are not hurting us.”

“But it hurt me w-when they d-did it, and they t-talked about h-how m-m-much it h-hurt them!”

Roman barely suppressed a growl.

Logan took a chance and scooted closer to Virgil. “In your case, your experience of unresolved physical arousal causing pain is unusual. Outside of the Dark Sides hurting you, when you began dating us for example, if you were unable to climax did it cause you pain?”

Virgil made eye contact for the first time in nearly an hour. He shook his head minutely, barely
moving it an inch.

Logan smiled softly. “Have you stopped with the intention of causing us harm?”

“No! Never!”

“I know. And if one of us needed to stop, would you feel harmed?”

“...no…”

Logan nodded. “So, then would it follow that you are not harming us?”

Virgil whined and drew into himself. “But they said it hurt them until they could get off…”

“Is it possible they were lying to manipulate you?”

Virgil chewed on his lip and nodded, new tears spilling from his eyes.

Patton sniffled and dried his face. “Can I give you a hug honey?”

Virgil nodded, free of fear. Patton wrapped his arms around his Virgil and held him as Virgil broke down once more, this time in relief. He kept asking and re-confirming that he hadn’t hurt them, hadn’t harmed them sexually. The three Light Sides spent the rest of the afternoon reassuring Virgil he’d done nothing of the sort. They started out in a cuddle pile, touching Virgil and holding him, but after a while Virgil had to beg off and change into sweatpants, sensory overload making every touch feel like coarse sandpaper. Patton eventually got some cheesy pasta and water into Virgil before he laid down on the couch, eyes closed and breathing even. Roman snapped a large mattress into existence in the middle of the room, large enough for all four men if Virgil woke up and changed his mind. They knew now how much more they needed to work through before Virgil was ready for sex, but glad things were more out in the open.

Virgil waited until everyone was asleep before he quietly sank out.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sure everything's fine. :)}
Chapter 150

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! First and foremost, we've got some warnings for this chapter. In the first section, there's a good bit of anxiety and overstimulation, as well as a near-panic attack. There's a section of italicized text between lines of tildes that contains a graphic description of sexual assault of a child, heavily implied grooming/training, and general awfulness. After that section, there are some very negative thoughts, mostly centered around fear and self-hatred.

Secondly, thank you very much for hanging in there! I've had some stuff happen lately, including new trauma so wooooooo. This fic will be updating more regularly now that some stuff has been dealt with!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As soon as Virgil appeared in his room, he ripped his clothes off, the soft cotton like sandpaper against his skin. Having the couch cushions pressing against him and hearing the sounds of the other Sides sleeping had rankled his nerves until he could barely stand it. Being able to be surrounded and comforted by his boyfriends had been nice, but he was way overstimulated and could not stand to be down there any longer. He quickly turned on the bath, wincing as the water flowing into the tub sounded like gunshots against his sensitive eardrums.

Mercifully, the tub filled up quickly, and he was able to sink into the warm, delicately-scented water. He dimmed the lights and lit a few candles above the tub, closing his eyes as he let himself relax. Bergamot wafted by him, and the movement of water around his body felt like silk moving around him. He wasn’t sure how long he stayed in the water or how it never seemed to lose its warmth, before his anxiety kicked in.

Oh god, I left them and didn’t leave a note!! Shit!! Did I fall behind on my work? Oh god, what am I forgetting to do?!

Virgil lunged out of the bath almost violently, barely remembering to drain the water before he started drying himself off.

Come on, come on, I’m behind, I’ve gotta do stuff, gotta do stuff, gotta do stuff…

When Virgil looked in the mirror, his wide-eyed expression stared back at him, poorly illuminated by candlelight. He froze, then closed his eyes and forced himself to take deep breaths.

It’s okay, it’s okay, it will be alright. Note first, then check on work. Note first, then check on work.

Virgil sat down at his desk, hair damp and clothes sticking a little to his body, and quickly scribbled out a note that he was just overstimulated and in his room. He focused, snapped, and hoped he’d successfully sent the note downstairs. He landed on his bed next and opened his laptop, clicking to the shareable Excel spreadsheet Logan made for everyone. He read over the past two weeks several times before a relieved breath escaped him, falling back on the bed and panting slightly.
No work, I’m good, I’m not behind.

Despite confirming he wasn’t behind, his anxiety keep pounding in his head, yelling at him that he was forgetting something. Even with Shelly and Lucas next to him, he stayed awake long after he’d settled into bed, staring at the ceiling as anxiety consumed him.

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“Shut up,” Deceit grunted as he thrust into Virgil.

Virgil cried and shook his head. “It hurts!!”

Deceit gave a particularly harsh thrust, watching Virgil’s face intently with a slack jaw. “It’s supposed to, you dumb whore.”

Virgil just kept shaking his head and crying, wanting it to stop, hating every second. The extraordinary pain was activating his base instincts, and wanted to get away. Deceit’s face was red and he was groaning, lost in pleasure. Virgil screamed and cried, wanting help, wanting nothing but to get out of there and run to his parents and let them hold him and rock him until the pain went away. Deceit’s thrusts stuttered as he came in Virgil, uncaring of the smaller, horrified Side below him. Virgil couldn’t resist the urge to squirm away from the source of disgust, nausea crawling up his throat and permeating his entire body.

As soon as Deceit pulled out, Virgil cried and started curling up on his side, feeling grossed out by his entire body, hating every inch of himself. Jealousy flipped him back onto his back and roughly entered him. Virgil screamed, earning a harsh slap.

“Jesus fucking Christ, how long are you going to keep, ah, doing this? You gonna get used to this soon? I’m trying to get off here. Don’t fucking ruin this, I need to get off.”

Virgil tried pushing himself away, only to have gloved hands hold his wrists down.

“Don’t worry about that,” came Entitlement’s oily voice. “They get used to it eventually. It’ll learn to be quiet. It’s only been doing this for a week now anyways!”

~~~

Virgil shot straight up and fell out of his bed. He whimpered and began shaking as he curled up on the floor, his body hurting way too much to have just fallen out of bed. He bit his lip to keep his cries in as he wrapped his arms around his knees and tears streamed down his face. Virgil knew he was shaking and that his teeth were clacking together, but he couldn’t stop. He felt the horror and disgust and pain and nausea all coming back to him.

I don’t want it, I don’t want it, it’s gross, I’m gross, I’m so gross...

Virgil cried into his knees, curled up on his floor.

Alone.

He felt small and frightened and helpless and hurt. He could feel how the Dark Sides’ actions had tainted every part of him permanently. I’ll never be clean, I’ll never not be gross. I’m always gonna be gross and alone and I don’t wanna be alone anymore!! Nobody loves me, they all hate me and think I’m gross. I want my dads! I want the Light Sides! I want Thomas!

Virgil wept. I want Morality to help my arms and knees, they hurt! And Creativity will protect me!
And Logic can talk to me real nice, and my dads can hold me! I miss them!!

Virgil slapped a hand over his mouth out of habit to muffle the sounds coming from him. I don’t want to wake everyone up!

He cried on the floor an hour before his world shifted slightly.

Wait… the Light Sides are my boyfriends. They like cuddling me right? Virgil whimpered. I want cuddles! I want them so bad!! I want someone to hold me until all the bad stuff goes away!

Virgil tried swallowing around his tears, but his mouth and throat were dry and sore.

Remy would make me iced tea when my throat hurt. I want Remy’s iced tea! I miss it! I miss him!

Virgil cried for a few more minutes before he pushed himself up slowly, still bawling, and moving to the bathroom. He avoided looking in the mirror, knowing it would be even harder to stop crying. He sipped some cool water from his sink and blotted a damp washcloth around his face, trying to cool it off. He’d been reduced to small hiccups, calming down slightly but still desperate for comfort. He tugged on his socks, confused as to why he was wearing sweatpants. He had a hard time getting his arms into his hoodie sleeves, so after a few frustrated tears he just wrapped it around himself like a shawl. He saw the ornate, beautiful cloak hanging on his wardrobe, but couldn’t for the life of him remember why Creativity had given it to him.

He shook himself and headed towards his door. A deep breath later, he managed to open it, only to slam it shut and fall to the ground with his back against the dark wood. He started hyperventilating, terrified that the Dark Sides would grab him again and hurt him and he wouldn’t be safe anymore and-

Virgil let out a wail before remembering that other people might hear him. I can’t wake them up! I don’t wanna make their sleep bad! He looked around and saw darkness and shadows in his room. Despite his light switch being a few feet away, he couldn’t move to it, terrified that if he moved the Dark Sides would take him and hurt him again.

What would the Light Sides do? They’re super brave and smart!

Virgil closed his eyes and tried to breathe deeply, having to swallow between breaths so he wouldn’t keep hyperventilating. After several minutes of breathing, he squeezed his eyes shut and jumped to turn on his light. Thankfully, he hit his mark, and the sudden bright light hurt his eyes. He squinted as he looked around the room, confirming there weren’t any Dark Sides there.

With a burst of courage, he scooted around on the ground so he could open the door, and turned the handle. His heart froze in his chest when he saw how very dark the hallway was, but he wanted good cuddles.

I’m scared. I don’t want to be alone anymore!!

He sucked in a few terrified breaths and shakily stood, squeezing the thick hoodie fabric in his hands. He looked both ways in the hallway before he stepped out, keeping his back to the wall and looking straight ahead so he could see if anyone was coming after him out of the corners of his eyes. He had to catch himself when he fell on the first step and almost lost his hoodie. He let out a terrified whimper as he looked behind him, grateful no one was there. He slowly moved down the stairs, one foot at a time, until he reached the bottom. He hesitated, staring at the three men sleeping in the living room.

I don’t wanna wake them up...
He stood at the bottom of the stairs, scared of the dark and wanting cuddles and too nervous to wake one of the Light Sides up. He whimpered as the minutes ticked by, fresh tears flowing down his face. Finally, unable to hold himself back any longer, he walked quickly across the room, not wanting to be in open space any longer than he absolutely had to. He’d noticed that the only open spot was next to Creativity, so he went to that side of the mattress.

Virgil watched Creativity for a minute before biting his lip, closing his eyes, and touching his shoulder. Creativity shifted and grunted in his sleep but didn’t wake up. Virgil let his hand and head drop as he started crying.

“Virge? My sweet!”

Virgil looked up and saw Creativity’s bleary eyes looking into his.

Creativity was taking his hand out from under the pillow. “Sweet stormcloud, what’s wrong?”

Virgil hunched in and chewed on his lip, feeling himself break the skin. “I h-had a b-bad d-dream and I w-w-was alone in m-my room.”

“Oh raven, come here.”

Virgil reacted instantly, nearly falling onto the mattress and curling up next to Creativity. The prince wrapped both arms around Virgil and held him snugly, kissing his hair.

“Shhhhhhhh love, it’s okay now. You’re safe, I swear.”

“I didn’t want it!”

“I know, little bat. I know. I’m so sorry.”

Virgil cried as quietly as he could into the hero prince’s chest, soothed by the strong, protective hold. However, he could only ignore the dark room to his back for so long.

He pulled back and looked behind him, his… boyfriend’s? arms letting him go easily.

“Love?”

Virgil hid his face in Creativity’s chest, not wanting to see the monsters in the dark that he knew were there.

“Perfect angel, can you tell me how old you are?”

Virgil made a fist in the older Side’s sleepshirt and whined.

Roman tightened his arms slightly on the distressed Side. “It’s okay sweet crow, I promise it’s okay. Do you know how old you are?”

“Um… four?”

“Okay little one. Do you like being held?”

Virgil responded by starting to cry again and pressing against him. Roman heard his two boyfriends shifting next to him.

He started petting the back of Virgil’s head. “Shhhhhhhhh Virgil, it’s okay!”
Virgil sniffled quietly. “I don’t want the monsters to get me.”

Virgil was pulled more securely against the knight. “They won’t. Not while I’m around.”

Virgil believed him, but…

“Can I face the room please?”

Roman’s heart both melted and shattered at the meek request. “Of course!”

Virgil slowly turned so his back was to Creativity. Roman didn’t move, not wanting to touch Virgil when he knew that it could send him into a flashback. Unfortunately, Virgil’s shoulders started hitching.

Roman felt his chest clench. “What’s wrong Virgil?”

Virgil sniffled. “I s-still w-want you to h-hold me…”

The prince shifted closer. “Are you certain? I don’t wish to frighten you.”

“P-please?”

Creativity wasted no time in gently wrapping his arms around Virgil. They’d never done this before, and Roman was acutely aware of how it could be traumatic for Virgil.

He let out a large breath when he felt Virgil quietly rumble.

“Is this comfortable?” Roman whispered. He got a sleepy nod in return.

Roman breathed in the scent of lavender and bergamot. “Goodnight Virgil.”

“Night Cr- Prince.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm glad you made it through! Poor Virge. Such a sweet bean, and then he got smol and scared and confused. Luckily, he's got Roman, who is a sweetheart. As soon as Ro figured out what was going on, he was immediately, "A tiny is scared and hurt, must protecc,", which is exactly what Virgil needed at that time.

This chapter is important to the overall arc of the entire story. You'll see why later. ;)
Roman woke slowly, smiling into the hair of the man he was holding. He breathed in deeply. Virgil.

He nuzzled the back of his head a few times before he remembered the previous night. He froze, only relaxing when Virgil remained asleep. He longed to pull Virgil to him, to hold him tightly and murmur soothing words into his ear until the younger Side felt safe again, but he didn’t dare wake up Virgil.

So instead he laid there, just holding the exhausted Side. Patton and Logan got up, silently walked to the kitchen, and Roman heard them start preparing to cook. After a pan got set down a little harder than intended on the stove, he felt the slender figure in his arms begin to stir. When Roman heard Virgil start sighing, he cleared his throat quietly.

“Good morning Virgil. It is I, Prince Roman.”

Virgil let out a small groan. “Morning Roman.”

Roman started gently rubbing one of the arms in his hands. “How do you feel, little storm?”

Virgil snuggled into the bed a little. “I’m feelin’ good.”

“I am so glad to hear that, sweet crow. How old do you feel?”

Virgil frowned. “Um… I’m not sure? I’m sorry.”

“It’s quite alright! I believe Logan and Patton are in the kitchen making breakfast. How does that sound?”

“Sounds good,” Virgil said quietly.

Roman’s brow furrowed at the timid voice. “Are you alright raven? Are you uncomfortable with this?” He started to pull away.

Virgil scooted backwards quickly. “No! I mean, I want to keep doing this. I feel safe when you hold me.”
Roman bit back a squeal as he held Virgil firmly. Patton walked into their line of sight and smiled widely.

“Hey sweetpea! How’re ya feelin’?”

Virgil snuggled against Roman, who smiled and squeezed him.

“I’m feeling better.”

“That’s great honey! How does juice, waffles, and bacon sound?”

“That sounds yummy. Thank you Patton.”

“No problem sweetie! I’m gonna go help Logan finish cook—”

“Wait.”

Patton jumped. “Yeah chocolate chip?”

Virgil turned his head into his pillow, hiding most of his face. “Can you stay? Please?”

Patton melted. “Of course baby. Is it okay if Roman goes to help Logan in the kitchen?”

Virgil whimpered and grabbed onto the parts of Roman’s hands and arms that he could reach. Roman responded by nuzzling the back of Virgil’s head.

“Shhhhh sweet love, it’s alright. It’s okay, I’ll stay if you want me to.”

Virgil sniffled. “B-but Logan n-needs h-help in the k-k-kitchen.”

Patton crawled into bed next to Virgil. “Logan, honey?” he called.

“Yes dear?”

“Do you think you can handle finishing breakfast?”

“I believe so.”

Patton looked at Virgil and smiled. “See? All good!” He opened his arms.

Virgil smiled shakily and nodded. Patton wrapped his arms around Virgil as best he could, and Virgil snuggled against his chest. Patton sighed and closed his eyes. The three Sides laid together in the soft warmth of each other, cuddling happily. Patton and Roman’s hearts soared at being able to help the currently-small Side feel safe and loved.

After about 10 minutes, they heard a clatter and an expletive come from the kitchen.

When Virgil bunched his hands up in Patton’s shirt, Roman brushed Virgil’s forearms. “Would you be alright if I helped Logan, small one?”

Virgil nodded hesitantly. Roman’s heart twinged, but he gently patted Virgil’s arms.

“I shall return shortly, little prince.”

Virgil nodded again, wrapping his arms around Patton and hiding his face in Patton’s chest when Roman moved away.
Patton frowned and rubbed Virgil’s back. “It’s okay sweetie, he’ll be back.”

Virgil nodded but pressed more firmly against Patton. Patton just held him, rubbing his back and trying to soothe the distressed kiddo. He sent a silent thanks to whoever was listening when Roman and Logan came in with trays of food and juice. Virgil looked up from Patton’s chest and brightened, then blushed and hid his face again. Patton breathed out a laugh and ruffled Virgil’s hair.

“Come on sweetpea, time for waffles and bacon and juice!”

Virgil slowly detached himself, following Patton closely as he sat up. Patton set up a plate for Virgil and quickly fixed his own breakfast. Roman sat next to Virgil and bumped shoulders with him, earning a giggle. Logan quietly sat next to Roman, smiling at Virgil.

Breakfast passed quickly, Virgil scarfing down his food and the other three Sides idly chatting. Virgil tilted his head at the coffee that had appeared next to Logan.

“Would you like some Virgil?”

Virgil bit his lip and looked up at Logan shyly.

Logan softened his features. “It’s alright Virgil. You may have coffee if you wish, and if you do not want coffee you are not obligated to drink it.”

Virgil chewed on his lip for a moment longer before nodding hesitantly, eyes darting up to search Logan’s. Logan just smiled softly as he handed Virgil the mug of coffee he surreptitiously cooled to a safe temperature.

Virgil sipped the coffee, gradually draining it. As he did so, the three Light Sides watched him sit up straighter and relax his shoulders.

Logan took the dishes and placed them on the coffee table. “How old are you feeling Virgil?”

Virgil shrugged, not meeting any of their eyes. “Fifteen I think?”

“Alright.” Logan nearly startled when he turned back and saw Virgil curling in on himself.

“Virgil, what-”

“I’m sorry I’m not older!” Virgil blurted out.

Logan started running a hand up and down Virgil’s back. “It’s quite alright Virgil.”

Virgil shook his head. “No! I have work to do!”

“And you’ve done a fine job when you’ve been young in the past.”

Virgil nodded without saying anything.

Logan wracked his brain. “What would make you feel better right now?”

Virgil lifted his head slightly, though not enough to look at anyone. “Work. I feel anxious about work.”

Logan squeezed Virgil’s shoulder. “Go right ahead. We’ll be here if you need anything.”
“Thank you,” Virgil squeezed out as he sank out to his bedroom.

Logan raised an eyebrow when Roman kissed his hand.

“You did splendidly, my love,” Roman said lowly.

Logan felt his face catch fire. “Ah yes, it was not a difficult problem.”

Roman slid over and put a hand on Logan’s waist. “And yet you were incredible nonetheless.” Roman pulled suddenly, bringing Logan’s body flush to his. He rested their foreheads together, staring into Logan’s dark eyes. “Truly a marvel to behold,” he growled.

Logan closed the distance and kissed Roman deeply, a strong arm winding its way around his waist, holding him right where he was. Roman took command and twisted his hand in Logan’s hair, licking into his mouth the moment Logan gasped.

They jumped when Patton cleared his throat.

He smiled at them, despite looking a little flushed. “Since Virgil might come back downstairs, what do you fellas think about taking that to your room?”

“Only if you join us,” Logan surprised himself by saying.

Patton grinned and sank out with them.

By the time lunch rolled around, Virgil had gotten back to his regular age. He kept his head ducked while his boyfriends reassured him, and blushed when they complimented him. That night they had a movie date, complete with cuddles. After the date had ended, Virgil hugged each of them, still too disturbed by his nightmare to kiss them. He tugged on sleep pants and a t-shirt, grabbed Shelly, and went to sleep.

///// 

Several days later, Patton and Virgil were cuddling on the couch after dinner. Logan and Roman were on a “date” in Logan’s room, but they’d been in there for an hour and it had been suspiciously quiet when Virgil had walked by to grab Lucas out of Roman’s room and return the spider to his own room.

Currently, he and Patton were holding and nuzzling each other, and not really watching *Spongebob Squarepants* all that closely. Virgil was more than a little aroused, his skin tingling and jeans uncomfortable.

Virgil pushed at Patton’s chest, who leaned back immediately. Virgil felt his eyes sting at the thoughtfulness, but he quickly closed the distance with a firm kiss. He felt Patton smile against his lips and wrap his arms around Virgil in a gentle hug. Virgil licked at Patton’s lips as he brought a hand to his boyfriend’s large chest. Patton eagerly parted his lips and followed Virgil’s lead on the kiss.

Feeling bold, Virgil used his other hand to start massaging Patton’s upper thigh. At the surprised moan and full-body jerk, Virgil kept doing exactly what he had been. He brushed his thumb over Patton’s clothed nipples, making him moan helplessly.

Virgil kept that up, trying to coordinate both his hands and his mouth, and being somewhat successful. The sounds and movements from Patton were enough for Virgil to almost consider asking Patton if he could unzip his pants to relieve the pressure.
Virgil’s brain short-circuited when Patton leaned down and started sucking at his neck. He wasn’t biting, but was scraping hyper-sensitive skin with his teeth. Virgil unconsciously massaged Patton’s thigh, and brought the hand that had been on Patton’s chest to rest on the back of his head. He could hear broken whines coming from his mouth, but didn’t care enough about those to stop.

Patton pulled back, hair wild and eyes glazed over.

“Wanna go upstairs honey?” Patton panted.

Virgil flushed. “Yeah,” he said, smiling.

Patton squeezed his hand. “Whose room?”

“Yours.”

Patton smiled and sank them both out to his room. Virgil took a moment to get over the worst of the dizziness on Patton’s bed while Patton patiently waited. Once he felt normal again, he put a hand on Patton’s waist and kissed him, more innocently than last time, trying to check in about what was about to happen. His skin was sparking from the intensity of the situation and how he very much wanted more.

I want to have sex with Patton.

The thought gave him butterflies in his stomach and a strange sense of... unrest? Virgil shook it off when Patton pressed a little closer. Virgil almost laughed when he realized they were both waiting for the other to make a move. Virgil reluctantly pulled away to crawl up the bed, grabbing Patton’s hand to bring him with. He felt suddenly shy, smiling nervously as Patton followed him. He laid down on the pillows and Patton covered him. Virgil closed his eyes and returned the gentle kiss that came, feeling Patton’s hand carding through his hair a moment later.

Virgil decided to take control and move things along. He grabbed the back of Patton’s thigh and squeezed, using his other hand to play with his nipples. He felt a spike of victory when Patton moaned and his hands twitched. Virgil’s hips were jerking up, searching for any kind of friction. He only got harder when Patton started gently massaging his chest and nipples. Soon, they both found themselves shirtless, clothes lost in the fervor. Virgil’s hands were roaming Patton’s body, amazed at the incredible man he was able to be with and more turned on than he could ever remember being. Every touch made his mind cloudier.

After several minutes, Virgil couldn’t ignore his arousal any longer. He put a hand on Patton’s lower back and pulled gently, internally cheering when Patton laid down on him and rolled his body. Virgil let out an embarrassing sound that he didn’t care about one bit. He nipped playfully at Patton’s lips, then gasped and arched his back when Patton lightly pinched one of his nipples, rolling it a few times before smoothing his thumb over it.

Virgil was trying to figure out how to time his body’s movements with Patton’s, but his inexperience showed and he was getting frustrated. He could still smell the fried chicken that Patton had made, and winced when he felt how greasy his own hair was. He felt how his skin was tight since he’d forgotten to leave enough time after his shower to moisturize, even as Patton started nibbling on the tendons of his neck.

We didn’t plan this. It just happened. That’s how it happens in relationships right? Virgil felt his growing distress battle his arousal. I could have sex with Patton. I could come finally. It would be
fine. Maybe even good! Virgil’s breath caught when his jeans shifted down a bit. I don’t want this. I don’t want this. He’s making me feel so good. God, am I just an asshole who’ll never be happy with anything? I could come from this. I’ve wanted this for so long. Virgil felt himself getting closer and closer to orgasm and with another thrust of Patton’s hips, he knew he had to say something.

He opened his mouth to speak, but had no idea what to say. I don’t feel bad. Maybe I shouldn’t say anything if I don’t feel bad? He let out a small whine when Patton started sucking on the side of his neck. Shit, I can’t. I don’t want this.

“Patton? Um, red please?”

The response was instantaneous. Patton rolled to Virgil’s side and stopped touching him.

“It’s okay baby, we’ve stopped. What do you need sweetie? You’re safe, I-”

“Pat, Pat, I’m okay,” Virgil interrupted. He smiled at the man’s concern. “I just didn’t want to tonight. I, um…” He looked away, suddenly worried Patton would be offended.

Patton slowly brought his hand up to lightly pet Virgil’s upper arm. “It’s okay honey, you never have to justify stopping, okay?”

Virgil scooted forward and curled into Patton’s chest, softly kissing the warm, sweaty skin he found there. Patton’s arms came up and rested around him. “I know, I’m just… worried you won’t like the reason?”

“There’s no reason for stopping that I’ll be mad at you about,” Patton stated.

Virgil met Patton’s eyes for a moment before cuddling into his chest again. “I… want it to be planned? It…” he sighed and closed his eyes. “I want it to be planned. When I was little, I always had this daydream that I’d marry someone and then I would have sex with him on our wedding night and it would be so amazing and wouldn’t hurt very much.” Patton’s arms tightened around him. “I don’t care about waiting for marriage anymore, and I know it’s kind of stupid because I want to have a “first time” even though I’ve basically done everything at this point with the Dark Sides and-”

Virgil was cut off when Patton’s arms squeezed him. “They don’t count. That wasn’t sex.” Patton’s voice got thicker as he continued. “You still haven’t had a first time baby, and if you want to have it with one of us and have it planned out, we’ll be so happy to be there with you. You deserve to have it planned, to have it be the most magical experience. I want it to be better than you ever could have imagined.” He buried his face in Virgil’s hair. “You deserve it all and so much more,” he whispered.

Virgil looked up at Patton’s sweet, teary face. “Oh Pat, don’t cry please.”

Patton giggled. “I’m sorry baby, I do that a lot!”

Virgil smiled. “I know. I love you so much Patton. I love you because of all that.”

Patton blushed prettily, and who was Virgil to deny kissing the tears off his face?

Patton giggled and laughed brightly, Virgil warming at the sound of pure sunshine. He wiped away any spots he missed, then sweetly kissed his boyfriend. He shivered from the cold. Good thing I have a nice, warm boyfriend right here.
“Wanna sleep?”

“Sure! How do you want to sleep?”

“Can I try holding you? Like how Roman held me the other day?”

“Awwwwww you wanna be big spoon?”

“If that’s okay with you?”

Patton quickly smooched him before turning over so his back was facing Virgil. Virgil’s mouth ran dry at the sight of a strong back and broad shoulders, but he swallowed and moved forward, keeping his hips angled away and tucking Patton into his arms. He bit back a groan at feeling Patton’s bare skin against his own. Patton helped move into a comfortable position to be held. When they were settled, Virgil breathed in the scent of Patton’s hair and rumbled loudly.

Patton breathed out a laugh. “Do you like it?”

Virgil held Patton against his chest. “Yeah. I can protect you this way. I feel like I can keep you safe.”

Patton tilted his head forward to kiss Virgil’s hands. “I love you baby.”

“Love you too Pat.”

Chapter End Notes

Hi folks! I would just like to make a request for the comments section: Please don't put triggering material in your comments. Saying that you went through stuff in general terms is okay, but please don't put details. It's been very triggering to me and there's the risk that someone reading the comments may also be triggered. I have no choice but to interact with comments since they're in my inbox, and comments don't get tags that can be filtered out like fics can. Plus, I could be missing out on the other stuff you type too! Writing this fic is already a lot of emotional labor, heck, just me surviving is hard, and I can't carry your trauma in addition to mine. I'm a person. Thank you for your understanding!
Virgil woke slowly to a body next to his and his hands being rubbed. He nuzzled the back of Patton’s neck and rumbled loudly.

Patton giggled, his voice deeper than usual. “Mornin’ Virge!”

“Mmmmmm, mornin’ Pat.”

“You’re adorable when you’re sleepy!”

“Am not.”

“Okay.”

Virgil hissed half-heartedly. Patton snuggled against him, and Virgil found he couldn’t stay mad at the man.

“God I love you.”

“Awwwww! I love you too baby!!”

Patton started shifting, so Virgil loosened his arms, only for Patton to turn over and wrap his own arms around Virgil’s midsection, rubbing his cheek against Virgil’s chest. Virgil huffed out a laugh as he laid more fully on his back to hold Patton, and rumbled at the skin-on-skin contact. They laid there cuddling for an hour until Patton started squirming.

“You good Pat?”

“I have to pee.”

Virgil muffled his laughter in Patton’s hair. “You’d better go take care of that,” he said, regretfully unlocking his arms.

Patton smooched Virgil’s chin and skipped off to his bathroom. Virgil stretched and felt the satisfying pops of his spine and joints sorting themselves out. He cracked his neck and was tugging on his shirt when Patton eventually emerged from the bathroom.

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “You fall in?”
Patton laughed as he started pulling out clothes from his dresser. “No, just got distracted for a second!”

Virgil saw some sweat on Patton’s back, and when he turned around Virgil spotted a blush high on his cheekbones.

He quirked a smile. “Mhm. Distracted.”

“I never said what I was distracted by!” Patton chirped. Virgil felt his face grow hot.

Virgil went to his own room to get ready for the day while Patton went downstairs to make breakfast. He quickly showered and lotioned, then put some nude eyeshadow on his lids with a bit of mascara in addition to his regular eyeshadow below his eyes. Walking over to his wardrobe, he decided to go with a frayed v-neck t-shirt, ripped skinny jeans, and his boots. He threw on a ring and headed downstairs.

Virgil heard sizzling skillets and the kitchen smelled heavenly. Patton was currently slicing what looked like a tan and brown-speckled log.

Virgil tilted his head. “Hey Pat, what you got there?”

Patton beamed at Virgil. “It’s a brown sugar compound butter! I’m making sweet potato pancakes, a blackberry-champagne reduction, bacon, and fried eggs!”

“Holy fuck that sounds good.”

“Thanks baby! Wanna get started on the limeade and watch the bacon and eggs?”

Virgil helped make sure nothing burned, but Patton really did the magic. Since he’d rolled the butter into a log and put it back in the fridge, the slices of brown sugar-butter were perfectly round. Virgil got the coffee maker going, and when they heard Roman and Logan descending the stairs, decided to make out to pass the time. Roman wolf-whistled at them loudly, for which Virgil flipped him off.

Patton pulled away, eyes sparkling and face splotchy. “We’d better stop. You might get me distracted again!”

Virgil snorted and hid his face in Patton’s chest. Patton kissed the top of Virgil’s head and patted his back before moving back over to the stove.

Everyone got plated up, and Virgil was certain that he’d died and gone to heaven. He was surrounded by three sweet, handsome men and was eating food fit for a king.

Logan pulled out his tablet and swiped the screen a few times. “Alright, Thomas has several very important meetings with Hulu executives today, so I believe it would be in our best interests to coordinate our efforts.”

Virgil scanned his eyes up and down Logan’s body. Every hair was in place, his sharp features were focused intently on the tablet in front of him, and his business-like attitude was doing something to Virgil. Virgil focused intently on what Logan was saying so he’d be able to stand up after breakfast.

_Do I have a businessman kink or some shit? Or is Logan just hot? Probably the second one._

Although Virgil felt a little more aroused since the beginning of breakfast, he was able to focus on
Thomas’ itinerary. When they all finished, Roman offered to help Patton with the dishes. Virgil bit his lip as Logan walked away. The precise line of Logan’s back had Virgil’s blood racing through his veins and his breath coming a little faster. He confirmed that Roman and Patton were occupied with each other, and then he went after Logan.

Am I doing this? Am I really doing this? Virgil couldn’t stop the growing smile. I think I can do this.

Virgil paused in front of Logan’s door, nerves building in his stomach.

What if he doesn’t want to? What if he thinks I’m too gross or tainted from the Dark Sides? He knows, he knows so much, but he doesn’t even know everything and he knows he doesn’t know everything.

Virgil shook his head. No, I mean, he’s made out with me and he’s gotten hard, I can’t be too gross right? And he’ll stop if I ask him to, I know he will.

He just about hit the ceiling when Logan’s door opened suddenly.

Virgil had grabbed his chest and was panting. “Shit Lo!”

Logan looked at him with an unimpressed look. “Are you alright? I saw a shadow standing in front of my door and assumed it was you.”

Virgil huffed. “Yeah, I’m good, just about had a heart attack though.”

“My apologies. May I help you with something?”

Yeah you can. “Yeah, I, uh…” Virgil trailed off, heart pounding.

Logan’s face softened. “Is something the matter dear?”

Virgil sent him a half smile. “Not right now, just nervous.” He took a deep breath. “I… were you working? Did I interrupt you?”

That’s totally not a copout.

Shut up.

“I was, and I would like to return expediently. However, if you are in need of assistance, I am more than happy to help.”

Virgil squeezed his eyes shut and swallowed. “Do you want to go on a date tonight? After work?”

Logan smiled, the vulnerable one only his boyfriends saw. “I would indeed Virgil. Before or after dinner?”

Come on, come on, say it, ask him. “I’m cool with either, I was just…” Virgil shook himself. “Can we go in your room? Please?”

Logan’s brow furrowed slightly. “Of course.” He stepped aside, and Virgil walked past him into the clean, subtly space-themed room. He smiled when Logan closed the door behind them. Virgil turned to Logan and held himself back from kissing away the frown on his nerd’s face.

“I’m okay L, I just wanted to talk about our date tonight? It’s, um, important?”
Logan just tilted his head towards Virgil. “Of course.”

Virgil started playing with the cuffs of his sleeves. *How the *fuck* do I ask him and explain everything?* “I… Well, okay, so I’ve always kind of had this idea in my head where my first time having sex with someone that I want to have sex with is planned out ahead of time, even though I know it’s kinda pointless now and I don’t even know if you want to because—”

“Breathe darling.”

Virgil sucked in a breath, but unfortunately inhaled spit and started coughing violently. Logan quickly summoned a glass of water and handed it to Virgil. Although he was able to get his coughing under control quickly, Virgil felt like crawling under Logan’s bed and hiding there until Logan forgot he existed so he could then become The Cryptid.

“Are you feeling better moonlight?”

Virgil nodded, staring at the floor with tears in his eyes.

“I am truly glad to hear it. May I ask what prompted your anxiety just now?”

Virgil looked up at Logan. Logan wasn’t looking at him in contempt or irritation; instead, concern and love and vulnerability played across his face. Virgil set the glass of water down on the desk and kissed Logan softly. Logan was surprised but returned the sweet, almost chaste kiss.

Virgil pulled back slowly, a tear slipping down his cheek and a smile on his face. Logan’s eyebrows shot up as he quickly wiped the tear away.

“I’m okay Lo, just… God, you’re so perfect, you know that?”

Logan smiled back tentatively. Virgil bit back laughter at how uncomfortable Logan looked.

Virgil inhaled, preparing to get his question out in one breath. “For our date - or after our date, I don’t know what this qualifies as - do you want to have sex?”

Logan looked surprised for a moment, then melted. “I would be honored, my moon,” he said, a little shaky.

Virgil wasn’t sure what to do, so he kissed Logan again, far less chastely this time. He knew he was bright red and grinning when he pulled back, but he didn’t care. “Awesome. I, uh, should probably let you get back to work?”

“Regrettably, yes.”

Virgil squeezed one of Logan’s hands, then left his room. Virgil nearly danced back to his room. When he got inside his room and closed the door, he picked up Shelly, knowing his room tended to drag anxiety out of him.

“I’m so excited!” he whispered to the plastic spider. “This might *finally* happen tonight!”

Virgil laid her on his chest as he flopped onto his bed and focused on Thomas’ realm.

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During a quick break between meetings, the Sides went downstairs for a quick snack, since the next meeting was scheduled to go through Thomas’ regular lunch time. Logan declined the quiche Patton had made for everyone, instead opting for a wheatgrass, papaya, and pineapple smoothie.
Virgil quirked his eyebrow at Logan, but had to look away when Logan smiled at him and set his face on fire. Virgil decided Logan must be on a new health kick when he took another smoothie, along with cut up celery, pineapple, and a piece of cinnamon toast upstairs with him.

After a long and stressful day, the Sides and Thomas were relieved they could relax and do nothing for the rest of the evening. Logan approached Virgil just before dinner.

“Hello Virgil,” Logan said softly.

Virgil smiled shyly. “Hey L.”

Logan reached out and rubbed his hand along Virgil’s arm. “We don’t have to. I would not be disappointed if our date ended as the others have.”

“You mean with us making out and getting blue balls?”

Logan squawked, and Virgil snickered.

“I… yes?”

Virgil lost it, bending at the waist and laughing. He heard Logan chuckling above him. Once they regained their composure, Virgil straightened his back and wiped his moist eyes.

“I know L, it’s why I feel comfortable with you. I wanna try at least?”

Logan nodded. “Alright. How much would you like to have planned?”

Virgil bit his lip and frowned. “I don’t know. I kind of see it as happening right before we go to bed, so after everything else? Is that still part of the date or is that after the date?”

“I believe that’s up to semantics. I would certainly not be opposed to sex right before bed.”

Virgil fought the urge to hide his face in the crook of Logan’s neck. “Yeah, okay. Um, what else needs to be planned?”

Logan started rubbing Virgil’s arm again. “Nothing needs to be planned. What would you like planned?”

Virgil gave in, stepping closer and breathing in lemon and lilac. Logan embraced him delicately and let Virgil ground himself for a minute.

After a few more stabilizing breaths, Virgil pulled back enough to talk. “I don’t wanna do anything we haven’t talked about. I just want the stuff we’ve agreed to?”

“Of course. Is there anything in particular you had in mind?”

Virgil cleared his throat. “I’ve, uh, well I’ve thought about a lot of it.” Someone please kill me.

Logan leaned down, his lips brushing the shell of Virgil’s ear. “Have you now?”

Virgil squeaked, and Logan kissed his ear, which did not help dammit!

“Are there any fantasies that bring you more pleasure?” Logan growled.

“Fuck.”
He felt Logan smirk against his ear. *Bastard.*

Once Virgil had grabbed a few wayward brain cells, he cleared his throat. “Uh, I don’t know, I guess everything we’ve talked about is fair game?”

Logan kissed his forehead. “Alright. Is there a particular place you’d prefer?”

Virgil thought for a moment. “I’d be alright with either of our rooms honestly.”

Virgil and Logan stayed there, hugging each other for a few moments longer. They chatted about the rest of their date, and settled on having a picnic while stargazing. Virgil was buzzing with nervous excitement the entire day.

An hour before their date, Virgil hopped in the shower, despite having showered in the morning. He quickly washed himself as thoroughly as he could before exfoliating, moisturizing, putting on oud-based cologne, then fussing over his nails and eyebrows for longer than he realized. When he looked at the time, he panicked and quickly applied lilac shadow to his upper lids and glittery black shadow to his lower lids. He styled his hair so it had some volume instead of being flat, and ran to his wardrobe, au naturale, chanting *shitshitshitshitshitshit* in his head.

He decided on his most torn jeans that showed a fair bit of skin, his calf-high boots, and a deep v-neck t-shirt he’d noticed Logan liked. Just as he finished frantically tugging the shirt over his head, he heard three precise knocks at the door. Deciding to forego jewelry, he opened his door to see a pristine Logan with his hair gelled back. Virgil’s mouth ran dry at the sight, far too gay to function at such a lovely sight.

“You look beautiful as always, moonbeam,” Logan said evenly, studying Virgil with dark eyes.

“Ah-” Virgil cleared his throat after his voice cracked. “Uh… you too?”

Logan took Virgil’s hand and brought it slowly to his mouth, maintaining eye contact and barely kissing the backs of his fingers.

“Thank you,” he said quietly, still staring into Virgil’s eyes.

Virgil did his best to reboot after short-circuiting. “We should probably go if you want to stargaze and eat.”

Logan smiled and lowered Virgil’s hand. “Then we shall go.”

Virgil and Logan walked to Logan’s room, and Logan led Virgil to his back wall where one of his many bookcases were. Virgil was confused until Logan moved a green book to an empty spot, and the bookcase slid to the side.

Logan turned back to Virgil. “Shall we?”

“...what the FUCK Logan?!”

“I needed a secret laboratory.”

“I... you accomplished it!”

“I know. I have the stars set up. Shall we?”

Virgil gaped at the absolutely ridiculous technology for a moment longer before physically shaking his head and walking through. Logan followed Virgil, grabbing a picnic basket along the way. He
laid out the blanket and a lamp and got out fruit sandwiches, butter, fermented whole wheat bread, and water bottles.

Virgil kissed Logan sweetly. “Thank you Logan. This is awesome.”

“Made all the better with your presence.”

Virgil was left with no choice but to kiss him senseless. They grabbed and touched each other, losing themselves in the taste and feel of the man they were with. Virgil felt himself growing hard, and could feel Logan against his thigh.

Virgil stopped when Logan pushed against his chest.

Logan was panting and his eyes were a little wild. “As much as I was enjoying myself-”

“I could tell.”

“-if we want to watch the stars, perhaps we should turn our gaze skywards.”

Virgil pressed a quick kiss to Logan’s nose, cooing when his face scrunched up. Logan sent him a faux-irritated look until Virgil raised his arm. Logan snuggled against Virgil’s chest, and Virgil rumbled deep in his chest. Virgil and Logan laid together in silence, happy to be touching each other. They ate some of the food intermittently, but would find themselves kissing slowly if they did anything but stare intently at the stars. During one such session Virgil ended up straddling Logan and touching and kissing him, focusing on the pleasure he was bringing his boyfriend. The sounds and movements from Logan had him aching in his jeans, and his blood sang when he looked at the man below him and soaked in the delight on his face. He jumped when he heard beeping.

Logan pressed a button on the side of his watch. “Apologies,” he panted. “I seem to have lost track of time. I have something planned for us in the sky.”

Virgil got off Logan and rested on his back just as lights began to streak across the sky. He stared in awe, slack-jawed, when he realized the trails were a light purple. Virgil teared up a little, calming when Logan took his hand and ran his thumb across the back.

Virgil watched until the streaking lights faded, then turned to Logan and kissed him. Logan returned the kiss, resting a hand on the side of Virgil’s face. Virgil whimpered at the tender motion, unexpectedly emotional. Virgil pulled away.

_I want this, God I want this. I want him, I want to make him feel good, I want to feel good._

“My room?” he asked breathlessly.

Logan nodded, then sank them both out. They landed just in front of Virgil’s door, and Virgil had to kiss him for the consideration despite still being a bit dizzy. Virgil noticed that despite the passion he was putting behind his kiss and the fact that he was completely pressed against Logan, Logan’s hands never ventured below his waist. Virgil felt nervous butterflies in his stomach and the fire of arousal racing through his veins. He rested his forehead on Logan’s shoulder, taking the time to do a few breathing exercises and fill his nostrils with Logan’s unique scent. Logan rested his hands on Virgil’s mid-back.

Virgil pulled back just enough to place a kitten lick on Logan’s jugular vein. Logan let out a surprised moan at that and bucked his hips forward, rubbing against Virgil’s erection. Virgil kissed that spot and stepped back. Logan let him go with no resistance, letting his hands fall to his sides.
Virgil caught one and marveled at the soft, warm skin. The butterflies had multiplied tenfold, but Virgil found that nervousness manageable. It almost seemed to add to the excitement.

He smiled demurely and pulled on the hand. “Come on,” he whispered.

Logan just smiled and allowed himself to be led into Virgil’s bedroom. Logan paused when Virgil did, watching the shorter Side for what he wanted to have happen next.

Normally, Virgil would’ve resented being treated like glass. He’d worked hard to get where he was, and he wanted to be treated like it. But he knew this was a potential minefield for him, and Virgil appreciated that Logan was letting him set the pace.

Virgil stepped around Logan, brushing a hand over his waist as he did so, and closed the door. He rested his arms around Logan’s neck while Logan kept his own on Virgil’s waist. The memories of pleasing Logan, both from this night and earlier instances, ran through his mind and made his nerve endings light up.

“Gotta admit, I’m not sure what exactly we do here.”

Logan smiled serenely at Virgil. “That depends. Would you like to continue?”

Logan huffed in amusement at Virgil’s quick nod. “Then we shall.”

Virgil was swept away in a skilled kiss, whining and pressing against Logan in an attempt to get something.

Logan parted and pressed kiss against the corner of Virgil’s lips. “What would you like?”

Virgil moaned helplessly. Logan ran a hand up and down Virgil’s back.

“Shhhhh, it’s alright. What do you want to happen?”

Virgil whimpered and kissed Logan sloppily. Logan responded, providing some technique to the kiss but letting Virgil do what he wanted. Virgil started placing nips, sucks, and bites all down the column of Logan’s neck, pulling moans from him.

Virgil felt the control slip from Logan as he worked his neck mercilessly, circling his nipples with his fingers and grinding as best he could against Logan. Feeling the normally-composed man moving erratically from the sheer pleasure Virgil was bringing him had Virgil hungry for more. Logan ended up pressed against the wall by Virgil.

“Lo,” he moaned between lovebites.

“Yes darling?” Logan asked, voice strained.

“Can I…” Virgil breathed in to calm himself, pausing in his movements. One of Logan’s hands started squeezing his shoulder.

*I want to. I want to make him come apart.* “Can I blow you? Fuck, I wanna feel you so bad.”

Logan’s breath hitched and his hips twitched forward. Still, he pulled back to look Virgil in the eyes. “Are you certain you want to?”

“God yeah.” Virgil couldn’t imagine *not* bringing this saint-like man to ecstasy.
Logan nodded, smile growing. “Then yes, I consent.”

Virgil kissed him fiercely for a few moments before running his hands over Logan’s clothes, trying to decide where to start. He decided that since he wasn’t sure if he could take his shirt off, he started running his fingers along Logan’s waistband and pausing at the button, waiting. With Logan’s quick nod and kiss, Virgil slowly lowered himself to his knees and pressed his hands against Logan’s hips. He could sense that undoing Logan’s pants might be a trigger, so he decided to pop the button out using his mouth.

“Fuck.”

Virgil looked up and decided he wanted to watch Logan come apart at the seams. His intense eyes were wide and focused only on Virgil, his hair was a mess, and his clothes were wrinkled. Virgil grabbed the zipper between his teeth and pulled down. Before he went any further, he knew he had to talk to Logan.

“You still good?”

“Absolutely.”

Virgil smiled and kissed the front of Logan’s jeans, feeling his hardness straining against the fabric. Logan swore loudly and banged his head against the wall.

“Careful, can’t really have sex with you if you get a concussion.”

Logan let out a short, breathy laugh. Virgil felt a tiny bit of fear in his abdomen. He placed a few kisses above the waistband before speaking again.

“Hey L? Can you, um, not touch me until I say you can? I just… with this, my head…”

Logan’s eyes came into focus slightly. “Of course darling.”

Virgil took a deep breath, and the fear dissipated, helped by Logan’s reassurance. He tugged down the denim and was met with only a thin bit of cotton between him and Logan’s hard-on. Virgil mouthed at the tent, relishing the moans from above. Every cry that fell from Logan’s lips sent Virgil deeper into his own pleasure, nearly consumed by what he was doing to Logan.

After a few minutes, Virgil tentatively brought his hands up to the edge of Logan’s boxer briefs. He paused for a moment. Do I really want this? This will be my first time. Do I want this? With Logan’s sigh, Virgil made up his mind.

Oh fuck I need to see what he tastes like.

“Wanna taste you. Can I? I wanna see how you taste, you’re so amazing.”

Logan had to force himself not to smash a hole in Virgil’s bedroom wall with his head. “Oh my god,” he whined before saying, “Oh fuck, yes.”

Virgil pulled the cotton down and winced at how red Logan’s dick was when it sprang up and hit his stomach. Poor guy. I must have gotten a little carried away there. Virgil used one hand to pull it down a little before taking Logan into his mouth slowly.

He started out just sucking a little on the head, testing to see if he would be able to finish. The taste and scent of Logan was intoxicating, and Virgil unconsciously moaned while his own dick
twitched in his pants. Logan was letting out his own high-pitched noises, and the pleasure singing in Virgil’s body had him taking in more. He started moving his head up and down when he got about halfway down Logan’s cock, making both Sides groan.

Logan kept a careful eye on Virgil, nearly jumping when Virgil met his eyes again. Virgil’s eyes were focused and determined, and Logan was certain he could drown in those dark pools. He was doing his best to not come right then and there, but he was already incredibly worked up.

Virgil’s eyes fell shut as he felt the hot weight of Logan on his tongue, the taste of precome not as awful as he remembered. He was letting out small moans and groans as he could sense Logan was getting closer. He was in an almost meditative state as he was consumed by Logan’s essence. He forced himself to come back to Earth as Logan’s sounds started getting higher in his throat.

Virgil pulled off Logan and stroked him loosely and slowly. “You can touch me if you wanna, but like, only if it’s kinda gentle?” He winced at his word choice.

Logan was nearly out of his mind with arousal, but was able to nod through it. “Of course darling.”

Virgil took Logan back into his mouth and started going at a faster speed, trying actively to bring Logan to orgasm as opposed to just enjoying himself. Logan kept his hand loose as he ran fingertips through dark hair.

“Beautiful, my god Virgil…”

Logan kept murmuring encouraging words as Virgil pulled out as many tricks as he could, noting which ones Logan responded to the best.

After a few minutes, Logan tapped his shoulder twice. “Virgil, I… fuck, I’m close, I’m so close. Virgil, please.”

Virgil didn’t look away as he pulled off of Logan. “I’m not stopping you.”

Logan’s eyes widened as Virgil took him down to the root. Virgil’s eyes watered a little, but he didn’t feel triggered. He swallowed around Logan, savoring the near-yells from his boyfriend. Just a few seconds later, Virgil felt Logan start coming. Virgil swallowed quickly, knowing that if he didn’t he might hit a trigger. He could feel Logan’s restrained fingertips stuttering gently against his scalp. He waited patiently for Logan to finish, and once he did Virgil started moving up and down Logan’s still-hard cock, hollowing his cheeks and running his tongue along the length, remembering that Logan liked overstimulation. Logan’s hips were twitching slightly, but Virgil felt okay with it. When Logan tapped his shoulder twice again, Virgil pulled off, placed a kiss to his lower abdomen, and tucked Logan back into his clothes.

Logan joined Virgil on the ground and pulled him into a filthy kiss, licking around Virgil’s mouth. *Damn, the nerd’s a little dirty huh?*

Logan pulled back. “Virgil that was… incredible.”

Virgil smiled at the starry eyes. “You weren’t so bad yourself.”

Logan had a dozy look about him, something Virgil rarely saw on him. Logan scooted forward and rubbed Virgil’s upper arm.

“How about I return the favor?” he asked lowly, still out of breath.
Virgil took stock of himself. The thought of Logan undressing him and *touching* him brought a fair amount of discomfort.

He bit his lip and ducked his head slightly. “Sorry L, ah, maybe not tonight?”

Logan softened a little. “Not tonight, moonlight. Do let me know if you change your mind later, I am *certainly* not opposed.”

Virgil flushed and looked down, smiling. He looked back up at Logan.

“God, Logan. Thank you. That was,” Virgil’s eyes grew misty. “That was…” he huffed out a laugh as a tear streamed down his face.

Logan seemed to understand. “I’m so glad, my moon.” He thumbed away the tear that had fallen. “I am so glad.”

Virgil surged forward and kissed Logan, clicking their teeth together a bit. When they stopped, Logan took Virgil’s hand and tilted his head to the bed in a question. Virgil smiled and stood. They curled up together on the bed, holding each other, Virgil’s head on Logan’s chest. Logan pressed slow kisses to the top of Virgil’s head.

“Goodnight Virgil. I love you so much.”

“I love you too Logan. I love you too.”

Chapter End Notes

WAY TO GO VIRGIL!!! :) I’m so proud of our bean!! He had such a good time, and Logan was so great with him!! Good job Virgil, you did great!!!
Chapter 153

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! The only warnings for this chapter are references to consensual sexytimes and some kissing, and that's it!

Also, two people made art for this fic!! Which is amazing!! I'll post the second piece of art in the next chapter so it can get its fair share of attention! For now, check out what ExhaustedAuthor made! Here's the link to the art! It's SO COOL!! There's so much going on and there are so many details and AHHHHHH it's so good!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil listened to Logan’s heart beat below his ear. Logan had fallen asleep quickly, murmuring into and kissing Virgil’s hair until he’d slipped under. Every touch and sound from Logan made Virgil feel safe and loved and cherished. Logan’s arms were still loosely wrapped around him, hands resting where he’d been caressing Virgil.

Virgil rumbled, feeling his head rise and fall with Logan’s breathing, the soft cotton against his cheek, firm muscles just beneath the shirt. He tilted his head up, watching Logan’s peaceful face, mouth open as he slept.

Logan took such good care of me. Virgil’s eyes watered. God I love him. He loves me. He was so good. It was so good. He blinked away the tears. It was so good. I had sex, and he made it so good. I finally enjoyed sex! Virgil replayed in his mind Logan’s sound, taste, the way his face looked when Virgil first untucked him and how it looked when he climaxed, the way his muscles twitched as he was so careful to not hurt Virgil.

I can’t wait to do that again. I love you Logan.

Virgil resituated himself and rubbed his cheek on Logan’s chest before succumbing to sleep as well.

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Logan sighed, closing his mouth and trying to get some saliva. His arms automatically tightened around the weight on his chest. Looking down, he saw a mess of dark brown hair and black and purple fabric.

He smiled as he pressed a gentle kiss to the hair, smiling wider when Virgil snuffled.

All three of my boyfriends are objectively adorable. I am truly blessed.

He breathed in the scent of lavender and oud, a touch of bergamot below the surface. He’d never admit it, but he was moved to near tears at Virgil’s trust in him and his growth.

I’m so happy for you, my sweet moonbeam.

Virgil had been amorous the entire date, and watching him take control when they gotten into his bedroom had left Logan’s mind spinning. It took all of Logan’s self-control to not come in his
underwear when Virgil *undid his pants with his teeth*. Logan had been watching Virgil carefully the entire time, out of his mind with pleasure but not wanting to cause the sweet, dark man any harm. The way that Virgil had been working him, the look in his eyes when they flicked up to Logan’s, the moans and groans, when Virgil deepthroated him… Logan could barely believe he was worthy of such an incredible honor. His vision had whitened out when he came, having held back as best he could with Virgil doing a *phenomenal* job. He’d been a little worried when Virgil had refused his offer to reciprocate, but was soothed when his body language had only indicated happiness and relaxation. He knew Virgil may have a difficult time with being unclothed and touched, and hoped he could one day bring Virgil the pleasure he’d felt.

Logan watched Virgil sleep, the gentle rise and fall of his shoulders, until it became time for breakfast. Even then, he couldn’t bring himself to start waking Virgil until far later than he should have. He kissed the top of Virgil’s head and rubbed his thumb back and forth over his shoulder, wanting to rouse his boyfriend out of sleep gradually.

Virgil sighed but just curled into Logan more.

Logan laughed quietly. “Wake up, my moon. It’s time for breakfast. I love you so much.”

He kept whispering reassurances and promises of love until Virgil started shifting more.

“Breakfast time, darling.”

Virgil groaned loudly, having enjoyed the gentle touches and quiet whispers.

Logan chuckled. “Did you sleep well?”

“Mhm.”

Logan let Virgil rest a little longer until he felt his muscles relaxing.

“Really, we should be getting up soon. I’ll still be here.”

Virgil turned to face Logan, internally laughing at the line on his face from the pillow.

“Sleep well?”

Logan kissed Virgil’s forehead. “I did. You were amazing.”

Virgil blushed fiercely. “I’d kiss you, but I don’t even want to *think* about how bad my morning breath tastes right now.”

Logan’s eyes turned dark as they burned into Virgil’s. “I don’t seem to recall you tasting bad last night.” Virgil’s eyes widened as he squeaked. Logan just smiled and kissed his nose, then eyelids when Virgil closed his eyes.

Logan and Virgil were lost to time as Logan tenderly kissed different spots on Virgil’s face, only stopping when Patton knocked on the door for breakfast. Logan called that they’d be down and looked at Virgil.

Virgil was looking up at Logan serenely, love shining in his eyes. He looked relaxed and at peace.

Logan smiled down softly. “I love you Virgil.”

Virgil’s eyes became shiny. “I love you too Lo,” he said thickly.
Logan pressed a final kiss to Virgil’s forehead, then started sitting up. Virgil whined but sat up with him.

Logan squeezed Virgil’s arm before rubbing his back. “Ready for breakfast, darling?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I… should we tell them?”

*I anticipated something like this.* “Not if you don’t want to. I understand the need for discretion if you so prefer.”

“They won’t get mad?”

“If you are referring to them becoming jealous-” Logan noted the flinch, “then no, they will not be. If you are concerned that they’ll be upset we kept this from them should they find out later, I do not believe they will be.”

Virgil fussed with the ends of his sleeves. “They won’t be mad that we lied to them?”

“No. If you decide you would like to have intercourse with them in the future, then you should inform them of our fluid exchange-”

“Dude.”

“-but you are not obligated to divulge details of your sex life to anyone if you don’t want to.”

Virgil sighed but continued to look at the blanket pensively. Logan decided to take a risk.

“Is there something else on your mind?”

Virgil’s eyes flicked in Logan’s general direction but didn’t actually land on Logan. “Are people supposed to have sex the morning after too?”

*Ah.* “Not necessarily. Some people do, some people don’t, it depends. And as before, I do not want any sexual contact that you don’t want.”

At that, Virgil leaned into Logan. “Thanks star.”

“My pleasure. Shall we?” Virgil and Logan brushed their teeth and fixed their appearance as much as they could in Virgil’s mirror, then headed downstairs, Virgil shyly grabbing Logan’s hand. Logan bit back a chuckle at the gesture. When they got into the kitchen, Roman sent them an impish look.

“My pleasure. Shall we?” Virgil and Logan brushed their teeth and fixed their appearance as much as they could in Virgil’s mirror, then headed downstairs, Virgil shyly grabbing Logan’s hand. Logan bit back a chuckle at the gesture. When they got into the kitchen, Roman sent them an impish look.

“Have fun last night?”

Virgil felt a smile creep onto his face against his will. “Yeah.”

“Awwwwwwww that’s so sweet!!” Patton cooed.

Logan pecked Virgil’s temple before going over to Patton and kissing him.

Patton giggled, eyes sparkling. “Smooches before coffee? You must have had a great time last night!”

Virgil ducked his head. “Yeah, we did.”

Roman raised his eyebrow in a silent question, but Virgil resolutely did not answer. Patton served
up a quiche with bacon and toast, and they sat down for breakfast. Logan went over the day’s schedule verbally, having forgotten his tablet in his room. Roman waggled his eyebrows, which Logan pretended not to see.

After breakfast, Roman and Logan left to go work, but not before Logan kissed the top of Virgil’s head as he was passing behind him. Patton cooed at the sweet gesture.

Virgil and Patton chatted while doing the dishes, kissing the other on occasion. Virgil left the kitchen to head upstairs, but noticed Logan set up on the couch.

“L?”

Logan looked up and smiled. “I thought you might want to cuddle today.”

Virgil smirked. “It’s only logical.”

“I fully agree.”

Virgil snorted and snuggled under Logan’s arm. Logan paged through several books, and Virgil focused on Thomas’ realm. Surprisingly soon, lunchtime rolled around, Thomas deciding to eat his tacos early. Logan gently pulled Virgil’s awareness fully back into the mindscape by softly kissing his hairline.

They both jumped at a loud wolf whistle.

Patton and Roman were smiling at them.

“Having fun?”

Virgil just smiled and pressed against Logan’s chest.

Patton giggled. “I take it your date went well?”

Virgil looked up at Logan. “Yeah,” he breathed, “it did.”

Logan rested their foreheads together.

Fuck it. “Can I tell them?” Virgil whispered.

“If you would not be opposed.”

Virgil turned towards Roman and Patton, who were watching them. Nerves flared in his chest and he swallowed.

It’s fine, they didn’t expect me to kiss all of them until I was ready. They won’t expect me to have sex with them either.

“WeHadSexLastNight!!” Virgil blurted out. It took Patton and Roman a moment to decipher what Virgil had said, but once they did their faces lit up.

“Oh My Goodness Sweetie!!! I’m so happy for you!!!”

“My Handsome Loves, Together Experiencing Ecstasy!!!”

Virgil winced at the volume but couldn’t stop smiling.
“Can I give you a hug?!”

Virgil chuckled. “Yeah Pat.”

Virgil was tackled a moment later by a light blue mass of laughter. Virgil laughed along with him, Patton’s joy contagious.

“I’m so proud of you sweetie!!” Patton squealed. “I’m so happy for you!!!”

Virgil pressed his eyes into Patton’s shoulder to soak up his tears. “Me too Pat, me too.”

Patton pulled back just enough to kiss Logan. Virgil laughed and wiped away tears that had missed being mopped up by Patton’s shirt. He looked over just in time to see Roman sit on the couch next to them.

“My turn?” he asked, smiling gently. Virgil just wrapped his arms around Roman’s neck and kissed him. Roman kissed him back eagerly, resting his hands on Virgil’s waist. When they parted, Patton had taken up residence on Logan’s lap.

Roman scooted closer to Virgil and pulled the younger Side against him. “How was it, my love?”

Virgil sighed and closed his eyes. “It was amazing,” he murmured. “Logan was so good.”

“He is, isn’t he?” Roman growled into Virgil’s ear. Virgil blushed and hid his face in Roman’s neck. Roman squeezed him, offering mercy for now. They cuddled together, focusing their attention on Virgil and Logan, until they all felt a tug from Thomas.

“Guess we should start working at some point, huh?”

“I’ll make everyone sandwiches!” Patton chirped as he jumped off of Logan. Logan let out a quiet “oof”, but watched Patton fondly as he skipped away.

Roman kissed the back of Virgil’s hand before he left to help Patton with their lunches. Logan quickly wrote another 5 minutes into Thomas’ lunch break and went back to cuddling Virgil. Patton brought out sandwiches for everyone, and Patton and Roman went back to their rooms.

Logan started to stand and looked down at Virgil. “Would you like to work in my room today?”

Virgil nodded quickly, and they both went upstairs to help Thomas through the rest of his day. By the time dinner rolled around, every one of the Sides was exhausted. Roman and Patton offered to have a group movie night, but Virgil declined, overstimulated and tired. He kissed each of his boyfriends goodnight and went to bed in his own room. Virgil flopped onto his bed and texted Remy and Saul if it’d be okay if he came over the next night. By the explosion of emojis on his screen, Virgil figured it would be okay.

As he clutched Lucas to his chest, he thought back on the previous two days and let tears of joy slip out.

///// 

The next day, Virgil and the Light Sides were busy with Thomas’ business needs, Thomas having signed a new contract. They spent meals together, but outside of that Virgil spent most of the day in his room or on the living room couch by himself. When supper rolled around, Virgil gave each of his boyfriends a hug and explained that he wanted to spend some time with Saul and Remy. They bid him goodnight and Virgil sank out to the Neutral Side.
Virgil accepted the hug from Remy happily. “Hey Rem.”

“Hey baby!” Remy stopped crushing Virgil and looked him over. “How have things been?”

“I’ve been good.” Virgil smiled and looked down. “Really good, actually.”

“That’s great!”

“Darling, you’re crowding Virgil.”

Virgil snorted at Saul’s weak excuse for a chance to hug him. Virgil just opened his arms, and Saul hugged him firmly for a long moment.

“Come on babes, I’ve got some tilapia waiting for us.”

The three Sides settled in for dinner, and Virgil was impressed at the turmeric-seared tilapia that Remy had made. Remy had set a mug of green tea in front of him, and everyone ate for a few minutes before chatting. They caught each other up on their days, Remy ranting about how Thomas was so not listening to him and then would suddenly want him on-demand in the middle of the afternoon for a 20-minute quickie (“Excuse me, I’m not some easy booty call.” “Sure you aren’t.” “Listen here you little shit-”).

“So, coffee bean, how are things with your boos?”

Virgil cursed the blush that he felt burning on his face. “Pretty good.”

“Oh yeah?”

He tried biting back the smile, but he just couldn’t. “Yeah.”

Remy snickered. “What, did you guys fuck yet?”

Instead of spluttering as expected, Virgil just grinned and ducked his head.

Remy gasped. “Virgie?” he breathed, voice full of hope.

“Yeah,” he said as happy tears pricked his eyes. “Me an’ Logan, night before last.”

“Oh my God baby!!!!” Remy screeched as he jumped out of his chair and almost knocked Virgil out of his. “OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD!!!! WAS IT GOOD?! HE’D BETTER HAVE MADE IT GOOD FOR YOU!!!”

Virgil laughed. “It was amazing Rem! I’m so happy.”

“I’M SO HAPPY FOR YOU!!! MY SWEET BABY HAD SEX!!!” He pulled back to glare at Virgil. “WHY DO YOU NEVER LEAD WITH THIS SHIT?! I RAISED YOU BETTER THAN THIS!!”

Virgil laughed brightly. “I was waiting for the right moment!”

“Bitch whatever!” Remy softened. “I’m so happy for you baby!”

Virgil felt a tear fall down his face just as one trailed down Remy’s. “Me too Rem. I’m so happy. Logan took real good care of me. He made sure I was okay and having a good time.”
“Good.”

Saul clapped a hand on Virgil’s shoulder. “Good for you darling. I knew that if you wanted it, you could do it.”

Virgil leaned in and hugged Saul. “And there’s still more stuff I wanna do!”

“You’ll get there.”

Virgil pulled back to lock eyes with Saul. “I know I will.”

Their attention was drawn to Remy when he blew his nose.

“Well girls, I think it’s time for a celebration!” he declared as he summoned 5 gallons of J. Bird mead.

Virgil paled, remembering the celebration when he’d kissed Roman. “God save us.”

“Shut up, I have Gatorade and ibuprofen.”

“Well no problem then.”

Thanks in large part to Virgil’s concern about alcohol poisoning, they didn’t drink the entire 5 gallons, and his hangover the next day was tolerable. Even as he lay in bed groaning with an ice pack on his forehead, a thought kept flicking through his mind.

*I wouldn’t trade this for anything.*

Chapter End Notes

So much fluff and softness!! I’m sure this will continue! :D

3>:D
Hi folks! Massive trigger warnings for this chapter. We've got some negative thinking before the line of tildes. The italicized section between the lines of tildes contains beating, burning, caning, multiple instances of graphic sexual assault, restraints, and suffocation. Take care of yourselves.

Edit: there is a mention of a fake spider before the tildes and brief mentions of two fake spiders after the block of text!

Virgil hissed when someone started gently shaking his shoulder.

“It’s time to wake up, my dark knight.”

Virgil just hissed louder, which made Roman laugh.

“Really angel, you’ll sleep better in a bed.”

Virgil sighed and looked up at Roman. They were both clad in their onesies, having just finished a movie night.

He frowned and looked around. “Where are Patton and Logan?”

Roman smiled down and kissed Virgil’s forehead. “They went upstairs already. You’re so adorable when you sleep, it took me a while to wake you up.”

Virgil glared up to Roman, who was unfazed.

“Do you want me to carry you upstairs?”

Virgil sighed and sat up. “Nah, I can walk.”

“In that case, may I escort you to your chambers?”

Virgil snorted. “Yeah Princey.”

He stood and stretched, bat wings from his hoodie spreading out.

“My sweet little bat.”

Virgil walked up to Roman and kissed him. “My dashing himbo.”

Roman squawked. “I am not.”

“Are too,” Virgil countered, “A cute guy who’s strong and muscly, respects people.”

“Oh! That’s not too terrible!”
“-and doesn’t have a brain cell to spare.”

“Hey!”

Virgil snickered before kissing the pout off Roman’s face.

“In my own house,” Roman muttered as he smiled.

Virgil kissed him again. “Damn right,” he whispered against his prince’s lips. He pulled away just as Roman closed his eyes and leaned in again, causing the taller Side to stumble a little. Roman started pouting again, but Virgil looped his arms through Roman’s, cheering him up.

Once they got to Virgil’s door, Virgil turned to look at Roman. Roman was gazing down at him with heat in his gaze and rubbing his arm.

Virgil bit his lip. I don’t want to kiss him right now. I don’t want it to just be about sex. I don’t want it just to be about getting hard.

Roman’s face softened into worry. “Love?”

Virgil fought the urge to sniffle as his eyes watered. “Can I have a hug please?”

Roman immediately wrapped him in a gentle hug. Virgil returned it and hid his eyes in Roman’s shoulder. Roman swayed slightly from side to side, resting his cheek on Virgil’s head. After a few minutes, Virgil pulled his arms from Roman’s back so he could curl into his chest. Roman stayed silent, letting Virgil get the comfort he needed and speak in his own time.

Virgil sucked in a shaky breath. “Sorry Ro, I was just freakin’ out a little bit.”

“No need to apologize love. Can you tell me what frightened you?”

Virgil pressed against Roman a bit. “I wasn’t scared, I was just… sad?” He winced. “My brain was being an asshole. I was scared that I wouldn’t get any more hugs like this. I don’t-” he swallowed to help keep his voice clear. “I don’t want it to just be about sex now,” he finished in a whisper.

Roman’s heart clenched. “Oh sweet angel. You can have as many hugs as you want!” he declared thickly.

Virgil giggled wetly. “Okay Patton.” With Roman’s huff on top of his head, Virgil started feeling better. “I think I just needed a hug.”

“I will hug you for as long as you wish.”

Virgil pulled his head out just enough to look up at Roman. “I know Ro. I love you.” He smiled.

Roman smiled down at him, eyes watery. “I love you too.”

Virgil nuzzled back into Roman’s chest, feeling arms tighten on him once more. They stood for another minute before Virgil pulled back, Roman’s arms falling away.

Virgil sent him a half-smile. “Goodnight Ro.”

Roman smiled softly at him. “Goodnight, my sweet.”

With a two-finger salute, Virgil went into his room. He grabbed Shelly on his way to his bed and got underneath the covers.
Virgil spread his fingers spastically as someone finished inside him; he had no desire to make a fist and squeeze the mattress he was on, and it was either that or make a sound.

Greed rocked back and forth for a few moments, enjoying the high, before roughly pulling out. Virgil mostly suppressed a full-body flinch. His wrists were raw, the fluids that were coating his body stinging the wounds. He felt disgusting; his skin felt heavy and stiff, and the front of his body that was on the mattress was burning and itching.

Jealousy came over, picked Virgil up by the hips, and flipped him. Virgil cringed and hissed through his teeth as his still-restrained arms were twisted above his head. Jealousy stepped back with a grimace.

“Gross. I don’t want to touch that.”

Deceit sighed. “Oh well, it’s about time he got hosed off. Cold water as punishment for flinching.”

Virgil was surprised; he wasn’t aware of how long he’d been kept on the mattress, although he knew he’d blinked out a few times. He bit back whimpers as the cuffs on his wrists were moved and undone, the metal pinching and irritating his injuries.

Rage yanked Virgil up to his feet. “Lazy, useless bitch!”

Virgil gasped and tried to stand, but his legs gave out. Rage started kicking him, making Virgil curl up into a ball involuntarily to protect himself, changing positions as Rage targeted different areas.

“Enough Rage,” Deceit said, sounding bored. “Let him get clean, then you can take out your frustration.”

“Can he even get clean though?!” Malice laughed while Virgil whimpered.

Rage landed one more kick on Virgil’s left hip, making him cry out. Rage grabbed a fistful of Virgil’s hair and started dragging him to a bathroom. Virgil tried to use his legs and arms to gain some purchase on the ground, but Rage didn’t give him a chance.

Rage picked Virgil by one of his arms and threw him in the tub against the wall. Virgil gaped with wide eyes as he tried to breathe with the wind knocked out of him. The side of his body that had hit the wall was screaming in pain, and Virgil knew that he had at least bruised some bones, if not broken them. He heard Rage turn on the tub spout full blast, cold water from the powerful spray ricocheting onto him.

“Clean up, I don’t have all fucking day.”

Virgil pushed up with shaking arms, wheezing desperately, but his arms gave out and he fell to the bottom of the tub.

“Oh for fuck’s sake!”

Virgil let tears slip out when Rage threw a heavy lotion bottle and hit him in the head.

“Get under the fucking water!”

Virgil crawled under the powerful flow of freezing water by weakly pulling himself with his arms and pushing with his legs. As soon as the water hit him, he gasped, his body panicking under the
freezing cold spray and resorting to shallow, labored breathing. He couldn’t fit his entire body under the spout of bruising water, so he moved himself so water ran over as much of his body as possible. He cupped a small amount of water in his hands and tried rubbing some of the filth off him that way, but it was slow going.

The water was turned off. Virgil froze in place, taking in as much air as he could while nothing was happening. Suddenly, boiling hot water erupted from the spout, making Virgil scream and start pushing away with his feet.

Rage grabbed Virgil’s hair again and slammed his head against the porcelain. “Don’t you fucking move!!”

Virgil sobbed, the burning excruciating and only multiplying every second. Just as soon as the hot water began, his head was released and ice-cold water pelted his burns. He whimpered weakly as he lay limp on the bottom of the tub, legs twitching as they tried to curl up, tears leaking down his face. He could barely hear voices over the thunder of water. Finally, mercifully, the water was turned off.

“There you go,” Jealousy’s sickly sweet voice wafted over to Virgil, “Did the cold water feel nice on your burns?”

Virgil cried as he spoke. “Y-yes s-s-sir,” he sobbed.

“Don’t know why you’re crying, I’m helping you,” Jealousy grumbled.

Virgil flicked his eyes up to meet Jealousy’s seafoam green ones. “Th-thank you s-s-sir,” he managed with only a few hitches and whimpers.

Jealousy smiled down at him. “That’s better. Come on, I convinced Deceit to let me have you until tomorrow morning. It’ll just be me and you,” he reached out to stroke Virgil’s face, “together,” he whispered excitedly.

Virgil ended up having to crawl to Jealousy’s room while Jealousy impatiently walked ahead of him. Jealousy had him suck him off by the bed before Jealousy left Virgil alone in the room to go eat dinner.

“Feel free to come down and join us if you want anything!” he’d called over his shoulder.

Virgil curled up into a ball and wept, the smell of food coming in through the open door and his stomach cramping painfully. He wanted to get the taste out of his mouth, he wanted to wash himself so he was actually clean, he wanted to stop hurting.

Malice noticed the open door and fucked him dry on the floor, quietly approaching, then using his larger body to cover Virgil’s severely weakened, helpless one. Virgil was able to use that to dissociate and crawl into the vents, but after what seemed like five seconds Jealousy was back, screaming and beating him with a cane.

“I leave for a single meal and you go out and fuck someone?! You useless whore!! You’ve been with us for three years and you still don’t get it?!”

Jealousy was only landing glancing blows, which still broke the skin, but then threw Virgil over the bed to get a better angle. Strike after cane strike landed on his back, buttocks, and legs, his muscles instinctively trying to curl away while he consciously tried to stay still for Jealousy.
Virgil didn’t know how long it went on, but the beating stopped.

“Oh, little boy,” Jealousy cooed, “Look at you, you have some owies don’t you?”

Virgil had to suck in a few breaths before he could rasp out, “Yes sir.”

“It’s okay little boy, I’ll take care of you.” A cloying croon, a hand that stung as it ran over the many wounds. “You’re safe with me. You’ll make it up to me, I know you will.”

Jealousy grabbed Virgil’s hips and entered him roughly, then began a slow pace.

“See? I’m taking such good care of you. I’ll show you what it’s supposed to be like. It’s supposed to feel good.”

Virgil couldn’t stop the high-pitched, pained keens as Jealousy used him.

“Told you I’d make you feel good.”

“Yes sir, ah, thank you sir.” Virgil had to swallow back vomit.

Jealousy kept whispering into Virgil’s ear and thrusting into him, becoming more rough, until he orgasmed. He pulled out just in time to mark Virgil’s back.

“All mine,” he panted. He laid down on the bed and pulled Virgil up to him. “Don’t get my sheets dirty.”

Virgil waited until Jealousy’s breathing evened out before he checked the older Side’s phone. His eyes nearly bugged out of his head. ‘It’s been almost two weeks!’ He wanted to scream and cry, but barely had the energy to stay awake. Virgil passed out quickly despite the pain, exhausted by the previous two weeks of torture.

The next morning, Jealousy woke Virgil up.

Jealousy rolled onto his back. “Ride me, show me how much you love me.”

Virgil was still in excruciating pain, but was feeling like he had a little life in him from the night’s rest. He kept his head hung low, always feeling sick whenever he had to “perform”.

He pulled Jealousy’s satin boxers down and positioned himself over the Side, guiding himself onto Jealousy.

Jealousy groaned as Virgil sank down. “Oh yeah, so good.” He reached out a hand to massage Virgil’s thigh as Virgil began using screaming muscles.

Virgil felt his awareness drift away, pain fading into nothing. He was only brought back when Jealousy slapped his thigh.

“Whew! You really didn’t want to stop, did you? I’m sorry to say I’m done. You wanted more, didn’t you?”

“Yes sir.”

“What a good boy. Don’t worry, I’ll be back after breakfast.” Jealousy frowned. “Aren’t you going to thank me?”

“Thank you sir.”
Jealousy stood and patted Virgil’s cheek. Virgil laid down on his side, curling up and shaking, hugging himself for a small semblance of comfort. He closed his eyes and tried to pretend Remy or Saul was the one hugging him. He could smell the decaf coffee Remy drank, and the sports deodorant Saul layered on. He rubbed his hands up and down his arms, squeezing occasionally despite the deep pain from his horrific bruises, pretending his dads were hugging him and comforting him, a painful lump in his throat forming. He didn’t realize he was crying until Jealousy sighed.

“Miss me that much?”

Virgil opened his eyes, unable to respond.

Jealousy just walked over, pulled himself out of his slacks, and shoved himself down Virgil’s throat. Virgil gagged initially, but got to work and calmed his reflex. Jealousy kept a painful grip in Virgil’s hair, thrusting. Just as Virgil thought he was going to pass out, Jealousy pulled out and came over Virgil’s hair.

Once he finished, he tucked himself away and combed his fingers through Virgil’s hair for a minute. Next, he knelt on the bed behind Virgil and pulled him so his hips were in the air. He ran an appreciative hand over Virgil, spreading him open.

“Beautiful,” he murmured. “Look at how marked you are. They’ll know you’re mine.”

Jealousy brought Virgil downstairs, Virgil needing to use the walls and railing to stay upright. Rage slammed him down onto the mattress and shackled him on his back. Virgil shuddered at the disgusting feel of the mattress.

“My turn!” Malice shouted gleefully. He straddled Virgil’s head and started using him. As Virgil expected, Malice pinched his nose until he passed out.

When he awoke, Virgil coughed and hacked, every breath burning. He was back on his stomach and could see several pairs of feet around him.

“Dearest Virgil,” Deceit drawled, “do you think you can be good and stay out here for longer than you have been?”

Virgil remembered being left alone and ignored until he was being used, how much he hated the filthy mattress, how it made him feel less than human.

He let out a sob, knowing the correct answer. “Yes sir.”

~~~

Virgil gasped as he sat up in bed. He looked around, confused, feeling stained. The memories from his dream tore at his psyche, and he was frozen in fear. Slowly, ever so slowly, memories from the present trickled in. He remembered Remy and Saul holding him and comforting him, he remembered his boyfriends, he remembered Thomas.

Virgil buried his face in his hands and sobbed uncontrollably. He could feel his sheets acquiring the stain that was permanently on and in him and he hated it. He rolled out of bed, scared his hip was going to pop out and relieved when it didn’t. He saw Shelly and Lucas on his bed, and had to get them off before the stain spread to them from his sheets. He grabbed a Kleenex box and knocked the spiders onto the floor before running into his bathroom.

He turned the water as hot as it would go with shaking hands and grabbed his old, astringent body
soap. He scrubbed viciously at himself, using the soap for shampoo as well, trying desperately to get the gross off him. When he realized he was close to bleeding from his frantic scrubbing, he fell to his knees and wept, skin burning from the water.

*I can’t let them touch me. I can’t let them know I’m here. I can’t. I won’t do that to them. I won’t. I’m too gross.*

Virgil wailed for his loss, the loss of his brothers and surrogate parents, the loss of Thomas, the loss of his boyfriends. He wailed for the loss of any hope of love.

*I want to be warm with them! I want to be warm and loved and safe! Oh god!!*

He turned off his shower, not ceasing his cries, sloppily dried himself off, and dressed himself. He curled up on the carpeted floor of his bedroom and kept crying as his heart tore in two.

Chapter End Notes

Hi folks! There was going to be art for this chapter, but I, in my brilliance, forgot to take down who the artist was and I wanna give them credit! I'm so sorry wonderful artist! Let me know who you are and I'll get you in the next chapter!!
Alright, we've got a few trigger warnings for this chapter. About a thousand words in, there's a very brief, half-sentence reference to self-harm that's not followed through on. There's also an italicized block of text between two lines of tildes about halfway through that contains sexual assault, electrocution, burning, restraint, and implied torture. There's also some very negative thoughts throughout the chapter, but the character is able to power through with some assistance.

Also, I'm a dunce who forgot to post Jasper's chapter summary for the chapter that Virgil has sex with Logan! Here it is!

Virgil, shyly: "I might've thought about some stuff."
Logan: "You have my complete and undivided attention."
Virgil: "Umm, wanna try some stuff? ohshit unless you're busy of course!"
Logan *immediately sweeps everything off his desk onto the floor*: "I have never been busy in my life. My schedule is absolutely blank and I have the rest of eternity to listen to what you want to do to me."

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Patton frowned as he slowly woke up. He was trying to figure out what the sound was that woke him. He opened his eyes and listened, looking at his clock and sighing. 5:03 A.M.

It's low and comes in waves, and it sometimes goes higher. It repeats itself, but not in a perfect pattern… OH MY GOD VIRGIL!!!

Patton flung his sheets and blankets off, but still tripped over them as he sprang out of bed.

Oh my god baby, I’m coming, it’s okay!!

Patton caught himself just as he was about to burst through the door.

I need to knock, I gotta let him know we’re safe! We’ll respect him!

Patton knocked on Virgil’s door, a little quickly. “Virgil, sweetpea?” he heard the crying abruptly cut off, only little gasps audible from behind the door. He managed to keep his voice steady through his heartbreak. “Can I come in honey?”

“No!” A sob. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay sweetie! It sounds like you’re having a really hard time in there.” Patton sat down next to the door, careful to keep his emotions guarded. “I’ll be here until you’re ready to see someone.”

Patton frowned when it sounded like more sobs were punched out of Virgil. “Baby? Are you okay in there?”

“Y-yeah.”
He tilted his head. “Do you want someone in there with you?”

When a series of gut-wrenching cries floated through the door, Patton knew what was wrong.

“Do you think you shouldn’t have people with you?”

When Virgil didn’t respond, Patton sighed. *Oh baby, why won’t you learn?*

“Baby, you deserve to have people around you. We love you so much!!”

“Y-y-you shouldn’t!! I’m g-gross!!”

“Baby, no…”

Patton let Virgil cry for a minute before speaking again.

“Sweetheart, we’ve been together for so long. And we’ve known you even longer than that! I love you, I love being near you, I love touching you and holding you and cuddling you and petting your hair and so many other things!” Patton had to bite his lip and breathe deeply a few times at the high-pitched, pained keens he heard. “Virgil, chocolate chip-” Patton cringed at the sorrowful sounds Virgil made after that, “-what they did to you didn’t make you gross. You’re not gross. It only makes them gross.”

“B-but th-they *s-s-stained* me! I d-d-don’t w-want t-to stain y-you g-g-guys!”

“You won’t. Because you’re not stained. There’s not a thing wrong with you. You’re not bad or gross or anything like that!” Patton broke when he heard Virgil sob again. “Oh baby, please let me come in!”

Patton’s eyes were overflowing with tears by the time he heard a timid, “O-okay.”

He jumped up and opened the door as quickly as he dared. He wiped his eyes when he saw Virgil curled up defensively on the floor, shivering violently, face so *broken*.

“Sweetheart…”

“I d-don’t… I don’t w-want to! I don’t…”

Patton crouched down on one knee a few feet away from Virgil. “Shhhhhhh, I know. Can we try a grounding exercise?”

With Virgil’s desperate nod, Patton led Virgil through several grounding exercises. Although Virgil had calmed down a bit with the fourth one, Patton noticed Virgil hadn’t stopped shivering.

“Are you back with us honey?”

Virgil kept his eyes averted. “I h-haven’t r-r-really,” he stopped to blow out a shaky breath. “I w-wasn’t gone. I j-just think I’m t-too g-gross.”

Patton kept himself from sighing. “You’re not gross, and-”

“But I am! Do you know how many times they *used* me? I’m so marked and just… *gross*!!”

Patton wracked his brain for a strategy. “Okay… let’s try something.” He tried not to take it personally when Virgil flinched and whimpered. “Imagine it was me who had gone through all of the things you have.”
For the first time, Virgil’s eyes flashed up to Patton’s, and Patton had to focus on not crying when he saw his shadowling’s eyes.

Patton smiled sadly. “Would I be gross or stained?” “No! Of course not!!”

“Okay! So then why are you different?”

“B-because… b-because that’s how it always was f-for m-me!”

“I’m so sorry baby. But remember, I asked what if I had gone through what you did?”

Virgil shook his head. “No, no… I won’t let it happen to you. I won’t! It can’t!”

Patton started reaching out but pulled back quickly. “It’s okay honey! It hasn’t! But the idea is, if that happened to me, would I be gross and stained? And never deserve love or gentle touches?”

“No!”

“Okay! Then why are you different?”

Virgil paused. “I… I’m just different. Fuck, I can’t explain it.”

Patton moved into a sitting position. “Okay. Um, let’s try this. Are feelings the same as reality? Just because you feel something, does that make it true?”

Virgil started biting his thumb nail. “No…”

“Feelings are always valid. But just because you feel gross doesn’t mean you are.” When another violent shiver went through Virgil, Patton noticed his wet hair. “You just showered right? But your skin doesn’t feel good?”

Virgil shivered again. “Feels dirty,” he mumbled.

“I’m so sorry sweetie. Let’s say I felt gross and stained. Would that make it true?”

“No! You could never be.”

“Same for you. Just because you feel gross and stained doesn’t mean you are.”

Virgil froze, until his shivering made him move again. He started crying again, albeit more quietly. Patton’s heart twisted. “Can I touch you, please?”

Virgil shook his head. “I’m s-sorry!”

“It’s okay baby! I’m so proud of you for telling me that!”

Patton let Virgil cry for several long minutes while talking to him in a low voice, assuring him that he was perfect and clean and so loved. Eventually, Virgil raised his eyes once more.

“C-can we go to your room?”

“Of course sweetie.”

Virgil pushed himself up slowly, arms shaking. Patton longed to reach out and help him up, but didn’t. He’d never want to touch Virgil when he’d been told not to. As Virgil climbed to his feet, his shivering intensified and he wrapped his arms around himself.
Patton stood with Virgil. “It looks like your hair’s still wet. Are you cold?”

Virgil nodded as fresh tears flowed. “I-it’s warmer on the ground if you can lay there for a while.”

* I wish he didn’t have to know that. “How long have you been awake?” *

Virgil curled in his shoulders and bit his lip. “W-what time is it?”

Patton glanced at the clock on Virgil’s nightstand. “5:30?”

“How long have you been awake?”

Patton had to wipe at his eyes. “Let’s get you in my room and warmed up! I know just the thing!”

Virgil nodded and trailed after Patton. He was ushered through the door, and stood awkwardly in the middle of the bedroom.

Patton took a deep, calming breath. “Okay honey. Where do you want to sleep?”

Virgil dug his fingernails into his arms, but resisted the urge to scratch.

*I just want to be warm in a soft bed with Patton. I want that so bad! I want to be warm, I don’t want to be cold or hurting anymore! I want warm and soft! “Can w-we stay in y-y-your bed? I’m sorry, I don’t-”*

“Of course we can!” Patton chirped with forced cheerfulness. “I’m going to get some water, do you want to get settled under the covers?”

Virgil smiled in the direction of Patton, but couldn’t quite force himself to meet Patton’s eyes. He quietly got under the covers and snuggled in on his side.

“Do you want any water?” Patton called from his bathroom.

“No thank you,” Virgil forced out past his sore throat.

“Okay!”

Virgil refocused on the space in front of him, currently littered with stuffed animals. He could feel his eyes sting anew.

*I want to hold one of Patton’s stuffed animals, but I’m not good enough. I just want one, I want to hold one, I want to be warm and have soft things with Patton, I’m so tired of being in cold and hard places, I-

“Sweetheart! Why are you crying?”

Shit. “I’m sorry Pat, I just…” Virgil hid his face in the blankets. *I’m so fucking greedy.*

“No apologies needed! Do you want something? Are you uncomfortable?”

“No! It’s not that, I-” Virgil took a deep breath. “Can I Hold One Of Your Animals Tonight?” he rushed out.

After a moment, Patton smiled. “Of course you can baby, that’s adorable! Which one do you want?”

Virgil slowly brought his face out of the thick blankets and looked at Patton. “Hey.”
“Hey yourself!”

Virgil huffed quietly, then spied a blue dog with large spots on it. *Oh my god that is exactly Patton.* “I… Can I have the b-blue d-dog?”

“Sure!” Patton handed Virgil the dog. “There you go! And just to make sure, do you want me to sleep in bed with you or somewhere else?”

“Stay please,” Virgil begged. His eyes widened when he realized what he’d done. “Oh god, I mean, if you want to, I don’t mean to-”

“I do want to! Works out pretty well!” Patton slid in next to Virgil, and Virgil noticed he’d changed into a sleep shirt and pants while he was in the bathroom.

*God he’s so warm, and so perfect to cuddle with, he’s so soft, but I can’t ask-*

“Do you wanna cuddle or have some space?” Patton asked quietly.

Virgil bit the inside of his lip for a few moments. “C-cuddle? P-p-please?” he asked shakily. He whimpered and drew in.

Patton smiled, a twinge of pain in his eyes, and lifted his arm. Virgil slowly moved under Patton’s arm to rest his head on the larger chest. Virgil shifted and settled against Patton, sighing softly when Patton’s arms rested around him.

“Goodnight chocolate chip. I love you so much.”

“Night Pat. I love you too.”

~~~~~

Virgil bit the inside of his cheek so hard he tasted blood. They were taking off the cuffs and, thanks to Malice’s obsession with electricity, burnt flesh that had already been rubbed raw was going with them.

“We read that it’s important to give chained animals “enrichment” to improve their mental health. We care about you so much, and want to help you,” Deceit began, “Which is why you’re getting a break from the mattress. Aren’t we kind?”

“Yes sir.”

“Hm. Now crawl over to the couch and serve these gracious men. Hands and knees, no cheating.”

*It took Virgil several minutes to get onto his hands and knees, and his elbows buckled as soon as he tried getting off the mattress.*

Greed laughed at Virgil’s position. “As much as you might love getting fucked on the mattress, it’s time for the couch now. Don’t worry, I’ll make sure you get more time on the mattress.”

Virgil swallowed back bile and pulled his knees onto the ground. With the support of his legs, he was able to start moving again. He got to Malice first, who had already pulled himself out of his pants. The room started to dim as he finished servicing Malice through his disgusting ramblings and moved on to Rage. His vision blacked out when Rage pushed his head all the way down.

~~~~~
Virgil woke to arms around him, and a grumbling and moving man beneath him. He froze, blood turning to ice in terror.

“Alarm, not now alarm, hush alarm,” Patton whispered.

Virgil relaxed when he looked up and saw Patton.

When Patton finally stopped his alarm clock, he looked down at Virgil and smiled apologetically. “Sorry baby, forgot to turn off my alarms.” He frowned. “You okay?”

Virgil shook his head and hid his face in Patton’s chest. Patton’s arms tightened around him and started moving up and down. “N-nightmare.”

“Oh baby-” Patton was cut off by a snuffle from Virgil. “It’s okay now, you’re safe. They won’t ever hurt you again.”

Virgil was proud of himself for keeping his sobs quiet, although Patton still felt every single one like a dagger to the heart.

Patton softly kissed the top of Virgil’s head when he’d calmed down a little. “Was it a nightmare that upset you earlier tonight?”

Virgil hiccuped. “Y-yeah.”

“I’m so sorry honey.”

Virgil just held onto Patton’s shirt for dear life, with Patton holding onto him. Once Virgil’s cries had died down again, Patton squeezed him.

“Ready for breakfast?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. He still didn’t feel worthy of his boyfriends, and he was exhausted, but he didn’t want to ignore them. “Yeah.”

“Okay sweetie. Breakfast on the couch?”

Virgil nodded against Patton’s chest. Patton kissed the top of his head one more time and started sitting up.

They slowly made their way downstairs, Patton bringing Virgil some orange juice before he even turned the stove on. When he heard Roman coming down the stairs, Patton rubbed Virgil’s back a few times before attending to breakfast. As soon as Roman saw Virgil on the couch, he knew something was wrong with his love.

“Dark angel?”

When the nickname was only met with a slight hunch of the shoulders, Roman sat next to Virgil. “Are you alright?”

Virgil set the half-drunk glass of orange juice on a coaster on the coffee table and leaned against Roman, who wasted no time in clutching Virgil to his chest.

“My sweet, what-”

“Nightmares,” Virgil explained roughly.
“Oh love.”

Roman held Virgil for several moments before Virgil asked, “C-can I s-still b-b-be your b-
boyfriend?”

Too shocked to formulate a serious reply, Roman offered instead, “I would certainly hope so, as
I’m still deeply in love with you.”

It seemed to work, as the next moment Virgil had wrapped his arms around Roman’s muscular
torso and started crying loudly into it. Roman put a hand on the back of Virgil’s head and used the
other to rub his back. “Virgil! Goodness, my sweet little stormcloud…”

Roman did his best to comfort Virgil, and when Virgil calmed down he breathed a sigh of relief.
Virgil moved to rest more comfortably against his prince, secure in a hero’s arms.

Roman kept his hand on the back of Virgil’s head and massaged it, hearing a rumble a moment
later.

He chuckled. “There’s my kitten.”

Virgil playfully headbutted Roman’s chest in retaliation and rumbled louder when Roman rubbed
his arm.

“There you go,” Roman whispered into Virgil’s hair. “There you go. We’re not going anywhere.
You’ll have us for as long as you want us, I swear.”

Virgil looked up shyly, and smiled when he was offered a handkerchief a moment later. He quickly
cleaned his face and blew his nose, cuddling with Roman as soon as he was done. In a moment of
courage, he pecked Roman’s cheek.

“Can’t imagine never wanting you,” he murmured before hiding his face again.

Roman smiled sappily and scratched the back of Virgil’s head, hearing rumbles once more. “I love
you too, Virgil.”

Chapter End Notes

Eyyyyyy you made it!! How’d you like it? Poor Virge had a really rough night huh?
Don’t worry, we’re going to be seeing some very special guests in the fic soon! >:)
Hi folks!! We do have a few warnings for this chapter. After dinner, there's some consensual steaminess, two separate sections of it in fact! The first steamy section does contain a description of arousal as well as thigh touching. There are three people in the first section of steaminess, and two in the second section. In the second section, there isn't any thigh touching, but it is headed there. There's also the use of a safeword in the second section. As always, please let me know if something else should be warned for!

Virgil was rumbling deep in his chest, enjoying the warmth from Roman and being pressed against him, when he heard a set of footsteps descend the stairs.

*Logan.*

Sure enough, Virgil felt the cushions to his side dip a moment later. Roman kissed the top of his head and loosened his grip.

“Moonlight.”

Virgil’s eyes were already watering when he met Logan’s dark espresso eyes. Logan’s gaze was searching Virgil’s face, concerned.

“Your eyes are red, darling.”

Virgil smiled a small but sincere smile at Logan. “Nightmares.” He sniffled, which was met with a squeeze from Roman. “I… It’s good to see you.”

Logan was frowning with worry. “May I-”

“Please.”

Logan scooted closer to Virgil and wrapped an arm around him, using his free hand to brush away a tear that had fallen. Virgil closed his eyes and nuzzled Logan’s hand while rumbling, making Roman and Logan look at him adoringly.

After a half hour of the three men cuddling, Patton quietly brought out a quiche with coffee, more orange juice, and some grapes. Logan talked everyone through the day while Roman excitedly told everyone about the new ventures Thomas was considering. Thankfully, Thomas had scheduled it so he could visit his family for dinner, which meant a relaxing evening for the Sides.

After breakfast, Virgil got a good, long hug from Patton.

“Do you want to stay with me today baby?” Patton asked when they drew apart.

Virgil smiled and kissed Patton. “I’m okay Pat. I actually really wanna see Remy and Saul.”
“Okay honey! Just let us know. Have fun with your dads!”

Virgil snorted. “Thanks Pat.” He kissed his boyfriend once more, then sank out to the Neutral Side.

When he arrived in the Neutral Side, he didn’t hear anyone. He walked into the kitchen and saw a pan with burnt egg in it, then carefully walked to the bedroom door and put his ear against it. Not hearing any sounds that might imply the future need for brain bleach, he knocked. A few moments later, Saul answered, bleary-eyed and in sleep clothes.

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “You’re in bed early.”

Saul shrugged. “Remy got back from his shift early, insisting on an “early Friday”.”

“It’s Tuesday.”

“I told him that. He just said that time is a construct.”

Virgil snorted, then slapped a hand over his mouth so he wouldn’t wake the sleeping Side.

“Were you wanting to hang out, or would you like to sleep?”

Virgil looked at the dark outline behind Saul. I can’t wake him up. “I’ll lay down with you guys, but I probably won’t sleep. Thomas has shit to do today.”

Saul and Virgil crawled into the large bed, Virgil in between his two surrogate parents. He balled up a bit of Remy’s sleep shirt in his hand in a vain attempt to prevent tears.

“Little one?”

Virgil quietly cleared his throat. “Sorry Saul. Had a couple nightmares this morning, ‘s one of the reasons I wanted to see you guys.”

Saul held him tightly from behind. “I’m so sorry Virgil. We’ve got you, you’re safe. We love you so much.”

Virgil cried silently while Saul ran fingers through his hair. Once Virgil calmed down, Saul ruffled his hair, disheartened when he didn’t hear a hiss immediately afterwards.

“How much sleep did you get last night?”

Virgil’s breath hitched. “N-not much.”

Saul shifted so he was holding Virgil again. “Try to get a little sleep. Thomas will be okay with passive influence for now. And I’ll be getting up in an hour to work, so I’ll keep an eye on him for you.”

“Okay. Th-thanks.”

“Not a problem. Go to sleep.”

Virgil consciously relaxed his muscles and waited until he heard Saul’s breathing even out.

I can’t fall asleep. Thomas needs me, even if Saul’s awake. I have to protect him. I have to protect all of them.

Virgil watched over Thomas carefully, keeping his presence in the background. Eventually, the
combination of being surrounded by warmth, family, and a soft bed and blankets made Virgil’s eyelids grow heavy.

*I’ll close my eyes. Just for a minute.*

\\\\

When Saul awoke, he was happy to see Virgil had fallen asleep. He’d noticed how red his little brother’s eyes were and he was thrilled when he could make Virgil laugh. He carefully extracted himself from the bed and fixed the sheets and blankets around Virgil. With a final fond look, he went into the kitchen, absentmindedly influencing Thomas and cleaning the dirty dishes away. He put on a pot of coffee for when Virgil would wake up and focused more fully on Thomas.

Sure enough, 5 hours later, he heard a few expletives come from his room, and then another string of profanity. After several minutes, a haggard-looking Remy and Virgil emerged. Saul just gestured at the coffee maker. Virgil headed for it with a single-minded determination, while Remy summoned an iced drink. Once they were all sat down at the table, Remy looked over his sunglasses at Virgil.

“How’re things going with your boos? You get any more action?”

Virgil turned a dark shade of red. “I- kind of? We’ve made out and cuddled?”

“Okay that’s adorable, but I’m talking about fu-”

“Nope! Not yet!”

Saul ruffled Virgil’s hair, relieved to hear a hiss this time.

“You’ve gotta get on that. Or vice versa, whatever you’re into.”

“Remy.”

“Or whatever’s into you.”

“REMY.”

“Or-”

“REMY.”

Remy dissolved into cackling. “Sorry babe, it’s too easy! I’m just happy one of those himbos up there helped get your rocks off!”

When Virgil only looked at the table, chewing on his lip, Remy sobered quickly. “Sugar? Something wrong?”

Virgil looked up guiltily. “I don’t think so? I just… didn’t get off.”

Remy frowned deeply. “Did Logan?”

“Yeah!” Virgil’s eyes got a distant look as the corners of his mouth twitched upwards. “He did.”

Remy relaxed slightly. “Then why didn’t he get you off?”

Virgil’s eyes refocused as he picked at the end of one of his sleeves. “He offered, but I was kinda
nervous? I’ve never… looked like that in front of them.”

“Babe, they’re head over heels for you. They obviously think you’re hot.”

“But what if they stop thinking that when they see me without any clothes on?!”

Saul decided he needed to step in. “They won’t.”

Virgil deflated, putting his head in his hands. “Ugh, you’re probably right, my brain’s just stupid. And I don’t know, it’s kinda scary thinking about not having clothes on around people?”

Saul reached over and squeezed Virgil’s hand. “You’re safe here.”

“I know, and I’m safe with them. Logan was super careful and respectful, and when I said no after he offered to,” Virgil cleared his throat as his ears turned pink, “return the favor, he was fine with that, just said that the offer still stands. They’re really awesome.”

“They’d better be.”

“Remy. Virgil, have you spoken with Dr. Picani about this?”

Virgil was studying his coffee mug intently, old feelings of guilt creeping back in. “Kinda? Not about this though. I’ve gotta see him soon.”

“I think that’s a good idea, coffee bean.”

Virgil smiled shyly at him, and Saul fixed a grilled sandwich lunch for them while Remy and Virgil chatted. After lunch, Virgil and Remy watched an episode of *Keeping up with the Kardashians* and dragged each character while Saul brought over drinks and snacks as requested.

At the end, Virgil hugged each Side. “I’ll be back soon,” he promised, voice thick.

“You come over as often as you want, there’s no such thing as bothering us!”

When Virgil was finally able to make himself go back to the Light Side, Saul led Remy back to bed, knowing his love needed more sleep.

///// All of the Sides were working diligently, making sure Thomas didn’t have too much leftover work before he headed to his parents’ house. By the time dinner rolled around, Virgil was a little frazzled but pleased to have the rest of the night off work.

Virgil went downstairs to see Patton boiling some spaetzle.

Patton turned around and brightened. “Hey buttercup! How does cod with spaetzle and brussels sprouts sound?”

Virgil smiled and walked over to Patton. “Sounds delicious,” he said lowly before kissing Patton. “And the food sounds good too.”

Patton had a pretty red blush dotting his face. “That’s good!” he squeaked.

Virgil just looked at him softly. “Anything I can do to help?”

“I, ahm, I think I’m good! Do you want to set the table?”
“Sure.”

Patton finished getting everything cooked, and Virgil fetched everyone from upstairs. He smiled at Logan, despite the gnawing sense of guilt growing stronger.

_He said he’s cool with me waiting, but I already got to get him off and it was incredible. He wants to, so doesn’t he deserve it? I owe it to him, I already got to._

While Virgil was swallowing thickly, Thomas and the family decided to play _Trivial Pursuit_.

Logan sighed. “It seems I’ll be indisposed following dinner. Although if history is any indication, I sincerely doubt they’ll be competing in this game for very long.”

Virgil snorted into his cod through his growing fear. _Okay, so I’ll have a little time after dinner before I have to let Logan touch me, but then I’ll have to wait for him and then I might be too anxious to get it up._

Virgil forced the rest of his dinner down, opting for only one serving so he’d be less likely to throw up from anxiety. _I don’t want him to touch me. I don’t want to be touched. It’s scary and it hurts and I just want to keep my pants on. I don’t want to take them off._ He was proud of himself for being able to not cry throughout the ordeal of supper.

Logan bid everyone farewell before heading up to his room while Roman and Patton dragged Virgil over to the couch, insisting on binge-watching the new spinoff of Steven Universe. Virgil could hardly protest the decision as he was placed between his two right-brained boyfriends. He cuddled with them, trying and failing to soothe his nerves for when Thomas was done playing _Trivial Pursuit_.

_At least they’re not touching me where I don’t want to be touched._ Virgil rumbled when Patton started massaging the back of his tense neck.

_Wait..._ Virgil felt hope blossom in his chest as an idea came to mind. “Hey Pat?” he whispered.

“Yeah baby?”

“Can I kiss you?”

“Yeah baby!”

Virgil chuckled at the Austin Powers impression and started the kiss out sweet, Patton using his free hand to squeeze Virgil’s knee. Virgil deepened the kiss, very aware of the warm weight that was Roman’s arm still wrapped around his shoulders. Sure enough, a minute later he heard the television show pause and felt a hand brush his forearm.

“May I kiss you as well?” Roman asked lowly.

Virgil pulled back and gasped out a “Yes!” as Patton started mouthing at his neck. He felt a smile against his neck as Roman started kissing and sucking on the opposite side. Virgil was letting out little gasps and moans as two of his boyfriends worked to bring him pleasure. Patton nipped playfully at his skin before soothing it with a lick and a kiss, while Roman had started kneading Virgil’s thigh and sucking on Virgil’s neck to gently roll it between his teeth. Sparks were shooting from Virgil’s thigh straight to his groin and he had to stop himself from thrusting against empty air.

Roman released the section he’d been working on and kissed it, and listened to Virgil whining breathlessly.
“Such pretty sounds you make for me,” Roman growled into his ear. Virgil mewled helplessly, and Roman smiled against his ear, kissing the shell of it lightly. “Logan’s beautiful in the midst of ecstasy, no? Tell me, my sweet, how do you look?”

Virgil moaned wantonly. “I don’t- ah! I don’t know! I offered, but, oh fuck, I just wanted to cuddle after that! Oh fuck, please kiss me.”

Patton reconnected their lips, and it was all Virgil could do to hold on for Patton’s surprisingly filthy kiss. He was making all kinds of embarrassing sounds into Patton’s mouth as Roman had focused back on his neck and brought his hand from Virgil’s shoulder to his lower back.

The combination of sensations and the two men concentrating on Virgil was overwhelming him in a great way. He was running his hands over Patton’s arms and shoulders, moaning when Roman would touch a particularly sensitive part on his thigh, then moan louder when Roman did it again. He remembered Patton didn’t like to have his hair pulled, so he ran his fingers through it instead, his nerves tickled by every soft strand he touched.

Suddenly, the overwhelming feeling turned from great to too much. Virgil pushed on Patton’s shoulders enough to disconnect their lips and hide his eyes on a broad shoulder. Both Patton and Roman stopped touching him almost entirely, Patton just embracing him in a loose hug and Roman with a grounding hand on his mid back. Virgil breathed through his nose, trying to calm his racing heart.

“You okay sweetie?”

Virgil relaxed his shoulders and curled into Patton. “I’m okay, I just got a little overwhelmed. You guys were awesome, it just got a little too much, but I’m okay.”

Roman started rubbing his back. “If you’re certain, little bat. Do you need anything?”

Virgil sighed, feeling steadier. “I’m good, that was really good. Could we keep watching Steven Universe?”

“Sure!”

Soon, Virgil was snuggling with two Sides while watching a masterpiece of a cartoon, and he couldn’t be happier. Logan was handling the game as best he could, and Virgil resolutely ignored the fact that it was almost over. Gotta stay relaxed for Logan. He smiled to himself. Maybe I could start kissing Patton and Roman again.

Virgil shook himself, wanting to save some for Logan, and just cuddled until the game ended and Thomas’ family started heading off to bed. Since Thomas was going to be spending the night at his family’s house, Virgil felt less of a need to be alarmed.

Virgil leaned forward, Roman and Patton leaning with him.

“I’m just gonna head up to Logan’s room. Figured I should hang out with him for a bit.”

“Okay! Have fun!!”

“Fare thee well, my love!”

Virgil sent them a two-finger salute and sank out to right in front of Logan’s door. He hesitantly knocked, his stomach lurching at what was about to happen. Logan opened the door, tense shoulders relaxing when he saw Virgil.
“Good evening, my moon.”

“Evening, star.”

Logan’s eyes twinkled at the nickname. “How may I be of service?” he asked innocently, voice pitched just that much lower.

Virgil swallowed past the lump in his throat, tilting his head so he could look up through his eyelashes. “You mentioned you wouldn’t mind… um…” Virgil lost his nerve and looked down. Thankfully, Logan seemed to catch on.

“It’s quite alright Virgil. Do come in,” he said, quickly stepping to the side. Virgil walked past him and stood next to the bed. Logan joined him, a gentle hand resting on Virgil’s arm.

“Do forgive me if it’s rather obvious, but can you please explicitly state what you want?” Virgil looked up at Logan, fighting the urge to chew his lip. “I want to know what it feels like to get off.” That part isn’t a lie. I just need to focus on Logan. Logan’s safe, he won’t hurt me too much. And he’s hot, I should be able to stay turned on.

Logan’s coffee brown eyes turned even darker. “Wonderful.” He stepped closer to Virgil, well within his personal space and placed a hand on his waist. “And how would you like to achieve that? I could touch you,” he leaned forward and kissed the junction of Virgil’s shoulder and neck. “I could do what you did to me,” a soft kiss on his jugular, making him shiver. “Or I could watch you touch yourself, tell you all the ways you’re doing a wonderful job.” Logan pressed against Virgil fully, enough so Virgil could feel Logan’s growing erection. “Tell me, which one of those appeals to you more?”

Virgil could only let out a whimper.

Logan smirked, staring into Virgil’s deep eyes. “I need full sentences, my dear.”

“Please.”

“Please what? Would you like me to bring you to orgasm with my mouth? With my hands? With instructions? I’m deeply curious.”

The response was a pitiful whine, and Logan kissed Virgil’s forehead, having mercy on the poor man.

“Shhhh, it’s okay, I’ll take care of you. Would you like me to do to you what you did to me?”

Virgil imagined how it would feel to have Logan’s lips around him, his tongue on him, intense eyes staring up at him. “Yes.”

“Perfect.” Logan kissed Virgil firmly, pulling his shadowy lover against him. Virgil made a sound into the kiss, trying to focus on it and stay in the moment, ignoring what he knew was approaching.

Virgil decided he wanted this to be over with as quickly as possible, so he pulled Logan down with him onto the bed. They both fell a little bit, making Logan smile and huff. They got situated so Logan was in between Virgil’s legs. Instead of draping himself over Virgil like he was expecting, Logan instead leaned up to look at Virgil in the eyes.

“Let me know the moment you want to stop, alright?”

“I will L.”
Logan kissed him softly as he laid down, giving Virgil space to say something if he needed to. He brushed the backs of his fingers over Virgil’s face before running them through silky hair.

Virgil felt like crying as Logan was so gentle with him. *I wanted it to be good for me. I don’t want him to touch me, not yet. It’s scary.* “Sh-should we take our clothes off?”

Logan pulled back enough to study Virgil’s face. “Only if you want to.”

Virgil smiled and nodded, sitting up and kissing Logan while shifting his hoodie off. *This I can handle.*

*But it’s not just this that’s going to happen, is it?*

Virgil ignored the voice, focusing on how Logan had vanished his tie and let Virgil lift his shirt up. Virgil quickly captured a nipple in his mouth and sucked on it, playing with it using his tongue and teeth, before moving on to the other one. Logan had a hand lightly resting on the back of Virgil’s head and was letting out short, high-pitched moans. When Virgil saw how dark Logan’s nipple was, he blew cold air on it, making the normally composed man above him swear loudly.

Virgil wordlessly brought one of Logan’s hands down to the hem of his t-shirt. Logan helped Virgil out of his shirt, then immediately started lavishing attention on Virgil’s collarbone. Virgil keened and hitched his hips upwards, relieved he could at least get a little hard. Logan started working on Virgil’s nipples next, careful not to overstimulate him, while his hands were going everywhere, rubbing and squeezing, hot and loving and *precise.*

“*Logan.*”

Logan started slowly, oh-so-slowly, kissing his way down Virgil’s stomach, his hands on Virgil’s sides. Virgil’s breath caught in his throat when Logan’s eyes flicked up to his. Virgil’s stomach began tying itself into knots, Logan’s mouth and hands going lower and lower.

*I don’t want this, I want this to stop, I can’t, he deserves this, I don’t want to, he should be able to do what he wants too.*

Logan’s hands rested lightly on Virgil’s hips, the look in his eyes changing from heated to questioning.

*I have to, I have to, I don’t want to, please I don’t- wait! He said he doesn’t want anything I don’t want! He said they don’t consent to sexual stuff when I don’t want it! OH NO. OH NO OH NO OH FUCKFUCKFUCKFUCKFUCKFUCK-* His thoughts abruptly cut off as Logan ran his fingertips just above the button to his jeans.

“Red!” Virgil choked out past his tears. He felt like he was going to throw up.

*I made him do something he didn’t want, oh god oh god oh god-*

Logan pulled the blanket over Virgil as he quickly crawled back up the bed. “It’s okay, it’s okay, I promise. I’m-” he cut off with a frown when Virgil shook his head, tears streaming out. “Darling, you were perfect, *perfect,* to use the safeword if you wanted to stop.”

*I’m a monster, oh fuck. “N-no! Logan, I-I-”* Virgil sobbed. “Y-you said you d-d-didn’t cons-sent to anything I d-don’t want!”

“That’s absolutely correct,” Logan replied adamantly. He was confused when that only caused more cries to erupt from Virgil. He cautiously wrapped his arms around Virgil, glad when his
frightened boyfriend curled into his embrace.

“It’s okay, I promise, I love you so much Virgil. Did I do something you didn’t want?” he asked, dreading the answer, already feeling sick.

“N-no, b-b-but I was gonna try to p-push myself into it!”

Realization dawned on Logan. “You didn’t want me to remove your pants and underwear or touch your genitalia?”

Virgil shook his head. Logan sighed. “Darling, you stopped before we did those things. I do not feel my consent has been violated, although I do question what on Earth made you think you had to submit yourself to sexual acts you don’t want for my sake?”

“I…” Virgil had to swallow stomach acid, despite feeling better now that Logan had said he didn’t feel like his boundaries were crossed. “I had such an amazing time with you, making you, um, you know, and you wanted to do that to me, and you deserve to do things you want in the relationship and I shouldn’t be greedy and keep them from you and—”

“Breathe darling.”

Virgil sucked in a breath. Before he could speak, Logan jumped in. “Darling, it seems that these particular thoughts have occurred before, in an only slightly different context, yes?”

“I… maybe?”

“And for the record, I very much enjoyed what you did, in case you couldn’t tell.”

Virgil’s face took on a blotchy flush.

“Have you spoken to Dr. Picani about this?”

“A little…”

“When did you last see him?”

“A week ago.” Virgil let out a breath. “I know, I should go see him.”

“I believe that would be a good idea.”

Virgil and Logan laid together silently, Logan comforting Virgil and Virgil trying to calm down. Eventually, they both began to tire.

“Darling, I believe we should sleep.”

Virgil lifted his head, unable to meet Logan’s eyes. “Yeah, you’re probably right.”

Logan snapped soft cotton t-shirts onto both of them. “Where would you like to sleep?”

Virgil understood the question for what it was. “Together, on the bed?”

“I would love nothing more.”

Logan summoned two more pillows so they could sleep a little more comfortably. Virgil started biting his thumbnail. “Hey Lo?”
“Yes?”

Virgil looked down at Logan, craving the feeling of holding his lithe body in his arms where he would be safe. “Can I hold you? If you don’t mind or anything!” Logan just smiled. “That sounds lovely, my dear.”

“Um, can it… Can I hold you with your back to me?”

Logan’s eyes held a mischievous glint. “You would like to be the big spoon?”

Virgil bit back an embarrassed groan and nodded. Logan flipped over on the bed and after a moment, Virgil slowly held him. Logan shuffled back, trying to encourage his nervous boyfriend to hold him.

Virgil relaxed when Logan settled against him. He loved holding his strong, sensitive nerd where he could protect him. He rumbled and tenderly kissed the back of Logan’s head.

“I love you L.”

“I love you too Virgil.”

Chapter End Notes

Logan’s kind of a little shit, isn’t he? Virgil had a great time starting out, but the poor boi needs to know to not push himself into things he doesn’t want!

We’ll be getting another special guest next chapter, but we’ll see if you like him as much as the guests this chapter.

3>:D
Chapter 157

Chapter Notes

Hi folks!! We do have a few warnings for this chapter. In the first part before the forward slashes, there are some discussions are sex, particularly about pushing oneself. A character starts spiralling a bit but is able to calm down before things get out of control. After the line of forward slashes, during the theatre scene, there's some pretty intense consensual steaminess that involves thigh touching, descriptions of arousal, and some grinding.

And we'll see our favorite snake this chapter too!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“We... are the Crystal Gems!”

Virgil jumped and smiled at the doctor’s sudden entrance. He waited until the short song was over and Dr. Picani had sat in his chair.

“Do you how do? How are you feeling today Virgil?”

Virgil smiled. “Good.” For the most part.

“That’s grrrrrreat! Anything you’d like to talk about today?”

Virgil fidgeted. “I, uh, kinda fuck up when it comes to sex?”

“Would you like a comfort item?”

At Virgil’s nod, Dr. Picani slid the basket of comfort items over to Virgil. Normally he’d wait until the shy man asked for one, but it sounded like something had happened since they’d last spoken.

Virgil grabbed the flying dolphin fish and clutched it to his chest. “I keep trying to do stuff I don’t want, which means they don’t want it and I don’t want to do that to them.”

Dr. Picani pressed his lips together sympathetically. “I’m glad you know your boyfriends don’t want anything you’re not ready for. Can you tell me why you push yourself?”

Virgil shifted on the couch. “I want to make them as happy as they make me. A few days ago…” he trailed off and absently smiled. He made eye contact with Picani, making the doctor smile. “Logan, um…” Virgil blushed and hid his face in the stuffed animal.

“We went out on a date, and afterwards,” Virgil brought his face out of the flying dolphin fish to smile at Dr. Picani again. “Logan and I had sex.”

Dr. Picani beamed. “That’s great Virgil!! And I’m guessing by your expression it went well?”

Virgil’s face was beet red, but he nodded. “Yeah! Logan was really careful and went slow with me, and he made it really good!”
“I’m so happy for you!! Did you feel ready for everything that happened?”

Virgil nodded. “I did! Logan let me, um, blow him,” he muttered out the last part quickly, “and then he offered to do the same to me but I didn’t want to and he respected that. And then we cuddled on my bed and went to sleep!”

“That sounds wonderful! And good for you for saying no to things when you didn’t want them!”

“Yeah!” Virgil’s mood dampened. “Um, and that’s uh… why I tried pushing myself with him later.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head to the side. “What happened?”

Virgil curled into the mammal-fish further. “I felt bad that he didn’t get to do what he wanted, even though he said he was cool with it. And I tried to let him get me off, and we got kinda far, but then I remembered he doesn’t consent to stuff I don’t want, so I used the safeword and he stopped.”

“That’s good you used the safeword when you wanted to stop! What led you up to the point of trying to push yourself into that?”

Virgil stared at the floor as tears built in his eyes. “Logan should have a good time too, not just me.” “And what makes you think Logan didn’t have a good time? It sure sounds like he did!”

Virgil’s blush returned. “He wanted to do the same thing to me and I didn’t let him.”

Dr. Picani tapped his pen on his chin. “Hmmmmmm. Let’s go over your boyfriends’ likes and dislikes. Do they all like the same things?”

“No, they each like different things. Logan and Roman like having their hair pulled and Patton doesn’t like that.”

“So is Patton being mean by not letting them pull on his hair? Should he let them pull on his hair even if he doesn’t like it?”

“No!” A moment later, “Goddammit.”

Dr. Picani smiled to himself. “Let’s apply that to you. The way you feel right now is the way your boyfriends feel about you pushing yourself into something you don’t want.”

Virgil sighed. “Yeah, okay.” He drew his knees up to his chest, something Dr. Picani hadn’t seen him do in a while. “It’s scary,” he whispered.

“Can you tell me what’s scary?”

Virgil’s eyes were distant. “Them touching me,” he said quietly.

“Touching your genitals?” Dr. Picani asked just as quietly. Virgil responded by sniffing and hiding his face in the flying dolphin fish. The therapist felt his heart twinge in sympathy. Before he could ask another question, Virgil started talking again.

“A-and them taking all my clothes off. I don’t w-want to!! It’s s-scary, it h-hurts!!” Virgil started hyperventilating.

“Okay Virgil, it’s okay,” Dr. Picani soothed. “You’re safe here. Can you find five things around you that are orange?”

Virgil whimpered as he lifted his head up. “F-five things,” he said shakily to himself. “Um, th-the
figurine o-ver there, the Steven Universe p-p-poster, your shoes, the r-robot plush, a-and a picture.”

Dr. Picani led Virgil through the rest of the grounding exercise, heart breaking when Virgil couldn’t contain his cries.

“And one good thing you like about yourself?”

“I l-like hanging out with my boyfriends?”

“That’s adorable! How are you feeling?”

Virgil placed his feet back on the ground, still holding the flying dolphin fish. “Better, th-thanks.” He sent a shy smile to the doctor.

“Of course! Want to keep chatting about that, or would you like to talk about the new spinoff series of Steven Universe?”

“Spinoff series, please.”

“Okay! Thank goodness they made another one right?”

////

Virgil stepped under the showerhead and let the hot spray wash over him. Dr. Picani had helped him get grounded again, but he felt coated in filth. He quickly used his shampoo and soap, then took his time with his hair conditioner. He still felt grimy, but he knew a shower couldn’t fix that.

He used his oud and bergamot scented lotion sparingly and did the bare minimum with his hair and makeup. He had just flopped on his bed with Tumblr pulled up when Patton knocked on his door for lunch. Although not feeling particularly hungry, he resolved to eat something so he wouldn’t feel crappy for the rest of the day.

When he got downstairs, he heard his three boyfriends already in the kitchen. Logan had his hand on Patton’s lower back and was whispering into his ear while Patton blushed and grinned mischievously. When Roman saw that Virgil had entered the kitchen, he walked up to him and grabbed his hand, smiling.

“Hello, my darkest, edgiest love.”

Virgil smiled and kissed his cheek. “Hello, my most dramatic, attention-seeking boyfriend.”

Roman smirked. “You know me too well.”

Virgil felt his ears burn as he ducked his head. “We should probably eat soon?”

Roman ran his thumb over the back of delicate fingers. “Very well, my sweet.”

Virgil’s hand was released as his heart rate increased, and they sat down for lunch. Patton served up an Italian ditalini with tomatoes, lentils, onion, and shrimp, which Roman practically inhaled.

I’m gonna have to finish… “talking” to Roman after lunch.

When Logan and Patton rapidly sank out and Roman waggled his eyebrows, before bowing grandly and sinking out himself. Virgil waited a few minutes after Roman went into his realm before following him. Virgil looked to the wardrobe, pausing before going through the glowing
I should see Rojo soon. What a great horse. He physically shook his head as his brain tried to remind him what else was there. He walked through the glowing door and was met with quite a sight.

Roman was center stage, performing an unrecognizable Italian opera. The lights made his white prince outfit glow, and the fit of the shirt made it easy to see how his broad shoulders and chest sloped into a trim, muscular abdomen. Virgil could just see a hint of the large muscles in the prince’s arms, and his lower body was very nicely shaped.

Feeling a stirring in his lower half, Virgil approached Roman, who stopped singing and smiled when he saw who was approaching.

“My love, the light of the stage suits you,” he murmured lowly as he took Virgil’s hand. Maintaining eye contact, he kissed the back of it.

“How oft when thou, my music, music play’st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway’st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap,
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,
At the wood’s boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O’er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless’d than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.”

Virgil’s eyes were shining and he was more than a little hard. He tightened his grip on Roman’s hand and used it to pull the prince into a kiss. Roman was surprised for a moment, but happily returned the kiss, bringing his free hand to the side of Virgil’s face and stepping forward to change the angle. Roman smirked into the kiss when he heard a whimper. He squeezed Virgil’s hand before he started kissing along his jaw and neck and moved his hand to Virgil’s waist. Virgil grabbed the front of his uniform desperately.

Roman broke the kiss, wanting to make sure Virgil was still okay. Virgil instead pressed against Roman and kissed him, running his hands over Roman’s arms and torso. Roman gently led them both down so he was sitting on the stage and Virgil was straddling him. He moaned when he felt how hard Virgil had gotten.
Virgil was letting out small whimpers into the heated kiss, his skin on fire. When Roman licked into his mouth, he moaned loudly, cinnamon and roses filling his nose and electricity shooting through his veins. He did his best to keep up as the feeling of a firm prince uniform just covering a powerful body tickled his palms, the sensation going straight to his groin.

When Roman rested a hand at his waistband in question, Virgil pressed closer against Roman and groaned, the relief of rubbing against Roman flooding his body. Roman understood the yes, and took one of Virgil’s thighs to pull him forward closer to his own hips. Virgil startled a little at the movement, but sighed into the kiss, thrilled to be able to relieve some more pressure. Roman’s hand stayed on Virgil’s thigh, squeezing it and rubbing up and down, setting Virgil’s nerves on fire.

Virgil started taking control of the kiss, Roman more than happy to go along. Roman laid down on the stage slowly, keeping his hands loose in case Virgil got uncomfortable. Virgil instead tangled his hand in Roman’s hair and pulled lightly, testing to see if Roman did indeed like it. With Roman’s moan and how his whole body jerked, Virgil tightened his hand more, thrilled at the high-pitched keens he was able to pull from his prince.

His hips twitched a few times, but he didn’t know if it’d be okay to grind against Roman and he really didn’t want to break the kiss. When Roman’s fingertips traced Virgil’s back up to his neck, Virgil arched and mewed, fireworks dancing up and down his spine. Virgil pulled apart, about to ask if he could grind, when he saw Roman’s face; starry eyes, face flushed, hair and uniform a mess. Virgil felt a proud thrill go through him at making an actual prince absolutely wrecked. Roman just smirked and rolled his hips up, smirk growing at the shiver and moan that came from Virgil.

Emboldened, Virgil laid on Roman more fully, tugging a little at his hair. Roman whined and rolled his hips upwards again. Virgil tried to match him, his own movements still a little clumsy. Roman wrapped his arm around Virgil’s lower back to help guide his movements, and after a few more attempts they were both moving in tandem, pushing and pulling, gasping, moaning into each other’s mouths as they spiralled higher and higher, Virgil’s head buzzing with so many stimuli. He could feel how hard he was and how hard Roman was, and a large part of him wanted to see what would happen if he kept going, kept following what Roman was offering and leading him to. Tension was coiling in his lower abdomen, and the Dark Sides had forced him to do this often enough that he knew he was close.

He also knew he didn’t want it to happen like this.

He pressed on Roman’s shoulder and leaned up, whimpering at the loss. Roman relaxed his hands, wide eyes immediately searching Virgil’s face.

Virgil was still panting, but managed a, “You’re amazing.”

Roman smiled sweetly and rubbed Virgil’s shoulder, hoping to ground him. “I’m glad.” He waggled his eyebrows for effect, Virgil playfully rolling his own eyes. Virgil laid down and situated himself so he could lay on Roman more comfortably, Roman embracing Virgil and kissing the top of his head as soon as he could.

They lay together in silence for a few minutes, catching their breath and coming down from the high.

“Hey Ro?”

“Yes, my stunning jaguar?”
“I-” Virgil gulped. “On our next date, if we’re both in the mood… I mean, we don’t have to! Obviously. But um, if you want, you know, um…”

“As much as your voice is the sweetest symphony to me, I do believe you have a point to get to?”

“Shut up, and also you’re a hypocrite.” Roman scoffed. “If you wanted, and like, if I wanted, I was wondering, on our next date, if we…” Virgil cleared his throat and closed his eyes, pretending he was talking to his empty bedroom. “If we could try having sex?”

Roman used a finger beneath Virgil’s chin to tilt it upwards. His eyes were wide, full of wonder and caution. “Are you certain angel?”

Virgil felt a smile creep onto his face. Dammit, being in love is totally ruining my aesthetic. “I am. I don’t know if I’ll be able to, but I really want to try.”

Roman smiled and kissed Virgil’s forehead chastely. “If, on that night, you wish to try, then I would be overjoyed to join you in rapture.”

Virgil blushed and managed to kiss Roman’s jaw before ducking his head. “Cool. That’s cool.” After a moment, he added in a whisper, “I can’t wait.”

Virgil felt Roman smile into his hair and squeeze him lightly. “I too am eager. One may say, anxious even.”

“Oh my god, shut up.”

“As you wish.”

They stayed there until their joints began to protest, then cuddled on the couch until dinner, intermittently working and distracting the other. Patton had turned the leftover ditalini into a stew by just adding some veggie stock and a few more ingredients. Virgil laughed with his boyfriends, and turned in soon after dinner ended.

He was unsuccessful in getting himself off again, but he went to bed hopeful for the future, and very much looking forward to his date with Roman.

Chapter End Notes

Slytherins are represented by snakes. What, who did you think it was?

In any case, do be prepared for some major plot points soon!! :D
Chapter 158

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There is steaminess throughout, and when Virgil goes into his bathroom there are solo sexytimes! Right at the end of the solo sexytimes, there is a very brief reference to sexual assault, specifically sounding. After the solo sexytimes, there is no more steaminess.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A few days later, Virgil was stretching out his back, wincing at the twinges that resulted from a particularly stressful day at work. Just as he was debating whether or not he should take a bath, he heard excited knocking at his door, followed by, “Virgil!! My sweet, courageous, loving, daring, dashing, handsome, stunning, edgy, sensuous-”

Virgil opened his door. “What?” he growled, his glower undermined by his pink cheeks.

Roman didn’t falter. “Would you like to cuddle until dinner?!’” he asked, bouncing on his feet a bit.

“Didn’t we make out this morning?”

“Please?”

“Yes, obviously I’m fine with that.”

“WONDERFUL!!!”

Virgil winced. “Princey!”

Roman looked meekly at him. “My apologies.”

Virgil just snorted. “Whatever dork.”

He took Roman’s hand and led them down the stairs. Roman landed in the corner of the couch and raised his arm, face hopeful. Virgil rolled his eyes, smiling, and snuggled against Roman, wrapping his arms around his boyfriend’s waist. Roman similarly wrapped Virgil up in his arms and kissed the top of his head, to which Virgil responded by kissing the base of his neck.

Roman shivered and gulped, knowing it was probably unwise to start kissing Virgil on the couch unless he wanted to embarrass Virgil in front of their other two boyfriends (which, while he was not opposed to showing off, Virgil wasn’t the most comfortable with that).

Roman simply pressed another kiss to Virgil’s hair and asked, “Would you like to watch a movie?”

“Hmmmmm… Atlantis?”

“As you wish.”

Roman waved his hand, and the opening credits began playing. Roman smiled when Virgil rubbed his cheek against his chest a few times before settling into a comfortable position. However, about
15 minutes in, Roman noticed Virgil was squirming a little.

He paused the movie with a wave of his hand. “Love? Are you uncomfortable?”

“No, just tense from work still. My back and shoulders are really sore.”

Roman hummed. “Would you like a back massage?”

Virgil looked up at Roman and searched his face, and Roman held his tongue to let Virgil do what he needed to do.

Finally, he seemed to find what he was looking for. “Alright.”

Virgil pulled away from Roman and shimmied off his hoodie, turning to face away from Roman. He paused for a moment.

“Hey Ro? Is it cool if I keep my shirt on?” Roman didn't miss how Virgil’s voice shook at the end of the question.

“Of course, my sweet.”

Virgil relaxed his shoulders at that and nodded. Roman cautiously rested his hands on Virgil’s shoulders and, upon not hearing or seeing any cause for concern, started rubbing up and down Virgil’s shoulders and upper arms. He applied a bit more pressure than he would if they were just cuddling, trying to get his muscles and skin used to the pressure a bit. He started massaging Virgil’s shoulders, but stopped when Virgil tensed.

“Angel?”

“Sorry Ro, just, ah, be careful on the tops of my shoulders?”

“Alright, my beautiful lark, I shall.”

Roman continued to gradually increase pressure, hearing little sighs and groans as he worked the tension and knots he found out of Virgil’s shoulders and back. He winced in sympathy when he hit a tender spot, but would massage around it until the muscle was looser so he could relax Virgil as fully as possible. A half hour later, Virgil was putty in Roman’s hands.

“Feeling better?” Roman asked, amused.

Virgil just rumbled and cuddled up against Roman again, eyes closed and the corners of his lips turned upwards. Roman couldn’t resist pecking Virgil’s temple before turning the movie back on. Throughout the movie, Roman thought he felt Virgil drift off a few times, but could hardly complain. Not when he was holding his love, safe in his arms, relaxed and content.

Patton quietly interrupted their cuddling for dinner, and Roman gallantly allowed Virgil to pretend like he wasn’t sleeping.

Dinner passed quietly, everyone exhausted from the long day. Logan offered to help Patton with the dishes, so Roman decided to valiantly escort Virgil back to his room. Once at his door, Roman waited on pins and needles to see what Virgil wanted to do. Roman thanked every deity he could think of when Virgil pulled him into a searing kiss.

Roman moaned into the kiss, Virgil’s hands gripping his uniform tightly. He grabbed Virgil’s waist with both hands and pulled the shadowy man against him, making Virgil gasp and let Roman
Roman ate up the delicious, needy whimpers like they were the last dregs of oxygen in his tank and he was a mile below the ocean’s surface. He’d taken to feeling and caressing every inch on Virgil’s body he could, keeping his hands firmly above Virgil’s waistband. His own pants were feeling rather tight, and he could feel that Virgil was in a similar situation.

Virgil pulled himself against Roman before running his hands over strong shoulders and arms. He couldn’t resist that sensuous neck any longer, so he regrettably detached from Roman’s lips and started mouthing and biting along the column of Roman’s neck. His cock twitched upon hearing a growl from the taller man.

Virgil ran his hands down a lovely sloped back and rested just above Roman’s waistband, scritching his fingers a little.

“Don’t stop on my account,” Roman ground out.

Virgil swallowed and took a deep breath, Roman’s hands softening on him and rubbing up and down. He went back to kissing his prince, hearing deep groans and the occasional surprised moan. Virgil settled for tracing over the sides of Roman’s hips, too nervous and not ready for anything more. Roman didn’t seem to mind one bit, taking control of the kiss and touching Virgil all over, and happily reciprocating when Virgil started grinding his crotch against Roman’s.

Virgil could hardly believe the sounds he was pulling from Roman, and he knew he wasn’t exactly quiet himself. His skin was hot and sensitive, the lightest touch from Roman tickling him. Roman would barely graze his fingers down an arm one moment, and in the next he’d be pulling Virgil against him while rolling his hips and growling. Virgil was out of his mind from the sensations, holding on for dear life while whimpering into Roman’s mouth.

At some point, however, Virgil felt himself getting close. I am NOT coming in my pants in the middle of the goddamn hallway. He brought his hands up to Roman’s shoulder and pushed lightly, Roman pulling back immediately and searching his love’s face. Virgil couldn’t resist kissing him lightly.

“I’m good Ro, just don’t feel like coming in my pants in the hallway.”

“But you wouldn’t be opposed to doing so elsewhere?”

Virgil groaned and hid his face in Roman’s chest, the taller man laughing quietly and wrapping his arms around Virgil’s shoulders. They stood there for a few minutes, holding each other and relaxing a bit. Eventually, Virgil looked up at Roman.

“We should probably go to sleep, Thomas had a long day.”

“Hmmmmmm, you’re probably right.”

Virgil smiled and leaned up to kiss Roman one more time, although that turned into more than one kiss.

He pulled himself away using every shred of his self-control. “Night Ro.”

Roman smiled down at him, lips red and cheeks pink. “Goodnight, my nightingale.”

Virgil smiled and opened his door, pushing into his room. His door closed, and the sound echoed in the completely still air. Virgil shook off the heebie jeebies he felt and went to run a bath, water
sounding thunderous in the lonely bathroom. Once the tub was at a good level, he stripped off his
clothes and sank in, the hot water soothing his muscles. He laid his head back and closed his eyes,
finally enjoying the quiet, only broken by the occasional sound of water rippling against the side of
the tub. After a few minutes, he looked at some of the bath bombs on the side of the tub. He
decided to go with an orange-mint scented one, knowing the scents would help ground him. He
heard the quiet hiss of the bath bomb disintegrating in the water and smelled the refreshing aroma
a moment later. It was fragrant and heavenly, and he could feel it was a moisturizing bath bomb.

Virgil looked down and saw he hadn’t fully calmed down since his makeout with Roman. Let’s see
if this actually works for once. Virgil took some body soap and wrapped his hand around himself.
He seemed to respond to being in pleasantly warm water, which he made a mental note of. He was
going worked back up fairly quickly with just touches, but he really wanted to finally get off. He
closed his eyes and thought back to his most recent experience with Roman. Possessive hands
holding him tight, a firm body writhing against his, cinnamon and roses and fresh air filling his
nose. How Roman managed to be aggressive yet so loving in his movements, he didn’t know. Even
when Roman took control of the kiss, there was something about it that was so adoring it made
Virgil feel weak even now. He sped up his fist, tightening it just a bit. He rubbed his thumb over
the head and thrust forward, instinctively seeking more stimulation. He bit his lip and furrowed his
brow as he felt orgasm approaching, focusing on the phantom touches of Roman. He was moving
his hips in time with his hands, moaning at how his body felt like it had been hit with a live wire.
Water was sloshing around, in danger of spilling onto the floor. Waves lapped at his skin, only
stimulating him further.

His mind began to wander a bit, jumping from one scenario to the next, until he felt a sharp pain in
his penis. He gasped and jumped back as much as he could, water still moving around the tub but
slowly settling. His skin started feeling like there were ants running around beneath it as he
remembered what kind of activity the pain would have come from. He looked down to confirm
that, yup, he was rapidly softening. Even though he felt like he wanted to rip his skin off, he settled
for a grounding exercise. Thank god Princey put in way more bath bombs than I’d ever need. After
a few minutes, he felt less like peeling off his skin and becoming a skeleton.

He half-heartedly rubbed at his skin and scalp, intending to shower in the morning anyway. He
stayed in the bath for an hour, just relaxing and breathing in the heavenly aromas. He knew at this
point that the bath had been spelled by Roman to keep the water warm, but he was growing tired
and falling asleep in a bathtub seemed like a bad plan. He drained the water and dried himself off,
putting on a thin layer of lavender-oud scented lotion. He changed into a t-shirt and sweatpants and
made his way out to his bed, ignoring the gnawing empty feeling.

He shuffled under the covers and clutch Lucs to his chest, pretending he was warm and not on
the verge of shivering. Virgil felt a lump in his throat, and a moment later he had to press his eyes
into Lucas to soak up tears. The blankets felt so thin and the room so large and empty and cold.

I’m a fucking adult for Christ’s sake, I can handle sleeping in my own room. I shouldn’t feel so
awful being by myself. What will my boyfriends think if I can’t spend a night alone? I’ve done it
before.

Virgil angrily threw off his sheets and stared at his ceiling. Goddammit.

He gently sat Lucas next to his pillows and threw his sheets over his mattress so he could say it
was technically a made bed. Pulling his hoodie around him and rubbing his arms, he made his way
out into the hallway and froze.

Who should I go to?
Go back to the Dark Sides, they'll show you a good time!

Virgil’s lips wobbled as he started going towards Roman’s room. I need Roman.

He paused before the grand doors, chewing on his lower lip. Will I be bothering him? It’s late, I made out with him and got him hard and then I left him like that, will he be pissed? No, they said that they don’t mind. Dammit Virgil, just do it!!

Before he could talk himself out of it, he knocked on the door. A few moments later, he heard footsteps approach the door and Roman appeared, clad in a gold silk pyjama set with maroon filigree and accents.

“Virgil! To what do I owe the pleasure of seeing thine divine countenance?”

Virgil smiled shakily. “Hey Ro,” he said, voice rough. Roman stopped smiling and tilted his head in concern. “I was just wondering if I could stay with you tonight?”

“Of course, my love! Are you alright?”

Virgil just shook his head and walked past Roman when he stepped to the side. He paused at the bed.

“Love?” Roman asked softly when he walked up behind Virgil. “What would you like?”

Virgil sniffled. “Can I have a hug?”

Roman opened his arms and Virgil wasted no time in curling into his chest. Roman held him there securely, just as Virgil knew he would.

“I had a flashback. I felt it.”

Virgil was as surprised as Roman that he’d said that. Roman just gasped and tightened his hold on Virgil.

“Oh my sweet love, my angel. I am so sorry. You’re safe now, I promise you. I won’t let harm befall you ever again. I swear it.”

“I know Ro.”

They stayed like that for several minutes, until Virgil wordlessly pulled back. Roman let him go without any resistance. Roman marveled at the beauty and grace of Virgil’s soft hand in his as he was led to the massive bed. He followed Virgil under the heavy covers, raising his arm and clutching Virgil to his chest as soon as possible.

Virgil was still a little cold, but could feel himself warming up thanks to the heavy blankets and the furnace that was Roman’s body. Roman held Virgil safely against him, just barely touching him and kissing the top of his head until he drifted off into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Wasn't Roman just the sweetest in this chapter?
Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There's a few sections of negative thought that leads to a bit of anxiety, but nothing too terrible! Otherwise, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Virgil woke up surrounded by warmth. He rumbled happily and tried to burrow into the warmth further.

Roman let out an amused huff. “Sleep well, my perfect angel?”

Virgil just hummed and rubbed his cheek against Roman’s chest. Roman tightened his arms and kissed the top of Virgil’s head before laying back and idly tracing patterns on Virgil’s arms. Virgil dozed on Roman and Roman admired Virgil until Logan knocked on their door for breakfast. Virgil grumbled but got up to get dressed and go downstairs. He was glad he did, because Patton had put together a breakfast of stuffed French toast, bacon, and scrambled eggs. Logan poured himself and Virgil a mug of coffee and set it down in front of him before he sat down.

Everyone complimented Patton on the mixture of cream cheese and fruit compote in the French toast. Logan quickly went over the day, noting it was a lighter day but Thomas still had activities scheduled regularly. Virgil cleared away the plates since Patton had talked throughout breakfast and was still working on his eggs. As he was passing behind Patton, he placed a hand on his shoulder and kissed his cheekbone. Sure enough, a blotchy flush spread across Patton’s face as he turned bright eyes to Virgil. Virgil pretended to be absorbed in putting the dishes in the dishwasher, smiling to himself all the while. He heard a chair get pushed back and felt a hand on his lower back a moment later.

“Thank you for taking care of the dishes sweetie,” Patton said, his voice pitched just-that-much lower.

“I-uh, yeah, no problem.”

Patton kissed his cheek sweetly, staying there for longer than strictly necessary but Virgil wasn’t about to complain. They finished putting away the dishes, and kissed for a few minutes in the kitchen. Once they sensed Thomas start his day, they had to break apart and go to their own rooms. Virgil walked Patton to his door, and just as he was about to get to his own door Roman spotted him.

“Virgil!”

Virgil smiled as his prince approached. Roman came to a stop a comfortable distance away.

“My dark prince! My emo lover! How are you?”

Virgil raised an eyebrow. “I’m good Princey. Only two nicknames this time?”

“I could go on if you prefer.”
“No that’s okay! I’m good, what’s up?”

Roman shifted a little. “I was wondering if you wished to spend the day with me? I can understand you may not want to be alone after last night.”

Virgil relaxed his shoulders. “I’m alright. I’d actually probably be good with a bit of time to myself. Thanks though.” He sent what he hoped was a convincing smile.

Roman beamed. “Of course! If you find you would like company, my door is open for you!”

“Thanks Ro.” Virgil studied Roman’s striking cognac eyes and his cut jawline.

“Anytime! Fare thee well, my love!”

Virgil shamelessly checked out Roman as he walked away.

*Roman is so safe. He’s so careful with me. I want to know what it’s like.*

“Hey, uh, Ro?”

Roman turned around and was back with Virgil in an instant. “Yes my love?”

Virgil smiled up at him, even as his eyes stung. “I was wondering, if tomorrow night, not tonight, we could go on a date?”

Roman lit up at the idea of a date, and then got the sappiest look on his face that Virgil had ever seen when he remembered what their next date meant.

“I would love that,” Roman said quietly, grinning from ear to ear.

Virgil ducked his head, trying to hide his own goofy grin. “So, uh, I’ll see you tomorrow night then?”

“Indeed you shall.”

“Cool,” Virgil breathed out, laughing lightly. Roman leaned in for a moment, then went back to his own room. Virgil grabbed Shelly off his desk and put her on his chest, ready to help Thomas and giddy at the thought of his next date with Roman.

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Virgil had gotten his nails painted a deep red color by Remy, who had harassed him the entire time. He had just finished drying his hair after getting out of the shower and putting on some sparkly lotion. He styled his hair with a bit of mousse, and used black eyeshadow with some safe glitter below his eyes. He decided to also put on a bit of eyeliner and mascara, and he tamed his eyebrows as best he could. He blushed when he thought about why he was brushing his teeth and using mouthwash.

*Will tonight be the night? He’s the embodiment of Romance, that’s gotta bode well right?*

Virgil smiled to himself as he put on some ripped black jeans, his boots, a low v-neck t-shirt, and his hoodie. He sprayed a bit of oud cologne on himself, then assessed his appearance in the mirror.

*Okay, I’m looking good. What else do I need? Should I do something to make sex with me better? What if he gets mad if I don’t want to have sex? What if he wants to break up with me because I said I’d have sex with him and then didn’t? What if-"
Virgil physically shook his head. *No. Roman wouldn’t do that. He was so patient with the kissing, and making out, and everything else, he’ll be patient with this too. And Logan was ready to stop when I was blowing him. This’ll be fine, this’ll be fine, this-*

Virgil jumped when Roman knocked on his door. He opened it quickly, not wanting to make himself panic.

Roman was glowing.

Roman had styled his hair so every strand was in place. His skin seemed to shine, and he was in a freshly-pressed, slightly tighter uniform. Virgil noticed that Roman was also wearing white gloves.

*I’ve gotta tell him he looks good, he’ll be worried if I don’t.*

“Hi,” Virgil managed to croak.

Nice.

“Hello, my sweet love. May I accompany thee to my kingdom?”

Virgil nodded at the deep voice and took the elbow that was offered to him.

“You look simply ravishing tonight,” Roman said.

“I- uh, thanks! You do too.”

“Why thank you! My sweet, I do have two ideas, and I would like to know which one you’d prefer. I can have a simply wonderful basket made up for us if you would like to stargaze, or we could attend the ball occurring at my palace. Do either of those sound desirable to you?”

Virgil considered it. *I wouldn’t have to worry about embarrassing myself or Roman if we go stargazing, but Roman loves parties and being the center of attention. He’d like to go to the ball.*

“I’d be down to go to the ball at your place.”

“Wonderful! You’ll be the most stunning person there, I’m sure of it.”

Roman led them to the wardrobe that was the portal to his realm. Virgil froze.

“Shit!! Should I be dressed in something nicer?!”

Roman stepped in front of Virgil and tilted his head up. “My little bat, you’ve nothing to be ashamed of. You’re absolutely gorgeous, and everyone is wearing what makes them feel comfortable.”

“If you’re sure…”

“I’m quite certain. We also do not have to attend the ball if you would be uncomfortable.”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I think I’ll be okay.”

“Alright. Do let me know the moment you become uncomfortable, and we can do something else.”

Virgil tried waggling his eyebrows, but wasn’t sure how well he did. “Something or someone else?”
Roman smirked and leaned down, diverting his path from Virgil’s lips to his ear. “Whichever you’d prefer. I would have no objections to either.”

Virgil squeaked, which was met with a gentle kiss to his ear. Virgil grabbed Roman’s uniform in both hands, unsure of what else to do. Roman just smiled and pulled back.

“Shall we?”

Virgil took Roman’s elbow once again. They walked through the portal, Virgil now familiar with the shift thanks to his visits to Rojo.

“Virgil, have I told you about the tavern? A foul beast tore the roof of it off, and minutes after I had slain the vile creature the townsfolk were already coming together to help put on a new roof! Isn’t that wonderful?”

“I mean yeah, they’re cool people it sounds like, but why make them go through all that work when you could have just imagined a new roof? Then they wouldn’t have had to use up all that time, energy, and resources.” Virgil bumped his shoulder playfully.

“Hush you, don’t go poking holes in my plot.”

Virgil snorted and hid his face in Roman’s shoulder for a moment. They continued up the path, Roman and Virgil teasing each other back and forth. Once they got to the castle, they were greeted by armed guards.

“All hail, His Royal Highness Prince Roman and Sir Virgil!”

The guards straightened their backs and hit their spears on the ground once in sync.

Roman laughed. “At ease men! How has the ball been going?”

“As always Your Highness, everything is going off without any problems. The guests are enjoying themselves.”

“Wonderful! I believe I shall make my entrance.”

“Very good sir.”

The guards dropped to one knee as they passed, Virgil’s nerves climbing.

*How many people are going to be staring at me? Will we have to walk down a huge staircase or some shit? Will I have to make eye contact with individual people in the crowd? For how long? How do I NOT look awkward as hell?*

“Hey Ro?”

“Yes my sweet?”

“W-what’s your grand entrance gonna be like? I’ve never even been to one of those.” He winced at his wording.

Roman seemed nonplussed. “Not to worry! I’ll appear at the top of a grand staircase and greet my wonderful citizens! And then I’ll walk down, and we can dance if you wish.”

*Dancing does sound nice. But fuck, I still don’t know how to not fuck up at the grand Princey entrance.*
“Virgil, love, breathe.”

Virgil sucked in a breath and looked sheepishly at Roman.

Roman’s eyes bore into his. “Sweet angel, we truly don’t have to go to the ball if you don’t want to.”

“No, it’s fine, I’m just clueless on grand entrances and shit and I don’t wanna fuck it up or be awkward or embarrass you.”

Roman kissed his temple. “Shhhhh love. First of all, you couldn’t embarrass me. The townsfolk will be too stunned by your beauty! And if you’d like, we could meet on the floor? As I finish my descent down the stairs, I’ll meet you and take you into my arms. The music would start, and we’d begin our dance!”

Virgil huffed. “Just like a wedding.”

“If you so wish. If we do make love tonight, I want everything to be perfect for you.”

Virgil took his hand from Roman’s elbow so he could hug him. “God I love you so much.”

“I love you too, Virgil,” Roman said, a little thick.

They pulled apart after a moment, Virgil smiling. He thought of something awesome so I wouldn’t be awkward for the entrance. I love him. “Can we meet on the floor?”

“Of course we can.”

Roman led Virgil to the doors of the lower floor of the ballroom, where he was surprised to see a familiar face.

“’Ello there bug! Good to see you!”

“Hi! Uh…”

“You can just call me Madam, sweetpea.”

“Hi Madam! You look really great!”

The Dragon Witch was wearing a green scale-patterned ball gown with her grey hair up in a simple bun. Virgil noticed the eyeshadow and lipstick were very similar to Thomas’ grandmothers’ makeup.

“Would you be so kind as to show Virgil around, m’lady?”

“It’d be my pleasure, Prince Roman,” the Dragon Witch said as she bowed.

Roman kissed Virgil once. “I’ll see you soon, my love,” he whispered.

“Yeah, see you soon.”

Roman swiped his thumb over Virgil’s cheek and headed back the way they came.

“Right this way bug!”

Virgil offered his elbow to the Dragon Witch, who smiled at him and took it. When they got
through the door, Virgil was amazed.

The room was gold and white with floral accents, and long tables full of food and drink were against one side of the wall. Groups of people in various types of clothing were walking around and chatting happily.

_Eat, drink, and be merry_, Virgil thought to himself, amused.

“The balls ‘ere have everyone dressing in whatever they’re comfortable in. Roman will be here soon, can I accompany you to the floor?”

Virgil just smiled shyly. The Dragon Witch giggled.

“You are just too adorable! I can see why Roman’s head over heels for you!”

Virgil blushed and ducked his head as they made their way to the dance floor. A few people were casually dancing to the string quintet, but most were talking. The pair stopped about 20 feet from the bottom of the stairs. Virgil was wondering what was going on when the quintet suddenly shifted to a much grander tune. When the massive doors opened at the top of the magnificent staircase, he felt his whole world shift.

_Holy shit._

Chapter End Notes

They're on a date! Virgil asked out Roman!! I wonder what'll happen next?

:)
Chapter 160

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! Note that there are consensual sexytimes after the line of forward slashes! That's the only warning!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman looked magical. He was in his clothes from before, but he commanded the entire room with a smile. He looked every bit the fanciful, heroic king. Virgil gasped when Roman’s eyes found his. Virgil didn’t even notice the Dragon Witch slip away or the assembled guests behind him bowing.

Roman’s eyes didn’t leave Virgil, his face filled with joy as he descended the gilded marble staircase. Virgil was frozen in awe.

*I’m dating a Disney prince. Holy fuck I’m so gay.*

Roman reached the last stair and approached Virgil through the crowd. He took Virgil’s hand, but instead of bringing it to his lips, he bowed to kiss it. Virgil’s breath caught and his eyes filled with tears at the tender movement. At having a *prince* bow for him. *I get the gloves now. That really sells the whole prince thing.*

Roman leaned back up, smiling softly.

“You look beautiful tonight,” he said quietly, just loud enough for the two of them to hear.

“Fuck, you do too. You’re a *prince*.”

“And you are my love.”

Virgil surged up to kiss him. He remembered there was a crowd when they started applauding, though, and pulled back, about to apologize.

“Don’t you even think of apologizing for that,” Roman said lowly. Virgil turned beet red. Roman just smirked and placed a hand on Virgil’s waist, still holding the hand he’d kissed.

“Virgil Anxiety Sanders, may I have this dance?”

Virgil smiled. “You may.”

Roman kissed him once more as the music started up, holding Virgil close to him. Virgil sent a silent thank you to Logan for teaching him how to dance, and that it was a relatively slow dance. Roman was just staring down at Virgil with adoration, and Virgil was looking up at Roman, transfixed. Virgil barely noticed as they transitioned from one song to another, led comfortably around the dance floor by Roman, barely noticing the dancing couples twirling around them.

Virgil could feel his attraction growing for the knight in front of him. He couldn’t resist throwing off their rhythm to kiss Roman, the taller man laughing a little into the kiss. They both stumbled, but Virgil didn’t hear any complaints from Roman.
Roman had both his hands on Virgil’s waist at this point, but wasn’t pulling on him. *Gotta change that.*

Virgil pressed himself against Roman’s body, feeling Roman becoming more and more aroused. He knew he was in a similar situation, so he pulled back, breathless.

“Wanna go somewhere else?” he panted.

Roman’s eyes were wide and a little glazed over. “Where did you have in mind, my evening primrose?”

Virgil felt butterflies in his stomach, but they weren’t bad butterflies. “Your chambers?” After a moment, he added, “my king?”

Roman visibly bit back a moan and nodded. Virgil smirked, happy to finally fluster his prince, and kissed him once more. He took the elbow when it was offered and they both quickly left the ballroom.

They kissed frantically on the way up to Roman’s room, unable to keep their hands off each other. The hallways seemed to go on forever, but they finally reached the doors to Roman’s chambers.

Roman pulled back, and Virgil could tell it took a lot out of him. “Beautiful angel, whatever happens tonight you decide. I have already spent a wonderful evening with you. I would not be disappointed should it end here or at any point moving forward.”

And how could Virgil resist kissing him for that?

“I’ve had an amazing time too Ro,” he whispered against slightly swollen lips. “Let’s go inside your room.”

Roman pecked Virgil’s lips. “May I carry you?”

Virgil couldn’t help the snort. “Carrying me across the threshold?”

“If you so wish.”

Virgil kissed Roman a few more times. “Yeah. That sounds good.”

“Wonderful. Can you put your arms around my neck please?”

Virgil did so, and a moment later he’d been lifted by powerful arms and swept away in a kiss. He could feel they were moving, but he was just trying to keep up with Roman’s kiss and was very distracted. Roman broke the kiss for a moment before capturing Virgil again in another searing kiss and lowering them both to the mattress, one of Roman’s legs in between Virgil’s.

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Virgil groaned and tried pulling Roman closer, who resisted. “Shhhhh, my dark songbird, we’ll get there.”

He started moving his bent knee up and down the inside of Virgil’s thigh, shooting sparks straight to his groin. Virgil moaned and keened and grabbed frantically at Roman, trying to touch all of him at once.

When Roman started nipping and kissing at his neck, Virgil gasped, “Please, Roman, fuck, *please*, need you.”
“You have me, forevermore.”

Roman’s deep voice rumbling against his throat made Virgil’s eyes roll back into his head. However, as Roman shifted his weight, Virgil felt a small shard of ice in his stomach.

“Ro?”

Roman stopped moving his knee and caressed Virgil’s face. “Yes my love?”

Virgil kissed him. “Can we lay on our sides?”

“Of course.” Roman shifted so he was laying down on his side, making sure Virgil was on the side of the bed nearest the door. Virgil pulled them both into a kiss, reminding himself of who he was with. He moaned, Roman’s scent and taste consuming his senses.

Roman used the arm beneath him to pull Virgil’s body as close as he could, the other arm stroking tenderly. Virgil intensified the kiss, Roman doing the same until they were back where they started, Roman’s knee in between Virgil’s thighs, rubbing up and down. Roman scratched the base of Virgil’s skull, making him arch and sending shivers down his spine.

Virgil was painfully hard. I want this, I do, but how do I do this?

Roman brushed his fingers over Virgil’s nipples, playing with them one at a time while his knee moved higher and higher, making Virgil whine. He was engulfed in flames from the hot kisses Roman was leading him through.

Oh fuck, I need to. “Ro, I wanna, please!”

“Okay angel, okay. What do you want?”

Virgil keened. “I… I wanna take my hoodie off, but my shirt…”

“Alright, go ahead. Would you like help?”

Virgil nodded desperately, and Roman helped him take off his hoodie. Roman waved his hand to hang the hoodie neatly in the bathroom, not wanting to be apart from the lithe, gorgeous man writhing against him.

“What do you want, my moonlit orchid?”

“Please, want you, I wanna stay in this, but I wanna feel you!”

“I have a solution for that.” Roman kissed Virgil’s face softly, expertly avoiding his mouth that was letting out all kinds of sweet melodies. “You would like to reach the heights of pleasure?”

“Please, oh god!”

“I will be more than happy and honored to help you achieve that. Shall we?”

Virgil nodded and pressed his hips against Roman’s, groaning at the relief in pressure but waiting to see how Roman would respond.

Roman simply brought his free hand down to Virgil’s lower back and pulled them flush together. He began rolling his hips slowly, listening to Virgil sing for him. He brought his thigh up through Virgil’s and pressed it against him, using that as additional pressure and stimulation. Virgil was thrusting somewhat erratically, but seemed to catch on to the rhythm Roman was moving in. Soon,
they were thrusting against each other, Roman having to hold back from orgasming before Virgil.

Virgil moaned loudly, feeling things he’d never felt before. Every touch, every movement was *good*, and Roman’s hand was leaving trails of red electricity in its wake. The arm holding Virgil’s upper body against Roman felt safe, _protective_, and their torsos rubbing against each other was stimulating Virgil in ways he’d never expected. When Roman changed the angle of his thrusts, rubbing both of their erections together, fireworks erupted behind his eyes.

Virgil whimpered as the sensations began to overwhelm him in an amazing way. He felt like he was flying.

“Shhhh kitten, it’s alright,” Roman murmured soothingly as he ran a hand up and down his love’s back. Virgil arched into the touch and mewled, hypersensitive. Every nerve ending was firing.

Roman chuckled. “So responsive, so beautiful. How did I ever get so lucky? You’re doing perfectly, my love.”

Virgil whimpered and kissed Roman, joining them together. They were moving as one wave, bringing each other pleasure. Both Virgil and Roman could feel themselves flying higher and higher.

Roman was drinking up every sound coming from Virgil. He started sucking on parts of Virgil’s neck, tasting his unique flavor. With Virgil’s mouth free, his sounds were no longer muffled, and his shouts and whimpers were being sung directly into Roman’s ear. _Truly a masterpiece_. He kissed Virgil again when his love’s hips began to stutter.

Virgil felt his entire body becoming taut, heat pooling and tugging in his lower abdomen. He cried out when Roman’s movements became even more precise, his own becoming erratic.

“Ro! Roman, I’m- please! I think I-” Virgil kissed Roman again, trying to convey what was happening with his actions.

Roman understood. “Shhhhhhh kitten, just feel. Experience it. I’ve got you, I’m here. You’re doing so well.”

Virgil mashed their mouths together, barely understanding a word of what Roman was saying. He was filled with energy, his entire body drawn as tight as an archer’s bow. When Roman pulled Virgil’s hips against his as he thrust in and _up_, the cord snapped. Virgil gasped and held his breath, arching his back, eyes open and unseeing. He felt like his body was shaking apart, starting at his toes and moving up rapidly, until his entire being was quaking. He felt pulses of white-hot fire rush through him in waves, twitching with each one. He gasped as Roman kept pressing against him, keeping the earthquake going. Finally, the pulses decreased in intensity, and Virgil felt himself coming back down. He was still twitching, Roman’s ministrations causing another wave of passion to go through him, until he felt his groin become hypersensitive.

Roman was watching Virgil, so close himself, _so close_, but knowing he needed to focus on helping Virgil through this. It was the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen, and he wanted to ensure he helped Virgil through every single aftershock. Virgil suddenly went limp in his arms, eyes closed and face lax. Roman huffed at how wide Virgil’s mouth still was and how heavily he was breathing.

Just as he was a few thrusts away himself, Virgil made a small sound in his throat and the smallest of lines appeared between his eyebrows. Roman used every ounce of self-control to pull his hips away, even though his own dick was jumping in his pants. He started pressing tender kisses to different spots on Virgil’s face.
“That’s perfect love, you did amazing. You were so perfect. I love you. You did so well. I could never ask for anything more than to hold you in my arms forever.”

Roman kept murmuring loving words while lovingly kissing and caressing Virgil’s face. After a few minutes of Virgil being completely unresponsive, Roman was about to get worried, when Virgil stirred and blinked blearily. Roman kept whispering, kissing Virgil’s forehead. A few moments later, he heard a sigh.

“Are you back with me?”

Virgil just grunted and nuzzled the pillow. Roman huffed out a laugh and gently pulled Virgil onto his chest.

“There you are, you were so perfect. How do you feel?”

Virgil just rumbled, still rather limp. Roman held him and languidly stroked him, intent on providing only comfort and safety and grounding. They laid there together, Roman kissing the top of Virgil’s head slowly. After a half hour, Virgil started to stir.

“Did you make it out alive?” Roman teased.

Virgil grumbled, lifted his head an inch, and let it fall onto Roman’s chest. Roman just laughed.

“Roman,” Virgil started groggily, “that… that was amazing. I felt…” like I was flying “so good.”

“I’m so happy, my sweet,” Roman said, voice watery.

Virgil started to engage his limbs and shifted his hips, grimacing when he felt how sticky his boxers were.

“Uh, Ro, I think I might need to, um…”

Roman chuckled. “Go ahead love. I have some sweatpants in the bathroom for you.”

Virgil felt his face grow hot. “Thanks.”

“Nay, my love, thank you.”

“Oh my god, you’re such a dork.”

Roman let Virgil go easily, and Virgil found he needed a moment to get his legs to stabilize. He walked a little awkwardly to the bathroom, legs very weak. He cleaned up quickly and pulled the new sweatpants on, face flushing when he put his jeans and boxers in a convenient laundry hamper. He did a quick nighttime routine, noticing the red marks on his neck, and went back to Roman.

Roman wolf-whistled at him when he came out of the bathroom. Virgil collapsed on the bed and started scooting to Roman, who sat up.

“Forgive me, my love, but I also need to use the facilities. Would you be alright for a few minutes on your own? I can be out in a heartbeat if you need me.”

Virgil snuggled under the blankets. “Yeah Ro, I’ll be good.”

Roman kissed him quickly. “I’ll be right back.”
Virgil sighed and nestled into the pillows. He thought it was a minute before he heard any bathroom sounds, but ignored that for the time being. A few minutes later, Roman came out of the bathroom with a pink hue dusting across his cheekbones.

“Angel?” he whispered.

“Still awake.”

Roman crawled in next to Virgil and internally cheered when Virgil curled up on his chest.

He touched Virgil tenderly and whispered vows of love into his hair until they both fell asleep, surrounded by each other.

Chapter End Notes

FINALLY!!!

MY BOI!!!!

SO PROUD!!! :)
Chapter 161

Chapter Notes

Hello folks!! Thanks for hanging in there while I worked on this chapter! The only warnings for this chapter are a little bit of post-coital drop and vulnerability and references to consensual sexytimes.

And holy crap, check out the HBW moodboard CJ did!! It matches the vibe, Virgil's doing his best, and every tile says something different! There is one tile that has a big bruise on it, so if bruises are rough to look at this might not be the moodboard for you, but otherwise I can't think of any other tw's!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman woke slowly, and tightened his arm around the weight on his chest. When he blearily opened his eyes to see a mess of dark brown hair, he smiled. He brought his hand that had fallen off Virgil’s arm to brush gentle fingers through soft hair.

Roman’s eyes pricked with tears of joy. My love, my dark knight, my sweet raven, I hope you know how perfect you are. I’m so happy for you. You deserved a wonderful experience, and I hope it was everything you desired and more. I am beyond honored you trusted me so.

Roman recalled how Virgil had been entranced while he’d made his grand entrance, how Virgil had kissed him, how his shadowy love had moved against him, the beautiful symphony emanating from his mouth, how his back arched just so and his face was taken over by pure rapture. Roman had gotten a little concerned when Virgil had been unmoving for several long minutes, but that concern turned into amusement as Virgil was clearly just drunk on endorphins. He’d had to hold Virgil, limp as a wet noodle and absolutely adorable, on his chest for a half hour before he could encourage him to change in the bathroom.

He flushed as he remembered how quickly he’d been able to bring himself to orgasm in the bathroom. He kissed the top of Virgil’s head and smiled. The things you do to me, kitten. Roman sighed happily, more than content to hold Virgil in his arms until the slightly shorter man awoke. Which, if this was anything like Roman’s first time, he knew might take a while. Roman stretched some magic back out to Thomas’ realm and saw it was 6:30 in the morning. He winced, knowing he’d be tired the rest of the day for being up so early, but when Virgil shifted and snuffled in his sleep Roman could hardly complain.

Roman closed his eyes and turned his head so he could rest comfortably, holding Virgil safely to his chest and trying to pour every ounce of love he had into every single touch. Lavender, oud, and a touch of bergamot colored his thoughts as he dozed off, only waking when Virgil made a small sound or movement.

Finally, Roman felt Virgil waking up. He held Virgil close with the arm wrapped around Virgil’s back and used the other one to brush through hair and touch his shoulder and arm, rubbing his thumb back and forth.

“I love you Virgil. I love you so much. You are my entire world, and I would do anything for you. Wake up, perfect angel.”
Roman murmured so quietly he was nearly whispering. His eyes were still droopy, but he at least wasn’t going to fall back asleep. He grazed gentle fingertips down Virgil’s arm, and revelled in the sigh he heard.

“There you are, kitten.”

Virgil grumbled and pulled the blankets more tightly around himself. Roman huffed out a laugh and kissed the top of Virgil’s head.

“Come now, my love-”

“Did already last night.”

“Yes you did, and you were absolutely beautiful. We really should think about eating something for breakfast.” Roman thought he saw Virgil’s ears turn red beneath the mop of hair.

“But it’s so waaaaaaarm,” Virgil whined.

Roman chuckled despite shivering at his lover’s deep voice. “I know, but the world is so wide and wondrous! As much as I would love to hold you in my arms for eternity, we do have other functions to attend to.”

Virgil groaned. “What time is it?”

“8:30 in the morning, my love.”

Virgil lifted his head, more awake. “Thomas?”

“He’s doing fine, Logan has him eating a disgustingly healthy breakfast.”

“Patton’s sleeping in today?”

“So it would seem.”

Virgil snorted and laid his head back down.

“Angel, we really should join them.”

Virgil rumbled and curled up more on Roman’s chest.

Roman internally cooed. “You know what? You’re absolutely right.” And he settled in for more cuddling. He felt Virgil drift off for an hour, and Roman soaked up every single second of holding his sleeping love safe in his arms. When Virgil started stirring again, he summoned his willpower and started gently kissing the top of Virgil’s head and rubbing his arm.

“Love-”

Virgil’s stomach chose that moment to rumble loudly.


Roman laughed heartily. “It seems your stomach agrees with me!”

“My stomach is a bitch, and also you’re way too awake for this early in the morning.”

“It’s 9:30, my sleepy little kitten.”
“Shut up.”

“As you wish. Would you mind terribly if I used the bathroom?”

“I should probably go first, you’ll be in there for at least 45 minutes.”

“Go ahead, but also hush you!”

Virgil snickered and kissed Roman’s cheek before getting off the bed and wobbling over to the bathroom, legs a bit weak. He quickly washed his face and brushed his teeth before forcing his hair into a style that was socially acceptable. He made his way back out to the bed and under the covers, blushing at the lascivious look Roman was sending him.

“My beautiful raven, will you be alright by yourself if I go do my morning routine? I have the palace chefs cooking some breakfast for us.”

Virgil cuddled up against Roman. “Stay, don’t goooyo,” he whined.

Roman squeezed his shoulder and kissed the top of his head. “Fret not angel, I’ll not leave you. I’ll be just inside the bathroom, ready to race out at a moment’s notice.”

Virgil sighed, feeling strangely clingy. “I’ll be fine, you go do your thing. At least brush your teeth, I’m not kissing you until you do.”

“Then it shall be the first mountain I will conquer!”

Virgil snorted. “You’re so dramatic. Go, I don’t want your breakfast to get cold.”

“It will take at least 45 minutes for them to prepare it.”

“Exactly. Shoo.”

Roman scoffed but headed into the bathroom. Virgil curled around the blankets, staring at the empty spot where Roman had been laying. He knew it was stupid, but there was an undeniable hollow feeling in his chest and his throat was tightening. He closed his eyes and tried to pretend that Roman was still there, doing breathing exercises and gripping the thick blankets in his hands.

Roman’s just in the bathroom, he didn’t just use me and walk away. That’s not what happened. He didn’t use me, he still loves me, he’ll still be nice to me when he’s done in the bathroom.

When Roman emerged a half hour later, he saw Virgil curled up on his side, still in bed.

“Did you fall asleep?” he whispered.

Virgil met Roman’s eyes and shook his head. Roman quickly crawled into bed, recognizing the look in his eyes.

“Shhhhhhh angel, I’m still here. I love you so much, you know that?” With how quickly Virgil curled into his chest, Roman knew what was going on.

“It’s okay love, some people need to be held afterwards. It’s okay, I’m here, you’re safe.”

Virgil nuzzled into Roman’s chest. “I know it’s stupid because I know you’re in the bathroom and you’re not leaving me-”

“Be still my love. It’s okay, it happens to all of us. How are you feeling?”
Virgil sighed and smelled Roman deeply. “Better.”

“That is truly wonderful to hear. Do you feel up to breakfast?”

“Yeah, I’m good. Um, can you…”

“I’ll stay right here.”

Roman held and touched Virgil gently, silently pressing little kisses into his hair for the next half hour until the castle workers brought breakfast in. Virgil blushed at having the workers see him in bed with Roman, both still in their pyjamas, but the workers didn’t say anything and Roman didn’t seem the least bit bothered. They were brought eggs benedict, bacon, sliced fruit, orange juice, and espresso.

Both Roman and Virgil dug in eagerly, it already being late in the morning. Once they finished and Roman had reassured Virgil that someone would be by to clean up their dishes, they each snapped into clothes and slowly made their way back to the main Mindscape, Virgil leaning on Roman’s arm. They chatted all the way to the doorway, kissing intermittently. When they got back to the main Mindscape, Logan and Patton were busy in their rooms, so Virgil and Roman stayed in Roman’s. Virgil rumbled as one of Roman’s strong arms pulled him against his prince’s chest, a large hand on his shoulder, and he relaxed to focus on Thomas’ realm.

///// 

Roman and Virgil ate a light lunch with Patton and Logan, Virgil opting not to say what happened after the ball and Roman going on and on about how magical the ball was and how wonderful Virgil looked and how grand the ballroom was and-

“Love?”

Virgil looked up and pecked Roman’s chin. They’d settled on the couch in the living room after dinner. Roman tilted his head down, and Virgil took the invitation. He kissed Roman firmly, lights dancing behind his eyes. When Roman moved to set his notebook to the side, Virgil got up on his knees and lightly pushed on Roman’s shoulder, who let himself be pushed onto the couch.

Virgil smirked down at his starry-eyed prince and tangled a hand in his hair, relishing the surprised moan before diving in for a filthy, open-mouthed kiss. Roman’s hands landed on Virgil’s waist before roaming the rest of his body, Virgil following suit and touching his prince all over. Virgil was reconsidering his no-fucking-on-the-couch-rule when they all felt a tug from Thomas.

Virgil and Roman grudgingly separated and went to Thomas’ realm. Thomas was looking around excitedly.

“Great news guys! We can film early! Talyn, Joan, Adri, and Quil can all film today!”

Virgil tried not to let his annoyance show, especially since everyone else seemed excited.

“You good to go Roman?”

Roman struck his pose and held it. He was shining, lips and cheekbones just a shade darker than normal. “Absolutely Thomas! I’m always ready to perform on a grand stage!”

“Awesome! Let’s start with my lines, and then we’ll go onto your’s, and we’ll see how we feel after that? The others are out grabbing some supplies for the set, so we’ll have them take a look at our first run-through.”
“Wonderful!”

Virgil smiled to himself and sat down on the stairs, lounging comfortably. He shamelessly checked Roman out, counting on Thomas’ eternal obliviousness to let him off the hook. Soon enough, the four support staff arrived and Thomas gave the tapes to them to review. Roman came over to Virgil, pulled him into a side-hug, and kissed his hair. Virgil snorted and blushed, headbutting Roman’s chest. He felt himself relax when Roman touched him and held him, and although he hadn’t panicked like he had that morning, the anxiety from being left behind would still rise up from time to time.

Roman quickly kissed the side of Virgil’s head again and went to join Thomas and the rest of the crew. After a few minutes, Thomas brushed a hand through his hair.

“Yeah, you’re probably right. You guys free in three days to film?”

Virgil tuned in; apparently the filming wasn’t quite right and they wanted to build a few set pieces before trying to film again. Roman sighed, ego a bit bruised, and all four Sides sank down to let Thomas have an evening hanging out with his friends. Virgil was looking forward to an evening ravishing his prince.

When Virgil appeared in the main Mindscape, however, he noticed Roman seemed a little out of it. Dammit, that bump in filming must have hit him harder than I thought.

Virgil walked over to him and noticed how Roman’s smile didn’t quite reach his eyes.

“Ro?”

Roman deflated, dropping the smile. “My apologies little bat, I’m simply feeling rather un-glittery after my subpar performance this evening.”

Virgil frowned. “Babe, I thought they said that it was just props that they wanted to add. They didn’t say anything about how good you did.”

Roman sighed and looked off to the side, eyes far away. “Yes, but see, that’s the thing! They didn’t mention Thomas’ acting at all!” He looked down and raised a hand to his head. “Perhaps I’m losing my touch.”

Oh no, not this, we’re not doing this.

Virgil pressed himself against Roman and wrapped his arms around his neck, Roman grabbing onto Virgil’s waist. “Well, I thought your performance last night was stellar. Royal, magnificent,” Virgil leaned up to kiss Roman’s ear, “hot.”

Roman groaned and started placing his own kisses on the side of Virgil’s neck. A loud whistle interrupted them.

Oh right, there’s other people here.

Virgil hid his red face in Roman’s chest. Roman huffed and hugged Virgil, internally cooing at how shy he was.

“Sounds like you two fellas had a great time last night!” Virgil turned his head just in time to see Patton’s eyebrows waggle up and down.

Roman squeezed Virgil when he hid his face again. “Indeed we did.”

“Awwwwwww!! I’m glad you two had fun at the ball!”
“Indeed, I thought balls might be a bit overwhelming for you Virgil.”

Virgil bit back the snort from Logan’s accidental double entendre. “Yeah, well, Roman did a really good job at distracting me.”

“Good job Roman!! He’s our knight in shining armor!! How was the food?”

Virgil peeked back at Patton and Logan. Patton was excited for the two of them, and Logan was looking on with amusement.

_I could tell them. I really want Patton, so that's gonna happen soon anyways._ Virgil smiled to himself. He looked up at Roman.

“Can I tell them?”

“I have absolutely no qualms about that.”

Virgil snorted then looked back at his other two boyfriends. “We, uh…” he trailed off, suddenly lost for words.

Roman smiled down at him dreamily. “We made love.”

As expected, Patton squealed loudly.

Logan spoke first since he was able to form words. “That is wonderful. I’m very happy for the both of you,” he said sincerely.

_“That’s so sweet and adorable and awesome!!! I’m so happy for you two!!! MOVIE NIGHT!!!”_ 

Hearing no objections, everyone quickly snapped into their onesies, Virgil helped by Patton. Virgil and Roman were cuddled in the middle, which both men were quite pleased about. Patton made chocolate-caramel popcorn, and after three movies everyone was starting to doze off. Virgil was feeling overstimulated, so he bid everyone goodnight and headed up to his room to unwind. He smiled to himself.

_Probably still worn out from last night._

Chapter End Notes

Woohoo for Virgil!! It's definitely a thing where sometimes you just feel a little extra vulnerable after sleeping with someone. Tends to happen more often for folks' first times and people with trauma, but it can happen to anyone at any time. Roman made sure he was around Virgil and helped him! And then at the end of the day, Virgil let his bf's know that he felt like having some time alone!! We are making strides forward!

The bit where Virgil curls up on Roman and Roman says, "You know what? You're absolutely right." is from Jasper01!! Here's her AO3, and here's her Tumblr!!!
Virgil groaned and stirred when he heard precise, insistent knocking at his door.

“Wha’? Come in,” he slurred. He was confused when Logan stalked in, eyes shadowed and posture tense and angry.

“Virgil.”

Virgil sat up, anxiety ratcheting up at the furious tone. *What did I do? What have I done wrong? What did I do to piss him off?*

Logan ripped the blankets off of Virgil and climbed on top of him, summoning ropes to bind his wrists to the headboard. Virgil’s eyes widened as he started to hyperventilate. He felt like throwing up.

“L-Logan?” he whimpered. “Please, what-”

He was cut off when Logan’s fist collided with his nose. Virgil’s vision whited out as the front of his head exploded with pain. It felt like his eyeballs were about to pop out.

“Silence. You’ve done enough.” Logan waved his hand to soundproof the room as Virgil choked on his own blood. “I’ve been more than patient and now congratulations, you’ve worn out my patience. I’m taking what’s mine.”

Virgil started sobbing, choking on the blood from his broken nose. His face throbbed and his mind was spinning. He started screaming when Logan began pulling down his pants, thrashing and trying to kick his legs.

“Logan! P-p-please, *please* don’t!”
Logan just grunted in annoyance and summoned ropes to bind Virgil’s ankles to the end of the bed. He finished taking off Virgil’s pants and boxers, then shoved his own jeans and boxer briefs down.

“NO!!!”

Logan backhanded him, and Virgil felt a tooth chip. Without any more preamble, Logan lined himself up with Virgil and pushed in, groaning. Virgil let out a loud wail as Logan forced himself inside.

“Shut up, you knew this was going to happen at some point.”

Virgil sucked in a few hysterical breaths, coughing up blood, before beginning his sobbing anew.

Logan rolled his eyes. “Whatever;” and began a harsh rhythm.

Virgil cried at the tearing, the betrayal, the shock and horror. Logan was groaning and sighing above him, clearly enjoying himself.

*I thought I was safe, I thought I was safe with them. He’s hurting me…*

Logan leaned down, a cruel sneer painted across his face. “You idiot. You’ll never be safe. This is what you’re good for. This is all that can ever happen to you, all you could ever hope to have happen. Whore.”

Virgil felt his chest, his heart, tearing in two. *I’ll never be loved. I can’t be loved. I’m too gross to be loved. I’m unlovable.*

~~~~~

Virgil sat up in bed with a gasp, then promptly vomited over the side. He sobbed helplessly as he laid there, limply hanging off the side of the bed.

*He hurt me, he hurt me, he hurt me, he forced me. I loved you Logan.* He still felt the agony from his broken nose, the sharp edge of his chipped tooth against his tongue, his complete and utter devastation and heartbreak, Logan moving inside of him.

*Wait…*

Virgil whipped his head around. His bedroom was devoid of any other Sides. He looked at his wrists and found no rope burn. Turning his attention to the foot of his bed, there were no ropes or any indication that ropes had been there. He cringed and whimpered at the pain in his lower half, but found his clothes in order and no blood on his sheets. He began crying for a brand new reason as he made his way to his bathroom.

Virgil removed his clothing with shaking hands, his chest hitching as he tried to get himself back under control. However, an image of Logan’s face flashed through his mind and he had to run to his toilet to throw up again.

*Logan wouldn’t hurt me, Logan would never hurt me.*

*But what if he wanted to? You wouldn’t be able to stop him. He could force you whenever he wanted and you’d just have to lie there and take it like the bitch you are.*

Virgil whimpered, the vitriol from his mind carving out new wounds in his still-broken heart.
He wouldn’t. He’s Logan. He’d never hurt anybody like that, and he wouldn’t hurt me like that either.

But you’re not normal, are you?

Virgil let out a few sobs at that as he flushed the toilet and pulled himself up. He didn’t find any injuries, and he quickly pulled his clothes back on, feeling griny and gross and covered in slime. He splashed water on his face and brushed his teeth, trying to think about anything except the nightmare he’d just had.

Obviously there weren’t any injuries, you idiotic slut. No wonder the Dark Sides chose you, you’re stupid enough to stay and not get help and believe whatever they say. That’s all you’re good for, fuck toy.

Oh my god, SHUT UP!!!

Virgil listened, grateful that the voice had reduced itself to a whimper. Purely out of spite, he finished brushing and flossing his teeth, used mouthwash, and went back into his room. He snapped the vomit out of existence, wincing when he accidentally snapped some carpet out of existence as well.

Oops. I’ve gotta work on that.

Although images were still flashing through his mind and pain was erupting at different points across his body, Virgil settled into bed with Shelly in his arms.

I’m going to get a good night’s sleep. Fuck you brain, I’m not letting you take one more night from me.

You sure you don’t want your emotional crutch? You know, your “boyfriends”?

Virgil inhaled sharply through his nose.

I can deal with this by myself. I don’t always need them to calm down.

Sure you don’t.

He closed his eyes and did breathing exercises until he fell asleep.

~~~~

Deceit was holding Virgil’s arms behind his back, the Dark Sides towering over him. Three of them were landing punches and kicks to his smaller frame while screaming at him, Virgil long having lost track of what he’d done wrong and who was hurting him. The pain from each blow was multiplying, the sharp pain from each new injury becoming brighter and brighter until it was blinding him. He couldn’t breathe, there was too much pain.

“All right boys, 10 minutes is long enough.”

“They’ve only been hurting me for 10 minutes?!”

The three Dark Sides stepped back and Deceit let go of Virgil, who collapsed to the ground like a broken marionette. He was gasping, trying to get air into his lungs through the pain, unable to lift his bruised body an inch off the ground. Every inch of him burned and throbbed. He didn’t stay there for long, since Rage, still furious, picked him up by one arm and started dragging him to a mattress they’d just recently brought downstairs.
“Fucking bitch, doesn’t know when to quit. You keep doing the same fucking thing, how many times are we going to have to do this?! You know better!!”

He tried to whimper through his wheezing to no avail. Rage threw him onto the mattress and covered his smaller body a moment later, angrily growling. Rage grabbed Virgil by the shoulders and repeatedly slammed him against the mattress, increasingly frustrated that he wasn’t hurting Virgil.

“Fucking useless piece of shit!!”

Virgil had his mouth gaping open and eyes wide as he tried to breathe. His limbs started flailing instinctually, desperate for oxygen.

“Someone get his goddamn arms and legs!! The slut needs to be punished!!”

“Yeah, show him who’s boss!”

The Dark Sides scrambling to pin him down gave him a few blessed moments where he could breathe, but he was too weak to do anything else. He knew what was about to happen, what they liked using the mattress for.

“No…” he whimpered, barely audible. “No, please, no…I’m sorry… no…” He started silently crying, helpless and limp. “Please…”

‘Please, somebody save me.’

Rage swung his arm back and used all of his momentum to slap Virgil. “Shut up!! Shut up!! SHUT UP!!!”

Virgil had always been scared by other people’s anger, even when it wasn’t directed at him. Now, after a little over a year of living with the Dark Sides, anger was even scarier.

He felt as each Dark Side harshly grabbed his legs and arms, bruising them in their tight grips. The hopelessness of the situation felt new to him every time. He wondered how long it would take for it to stop being so novel.

Virgil shuddered at the feeling of his waistband being pulled down his hips and legs.

“No… no, please…no…”

He kept repeating those words over and over, too battered to be much louder than a mouse. He was quietly pleading even as Rage positioned himself between Virgil’s legs and leaned over him. Rage’s breath was hot and humid in Virgil’s face.

“God, you fuckin’ deserve this whore, you’ve been getting on my nerves all fucking day and breaking the rules and being just a bitch.” Rage fumbled with his own clothes before shoving two dry fingers into Virgil.

Virgil’s back arched of its own accord and a whimper emanated from him, his body reacting instinctively to the painful intrusion. Rage pumped his fingers in and out of Virgil rapidly, staring at his face and drinking in every pained expression. Virgil’s face was contorting, the blinding pain intolerable. When Virgil’s body started to relax, Rage added another finger, and sucked in a breath as Virgil cried out and tried to move away.

“You think you can fucking move? Huh? When I didn’t tell you to? When I wanted you to STAY
Rage pulled his hand out and shoved back in with four fingers, twisting them cruelly. “I wouldn’t have to do this if you’d just be a good whore, but you just had to break the rules fucking over and over and over again! Fuck! YOU!!” Rage punctuated the last few syllables with harsh jabs of his fingers. Virgil knew he was in trouble; Rage was going too fast for him to adjust and Virgil knew he was close to tearing again.

Virgil’s stomach dropped when Rage positioned himself at Virgil’s sore entrance. “No, no, no please…” he managed a little more loudly, forcing more air through his vocal cords as Rage got himself situated.

“You’ve been asking for it all week whore, you slut,” Rage rambled mindlessly. He shoved into Virgil and held himself there for a moment, savoring the feeling and the twist of pain on Virgil’s face. Virgil let out a breathy keen of agony, ending on a voiceless sob.

Rage started moving in short, punishing thrusts, punching a pained moan from Virgil each time. Virgil felt liquid running down onto the mattress. ‘Rage probably tore something again,’ he thought dully.

“Whore… useless, annoying… fuck!” Rage grunted.

Virgil felt himself walk over to the wall, leaving his body behind. He leaned his forehead against the peeling wallpaper, trying not to hear the sounds behind him, trying not to feel the rough hands around him. ‘Please let it be over soon.’

After what may have been minutes or hours of Rage taking out his anger on Virgil, his thrusts became more erratic and he stiffened. Virgil shuddered, the feeling of Rage coming inside him bringing him back unwillingly into his body.

Rage stayed there panting for a few moments before pulling out without a care. He used his bandana to clean himself off, throwing the used bandana on Virgil. Malice took his turn next, Rage grabbing onto the leg Malice had been holding. Malice was wild and uncoordinated and didn’t take long to climax, which Virgil both hated and was grateful for. Jealousy was next, slowly climbing on top of Virgil and tenderly brushing hair off of his forehead. He placed gentle kisses all over Virgil’s face while he used him, laying fully on top of Virgil afterwards and crushing the air from his lungs. Virgil noticed they didn’t bother holding down his limbs any more after that; he was too weak to fight back anyways.

After each of the Dark Sides had taken a turn, they left Virgil bleeding on the mattress while they went to cook dinner for themselves. Deceit turned to take one more satisfied look at Virgil, yellow eye glinting and scales shining in the dark.

Virgil startled awake, confused when he had the strength to move. He stayed where he was, staring at the ceiling, in shock and mind broken. He felt each bruise he’d received from Rage and the numb fire from where his flesh had been torn. He kept going back and forth between the present and the past.

I need someone. I can’t keep going like this. I need help.

Oh yes, you’re totally strong enough to survive on your own.
(...)shut up.

Oh wow, what an eloquent rebuttal. Truly a master of words.

Virgil pushed his blankets off, mentally kicking himself when he was surprised to see he had clothes on. He was about to pick up Shelly, but decided against it. I’m going to be asking to stay with one of them, I can’t bring a hard plastic object into their bed. Virgil settled for putting his hoodie on and zipping it up as far as it would go. After a moment, he flipped up his hood as well. As he walked towards his door, he fought the urge to check behind him to make sure there weren’t any Dark Sides that were about to hurt him.

He took a breath, and pushed his door open to the hallway. The darkness of the hall scared him, even as he expanded his pupils to see better. Every shadow seemed ready to leap out and grab him. Virgil bit his lip and decided to see if Patton was awake. He’s nice, he’s really good with soft touches and not touching me if I’m scared.

Interrupting his sleep is **totally** fine and not at all abusive. After all, people don’t need to sleep.

Am I being abusive?

You keep waking him up and guilt-tripping him into not sleeping. But that’s **totally** normal.

I don’t want to be abusive! Never!!

Too late, you already have been. So now are you just going to give up because you’ve already hurt them, or are you going to stop hurting them?

Virgil hugged his middle and hung his head, breath hitching.

I’m just like them.

You are. That’s why they took you. They were trying to protect the Light and Neutral Sides from you. And it took so much out of them, just being around you, that they needed some way to let out their pent-up frustrations.

Despite his best efforts, Virgil knew he was making sounds as he cried. His vision went back and forth between the Light Side hallway and the Dark Side hallway. He began walking towards the stairway to sleep on the couch for the night. He froze at the top of the stairs, terrified of being grabbed and his wounded heart screaming for love, not isolation. His skin craved the warmth of a bed and the tender touch of someone who loved him, not the cold air of loneliness.

The Dark Sides are who’s best for you. You being with them is the best thing that could ever happen to Thomas. Go back to them. They want you back.

“Virgil?”

Virgil yelped and spun around, falling with his back to the railing. He paled and stopped breathing.

“No… please no…”

A yellow eye was glinting at him from the darkness.

Chapter End Notes
Sometimes, steps forward can bring a lot of stuff to the surface, even stuff you've worked on, and I wanted to show that here. To be clear, Logan did not hurt Virgil, that was just a rude-as-hell nightmare.
“Please, no, help…”

“Virgil, sweetie, it’s okay! It’s just Patton, no one else I promise!!”

Virgil felt footsteps get closer, which made him flinch and whimper.

“Just t-take me, p-please please don’t h-hurt them sir, I’ll do w-whatever you w-w-want, just please d-d-don’t l-let them b-be hurt!”

The footsteps stopped, and Virgil heard clothes rustle. He started crying in earnest, knowing what was about to happen.

“Baby, please open your beautiful eyes and look at me?”

Virgil shuddered but obeyed. He looked up, and saw only Patton.

*Is Deceit imitating him? Oh god oh god he’s going to wear his face while he hurts me, oh god…*

Patton smiled sadly when Virgil met his eyes. “Hey there baby. It’s just me, okay? No one else.”

*He’s going to hurt you, it’s going to hurt so bad, it’s going to hurtso bad-*

“Virgil? Stay with me honey. It’s okay, you’re safe, I promise. Focus on my eyes?”

Virgil sniffled and tried in vain to mute his voice. Patton’s milk chocolate eyes were soft, gently staring into his own.

*Deceit could never get the eyes quite right. How do I know if it’s Patton?*

He scrambled for a test, breathing in only hiccups. “P-P-Patton? C-c-can you t-tell me the n-name y-y-you call m-me th-that’s related t-to b-b-baking please?”

Patton’s eyes filled with tears. “Chocolate chip. You’re my little chocolate chip, honey,” he said thickly.

Virgil bit his wrist to hold his cries of relief and catharsis in. “Y-your r-r-room?”

“Sure baby.”

Patton gently, oh-so-gently, helped Virgil to his feet and didn’t try to touch him after Virgil drew his hand back. Patton led Virgil to the bed, and after Virgil sat down, had to ask,
“Can you tell me what happened sweetie?”

Virgil curled in on himself, and Patton wondered how he could make himself so small.

“N-n-nightmares and flashbacks I th-think?”

“Oh sweetheart…” another shard of Patton’s heart broke off at the small cry he heard from the man on his bed. “Can I get you some water baby?”

At Virgil’s nod paired with a keen, Patton quickly grabbed a glass of water from the bathroom. He handed the glass to Virgil, careful not to touch his frightened and hurt boyfriend.

Virgil’s hands were shaking so violently that water sloshed over the edge of the glass and onto his sweatpants.

“I’m s-sorry!”

“It’s okay baby! It’s just a little bit of water! Want me to take that for now?”

Virgil squeezed his eyes closed and nodded. Patton took the glass and set it on the nightstand. He slowly sat down next to Virgil on the bed, keeping a careful eye on him and keeping his senses open for any additional discomfort. Silents tears were freely streaming down Virgil’s face, so Patton decided to intervene.

“Sweetpea? Can I hold your hand please?”

Virgil nodded and turned his hand so his palm was facing up. Patton gently took it.

“Okay honey, I’d like to try some exercises if that’s okay?”

At Virgil’s quick nod, Patton led Virgil through a grounding exercise and a dozen breathing exercises before Virgil seemed a little more stable. Patton gently squeezed Virgil’s hand.

“How do you feel right now?”

Virgil just huffed out a mirthless laugh. Patton pressed his lips together in sympathy.

“Do you feel up to some water?”

Virgil swallowed thickly and barely moved his head. Patton took the glass of water and brought it to Virgil, who managed to slowly drink it all without sloshing any over the rim of the glass. Patton replaced the glass of water on his nightstand.

“Alright honey, what–” he was cut off by Virgil wordlessly curling into his chest. Patton automatically brought his arms up around Virgil.

“It’s okay baby, you’re safe now, it’s okay,” he murmured. His heart shattered at the tiny snifflles and hitches of his boyfriend’s shoulders.

“Oh sweetheart, it’s okay! I’m so sorry honey, I’m so sorry,” Patton’s voice got thick and cut off. I’m so sorry I didn’t protect you when you needed me most.

Virgil whimpered and tried to crawl more into Patton, and Patton responded by just holding on and rubbing his back. Patton wracked his brain for strategies to help his shadowy boyfriend.

“Shhhhhhh honey, deep breaths for me, okay? Exhale, now inhale slowly, there you go sweetie.”
Patton led Virgil through breathing exercises, squeezing his hand as he did so. He was relieved when he sensed the edge come off Virgil’s fear.

“There you go, you’re doing so well and I know this is so hard for you, you’re doing so well. Want some more breathing exercises?”

Virgil tucked his head under Patton’s chin. “I-I think I’m g-good, I can take it f-from here. C-can y-you j-j-just-” Virgil tensed and sucked in a breath, so Patton started rubbing his upper arm.

“Stay with me baby, it’s okay.”

“I-I-I kn-know, just… you w-won’t be m-m-mad at me?”

Patton felt an icicle go through his heart. My sweet songbird still doesn’t trust me?! “Of course not!! What’s on your mind?”

Virgil shivered, and said in a quiet voice. “Can I not have kissing tonight please?”

Patton’s heart broke into pieces and fell apart. “Of course sweetie, I’m so proud of you for telling me. No kissing tonight, I promise honey.”

Virgil relaxed. “Thank you. I’m just… it was a really bad dream.”

Patton had to hold himself back, so used to giving comfort through tiny kisses on Virgil’s head. “It sounds like it was honey. I’m so sorry. I’m here, I’ll keep you safe, I promise I will.”

“I know you will Pat.”

Patton smiled and rubbed his cheek against the top of Virgil’s head. “How’re you feeling now?”

Virgil sighed and leaned more heavily against Patton, his muscles relaxing. “Better, still fucked up though.”

“I’m sorry honey.”

“Not your fault.”

Patton lightly squeezed him. “Is there anything I can do?

Virgil fidgeted. “Just, umm…” he trailed off, and Patton bit his tongue to let Virgil talk in his own time. “C-can it just be soft touches l-like this for tonight? I don’t want any h-hard hugs or anything.”

“Of course sweetheart.”

Virgil felt relief flood through him. “Can we go t-to sleep now? Can I stay with you tonight?”

“Yes to both!”

Virgil felt a small, brief smile on his face before he and Patton got situated under the covers. Before Patton could ask, Virgil curled up on his chest. Patton quickly wrapped him up in a gentle embrace. True to his word, Patton didn’t kiss him, instead whispering reassurances and vows of love into his hair. He gave only the lightest touches, which combined with the protective hold, made Virgil start to believe he was safe again. He wasn’t all the way there, but he knew he was at least safe with Patton.
Virgil kept his body relaxed, and was happy to see that he’d managed to fool Patton, as the older Side drifted off nearly an hour later into sleep. He was still too scared and his emotions and memories too raw to fall asleep, and he knew he probably wouldn’t be able to sleep until at least the afternoon, maybe later.

He nuzzled Patton’s chest a little, relishing the soft and strong man holding him. *I fall more in love with them every day.* Virgil huffed out a laugh. *Dammit, I’m starting to sound like Princey. We already have one himbo prince to look after.*

Virgil soaked up the kind arms around him and the body next to him until Patton’s alarm went off for breakfast. Patton blindly swatted around until he managed to turn the alarm clock off, Virgil quietly chuckling at his antics.

Patton heaved a sigh and smiled when he looked down at Virgil.

“Hey sweetie. How are you feeling?”

Virgil shrugged. “Better.” And he *was* feeling better, just not because he’d slept.

*Deceit must be laughing his ass off right now.*

Patton brushed some hair off of Virgil’s face. “I’m so glad honey. Wanna help me with breakfast?”

*Best to keep my mind off things.*

*Like how you’ll be seeing Logan soon?*

*So what? It was just a nightmare, I know he’d never hurt me like that.*

*Oh, well in that case, I’m sure everything will be just perfect.*

He did his best to ignore the creeping nausea. “Sure Pat, that sounds good.”

“Yay! I was thinking chocolate chip pancakes with fruit, eggs, and bacon?”

“That sounds delicious honestly.”

Patton giggled and lightly squeezed Virgil. Virgil went to get ready in his own room while Patton got ready in his, and they met back up in the kitchen. While Virgil was still working on the scrambled eggs, familiar footsteps sounded behind him.

“Good morning Patton, Virgil. How are you?”

“I’m doing good Logie!” Patton chirped.

“That is good to hear. Virgil darling?”

Virgil kept his face turned towards the eggs so Logan couldn’t see him. “I’m good, had a rough night.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.” Virgil had to fight a shudder; he still hadn’t managed to look at Logan yet. “Is there anything I can do?”

“Eh, not right now I don’t think. Thanks though L.”

“Any time darling.”
Logan chatted with Patton after getting a mug of coffee. Virgil heard giggles and kissing behind him, but couldn’t make himself look back. Eventually, however, the eggs were almost no longer soft scrambled and he had to plate them. He took a deep breath, braced himself, and turned with the pan.

“Turning with a pan.”

Patton and Logan were both watching the pan, and Virgil felt some of the sickness leave his chest upon seeing his nerd.

Logan didn’t do those things to me last night. He would never do those things to me.

His mind helpfully supplied flash images of Logan above him, hurting him, as he was pouring the eggs onto the plate, which made about a third of the eggs land on the counter instead.

“Shit, I’m sorry!”

“It’s okay baby! No need to cry over spilled eggs!”

Patton cleaned up the eggs when he saw how badly Virgil’s hands were shaking, which Virgil apologized and thanked him for. Virgil was having a hard time understanding words; he could hear them, but they weren’t processing in his brain even though he knew he should know them. Everything seemed a little foggy, but Virgil tried to hang on to reality.

He wasn’t sure what happened, but in the next moment Logan was standing right beside him. Virgil flinched back and cursed himself for the flash of pain that went through Logan’s eyes.

“Shit, shit I’m sorry! I, I just zoned out and I wasn’t paying attention, I’m sorry!”

Logan consciously softened his features. “It’s quite alright Virgil. Are you feeling alright? Would you like to go lay down for a bit?”

Ha! Lay down, like when he made you lay down and- “No I’m good, I should probably get some food in me. That might help.”

“If you’re certain. Do let us know if there’s anything we can do to assist.” Logan stared into his eyes, full of sincerity and love.

Virgil smiled shyly at that. That’s my nerdy boyfriend. “I will Lo. Thanks.”

“Of course.”

“GOOD MORNING WONDERFUL CITIZENS!!!”

Virgil jumped while Logan merely raised an eyebrow. “No nerds this time?”

“I didn’t see you right away.”

Virgil snorted into his hand in an attempt to cover his laugh while Logan let out a long-suffering sigh. When Roman’s eyes landed on Virgil, his face morphed into something sappy.

“Hello my absolutely stunning evening primrose.”

Virgil blushed brightly. “Hey Ro.”

Roman’s smile turned a little hotter as he took a step towards Virgil. “And pray tell, how are you
this spectacular morning?”

Virgil broke eye contact and shrugged. “I’m okay. Had a rough night last night but I’m starting to feel better.”

When Roman spoke again, Virgil noticed the sultry edge to his voice was gone. “I’m so sorry you struggled last night. Is there any way I can help?”

“No, Patton already helped a lot.”

“Awwwwww sweetie!! I’m so happy I helped!!”

Virgil turned to wrap his arms around Patton’s neck, who in turn loosely wrapped his arms around Virgil’s back.

“You did,” he said quietly before softly kissing him. It was short and sweet, and Virgil loved him all the more. He rested his forehead on Patton’s shoulder, suddenly tired but smiling against his boyfriend’s neck.

Patton used one hand to gently rub Virgil’s back. “Come on sweetie, let’s see if you can handle a bit of food hm?”

Virgil acquiesced and sat down heavily in his chair. Patton made him a mug of tea and set a plate of food in front of everyone. Roman kept the conversation going by talking about his ideas (“But think about the benefits Logan!” “Think about the risk of mortality Roman.” “Ughhhhhhhhhhh.”).

By the time breakfast was over, Virgil felt ready to pass out. He rested against the corner of the couch and put in his headphones, determined to stay conscious for Thomas; his Host was filming a sponsorship video that day, and Virgil wanted to make sure everything was as good as possible. Despite his best efforts, however, he started to doze off. He only startled awake when someone sat down next to him.

Logan was smiling at him and sitting so close. Not touching, but close enough he could grab Virgil and push him down and-

“I thought you might like some company?”

Virgil shrugged, trying not to let his unease show.

“Would you like to cuddle?”

Virgil could feel the adrenaline flood his system. He’s going to hurt me, he’s going to hit me and force me and push me down on the couch and force me and tie me up- No! This is Logan, he’d never do that to anyone! I need to stop this, how can I stop this?

His mind was replaying his nightmare, so he forced himself to meet Logan’s gaze. He felt his mind grind to a screeching halt. Logan’s dark coffee eyes were boring into his, and his entire body screamed nonthreatening.

Gotta remind myself this is Logan, not whoever was in my nightmare.

Logan. Logan was the one in your nightmare.

No. Not my Logan.
Virgil nodded and snuggled against Logan, who held him loosely. *Patton must have talked to him.*
Logan was tenderly tracing his fingers up and down Virgil’s upper arm, which seemed to sap his energy. The last thing he remembered was smelling lavender and lemon, with just a hint of basil.

Chapter End Notes

Glad to see you made it!! Don't worry, we are most definitely not done with dealing with the effects from Virgil's nightmare about Logan. :) More angst coming your way!
This is due to nightmares being rude jerks who don't know when to go home.
Chapter 164

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! We do have a graphic enough reference to a nightmare that contains sexual assault right in the beginning that there's a line of tildes to mark where it ends. Also, there are very vague references to that and Virgil's time with the Dark Sides a few times in the chapter. And the second half of the chapter has some very suggestive steaminess.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Horrible, blinding pain and all-consuming revulsion moving through him, rough rope digging into his wrists and ankles, the sharp, disgusting smell of musk. Betrayal, horror, agony, heartbreak.

When Virgil felt an arm around him, he tensed and whimpered. The arm lifted immediately and a warmth Virgil didn’t realize was there disappeared from his side. Virgil opened his eyes, shaking. Logan was watching him carefully from a few inches over.

It wasn’t him, it wasn’t him, it was just my asshole brain.

“L-L-Logan?” he asked tentatively.

“Yes moon?” Logan asked in the most tender voice Virgil had ever heard from him.

Virgil choked back a sob. “C-can you t-t-talk p-please?”

“Certainly. Anything in particular?”

“N-n-no, j-just gotta h-hear you t-t-talk p-please?”

“I can talk. Leo is a constellation in our night sky, and is one of the Zodiac symbols. One myth is of the Nemean Lion, which was killed by Hercules…”

Virgil listened to Logan go over the myths of the Zodiac constellations, sharp espresso eyes reassuring him that he was safe, this was Logan. When he heard footsteps approach them, he realized how cold he was and shivered.

Logan paused his storytelling. “Moonlight?”

Virgil wiped his face. “I’m okay L, I’m just cold.”

“*I CAN ASSIST WITH THAT!!!*”

Virgil jumped and hissed while Princey posed.

Virgil sighed. “Can you summon that cloak from my bedroom?”

“Of course!!”
In a second, Virgil had the thick cloak dropped on his lap. He quickly wrapped it around his shoulders and settled into the couch. He tentatively looked over to Logan.

“Lo? D-do you wanna cuddle?”

“Yes, absolutely.”

Virgil snorted at Logan’s enthusiasm and let himself be held again, this time wrapped up in a cloak. He heard quiet boot steps go up the stairs.

Logan was rubbing over the cloak where Virgil’s arm was. “Do you want to try getting more sleep?” he asked quietly.

Virgil met Logan’s eyes and smiled. He leaned in slowly, giving enough time for Logan to back out, and softly kissed him. Logan kissed back, almost chastely, and let Virgil go when he rested against Logan’s shoulder.

After a few minutes, Logan thought Virgil was asleep.

“Dream of the stars, my darling,” he whispered into lavender-scented hair.

He didn’t expect to hear back,

“Then I’ll dream of you.”

Virgil slept dreamlessly for a few hours until it was time for lunch. Logan gently roused him.

“It’s time to awaken, my darling.”

Logan laughed when he only got a sleepy hiss in return.

“Come now, Patton’s making customized grilled cheese with his tomato basil bisque.”

Virgil lifted his head up, and Logan had to bite back more laughter at the half-lidded, dazed expression Virgil was wearing. So instead he kissed his boyfriend’s forehead.

“You’re adorable when you’re just waking up. And any time of the day really.”

“I won’t tolerate slander.”

Logan just smiled and kissed Virgil’s forehead again. Virgil grumbled, but got up with Logan, keeping the cloak wrapped around him. Roman helped Patton with the sandwiches and kept an eye on the bisque while Patton ran the show and pecked Roman when he could. Lunch was a calm affair; it was cold and rainy outside, and everyone was feeling relaxed.

Each Side went to their rooms to work, as Thomas was having a hard time focusing, and they only rejoined for dinner. Virgil was happy with how things turned out, he just hoped the audience liked them too.

After a quieter dinner as everyone was tired, Roman offered to help Patton clean up dishes, which meant neither Logan nor Virgil would see them for the rest of the night. Virgil snuck up behind Logan at his bedroom door and cleared his throat behind him.

“Hey L.”
“Greetings Virgil.”

“I don’t think we’ll see Patton or Roman until tomorrow.”

“I believe your assessment is accurate.”

Virgil snorted as he pressed himself against Logan and wrapped his arms around his neck. *Need to replace the memories.*

“Wanna makeout in your room?”

“Absolutely.”

Virgil responded by twisting his fingers in Logan’s hair and roughly kissing him. Logan fumbled with the door handle for a few seconds before he managed to get it open. They stumbled a bit when the door swung open, making them both laugh into the kiss. Both mens’ hands were roaming each others’ bodies, swept up in passion. When they got to the bed, Virgil gently pressed on Logan’s shoulders, who laid down and guided Virgil on top of him.

Virgil tenderly brushed a hand through Logan’s hair, searching his face. When Logan lightly pulled on Virgil, he responded by tightening his fingers and smashing their mouths together in a heated kiss. Virgil listened to the sounds Logan was making, excited by the moans he was pulling from his genius.

They kept kissing, Virgil moving his knee on Logan’s inner thigh like how Roman had. Logan’s hips twitched at that, so Virgil pressed down, hearing a squeak.

Images flashed through Virgil’s mind. *You’re hurting him, he’s going to hurt you.*

Virgil broke the kiss with a gasp, immediately removing his hand from Logan’s hair and checking on him. Logan looked equal parts mussed and confused.

“Virgil? Are you okay?” Logan asked breathlessly.

*I know! I’ll tell him!*

“Logan won’t hurt me, he’d never hurt me.

*You’re lying to him by not telling him.*

*I know! I’ll tell him!*

*Oh really? You definitely haven’t been procrastinating at all. He’d earn-*

Virgil was startled out of his thoughts by Logan touching his face.

“Moonlight? Are you here?”

Virgil hated how his eyes filled with tears and his lower jaw wobbled.

Logan shifted from confused to concerned. “Shhhhhh, it’s okay. Do you want space or to be held?”

Virgil’s breath began hitching as he laid down next to Logan, who gathered him in his arms and started caressing him.

Logan pressed a sweet kiss to the top of Virgil’s head. “Deep breaths dear, you’re okay, you’re safe,” he murmured into soft hair.
Virgil gripped the fabric of Logan’s polo in his hand. “D-did-” he had to suck in a breath to continue, “did I hurt you?”

“No, not one bit, I promise.” Logan said firmly.

“I’m sorry,” Virgil whimpered.

“None of that, you’ve nothing to apologize for.”

Coward.

“I-” Virgil paused to snuffle. “I’ve been keeping s-stuff from you.”

Logan traced Virgil’s forearm. “You’re not obligated to tell me everything, darling.”

“Th-the nightmare last night - one of them - I” Virgil squeezed his eyes shut and swallowed. He’s never gonna want to touch me again. “Th-the Dark Sides w-would sometimes wear y-your faces, a-and I guess m-my stupid brain took that another step a-and o-o-one of the n-nightmares last night w-was y-you hurting- doing something I kn-know you’d never d-do.”

Logan squeezed him, burying his face in Virgil’s hair. “I’d never harm you,” he whispered.

“I know Lo, I know you’d never hurt me.”

“Never.”

Virgil felt a weight lift off his shoulders. “Are you m-mad at me?”

“Not in the slightest,” Virgil winced at how thick Logan’s voice was. “I’m furious with the Dark Sides, and I want to know what I can do to help you.”

Virgil sniffled and took a deep breath to calm himself. He slowly tilted his head up and offered a small smile to Logan, who delicately brushed away some of the tears on Virgil’s face.

“I think I’m okay, I think I just needed to tell you. Can we stay together tonight please?”

“Of course.”

Virgil leaned up and pressed a delicate kiss to Logan’s lips. They both got ready for bed together, touching and leaning against each other at every opportunity. When Virgil saw Logan hesitate at the bed, Virgil took initiative and crawled into bed, raising an arm in invitation.

“Can I… bebigspoon?” Virgil rushed out in a mumble, face turning red.

Logan fought to keep the smile off his face. “Certainly darling.”

They got situated under the covers, and Virgil let out a steady stream of rumbles once he had Logan secure in his arms.

He nuzzled the back of Logan’s head. “Comfortable, star?”

“I am. I enjoy being held like this.”

Virgil placed a tender kiss to the spot he’d been nuzzling. “Pleasure’s all mine.” He smirked. “Dream of the stars.”
Logan leaned his head forward enough to kiss Virgil’s hands.

“Then I shall dream of you.”

/////

Over the next few days, Logan and Virgil worked together to overcome the nightmares, Roman and Patton offered up cuddles, and Remy and Saul got to hang out with their little bro frequently.

After coming back from one such hangout with freshly-manicured and painted nails, Virgil found Patton puttering away in the kitchen, making gingerbread cookies and wearing an apron over his usual ensemble. Virgil was acutely aware of how the straps of the apron emphasized his delicious shoulders and showed off his thicker build. At the moment, he was just mixing the dry ingredients together. When Virgil smiled and walked into the kitchen, Patton looked up at him and beamed.

“Hey cutie! Wanna help make gingerbread cookies?”

Virgil rested his arms on Patton’s shoulders and kissed him slowly and deeply. Patton responded in kind, smiling into the kiss along with Virgil. Virgil leaned his forehead against Patton’s. “Cookies sound good.” He opened his eyes and was met with Patton’s bright, happy ones. He grinned and brushed their noses together, drawing a giggle from the older man.

Patton quickly smooched Virgil. “Do you wanna help with the wet ingredients? I can get you an apron!”

Virgil breathed in, savoring the quiet moment between them. “Yeah, I can do that.”

Patton waved, and a light purple apron with cartoon bats and cats appeared on Virgil. Virgil admired the apron for a moment before locking eyes with Patton and smirking. “Perfect.”

As expected, Patton blushed prettily. Virgil kissed Patton again before going to wash his hands and start cracking eggs. Once Patton got to combining the wet and dry ingredients, Virgil didn’t have anything to do, so he just traced his fingers over Patton’s lower back and pressed little kisses to the side of his head. Patton started rolling out the dough and had Virgil go fetch the cookie cutters with a quick kiss.

They made quick work of the dough, cutting out bats, cats, all different shapes of people, hearts, crowns, and books. After Patton put them in the oven and they cleaned up the workstation, Patton got out milk, vanilla extract, food coloring, and powdered sugar.

Virgil tilted his head. “Whatcha making?”

“Royal icing! We have to wait until the cookies cool before decorating them, so I’m making the icing ahead of time!”

Virgil watched as Patton mixed up the different colors, too worried about messing it up to participate. He chatted idly with Patton, smiling when Patton got bouncy while talking about Valerie and Terrence, and getting some paper towels when the blue food dye got knocked over in Patton’s excitement. Once the cookies had come out of the oven and cooled a bit, Virgil helped transfer them to cooling racks to finish setting.

Patton loosely wrapped his arms around Virgil’s waist. “Feelin’ flirty today huh?”

Virgil wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck. “Yeah.” He kissed Patton sweetly, both of them savoring each other. Patton ended up pressed against the table by Virgil, and they began running
hands up and down each other’s bodies. Virgil in particular was loving the feel of Patton’s broad shoulders beneath his hands, the fabric separating skin somehow making the touch hotter.

Virgil was more than a little aroused at this point, and when Patton’s hand trailed down his spine and made him arch he could tell Patton was in a similar situation.

He leaned down a bit to suck and nibble at a particularly sensitive spot on Patton’s neck. Patton gasped as one of his hands gently rested on the back of Virgil’s head and brushed gentle fingertips over his scalp.

Virgil was reminded of when Logan did the same to him while they were in Virgil’s room. He smiled against Patton’s neck. *I wonder what he tastes like?* Virgil reconnected their lips, turning the kiss dirty. Patton moaned and pulled Virgil close, thrilled to be making out with a very sexy man that he just so happened to be deeply in love with.

They both felt every inch of each other where they were pressed together, shifting and rubbing. Patton let it go on for a few minutes until he gently pushed at Virgil’s waist. Virgil pulled back slightly, searching Patton’s face. Patton smiled and kissed him.

“I need to get these icings packaged up so they stay liquid!”

Virgil smiled and pecked Patton before stepping to the side. Virgil kept his hips facing the table while he helped Patton put the various colors of icing away in sealed piping bags. They were just about finished putting everything away when Patton spilled a bit of plain white icing on the counter. He quickly scooped it up on one finger.

“This won’t go in the bag! Do you want it?”

Virgil stared at Patton’s finger before flicking intense, dark eyes up to Patton’s. Patton sucked in a breath, entranced by the deep eyes. Virgil rested lithe fingers on Patton’s wrist, and maintaining eye contact, bent down to suck the icing off his finger. Patton’s jaw dropped open and he made a sound like a slowly deflating balloon. Virgil made sure to get every bit of the icing off of Patton’s finger, sucking and swirling his tongue around the appendage devilishly.

When he was done, he pulled off slowly and licked his lips.

“Delicious,” he growled.

Patton’s last brain cell fizzled out while Virgil stood and started wiping down the table like nothing had happened. Patton was confused momentarily until he heard Roman and Logan enter the kitchen.

“I shall make the most amazing pasta!” Roman announced.

Logan came around to Patton and frowned.

“Are you alright darling?”

Patton squeaked.

Logan barely suppressed a smile. “He’s quite good at that, isn’t he?”

Patton nodded quickly. Logan laughed, Roman looked confused, and Virgil smirked at Patton over Logan’s shoulder.
Hi folks! It's been a while since I've done a Tumblr plug, so here's a link to my tumblr! I'm at Lilfellasblog!
The following day, Thomas felt like everything that could go wrong, did go wrong. First, his phone wasn’t put on its wireless charging station properly, so it died AND he got up late. Instead of showering, he had to just go with extra deodorant and hair products and run out the door, without caffeine or food. Then he had to attend 5 hours of painful business meetings in a row with a growing caffeine headache, and he was certain he wasn’t the most eloquent he’s ever been.

The rest of the day was working with Joan and the rest of the production company to get new Sanders Sides episodes out to the viewers. He was on Tumblr and he wasn’t ignorant to the complaints that videos took too long to come out, especially with an expanded crew.

Needless to say, by the time dinner rolled around and Joan convinced him to take the evening off to rest, Virgil was a wreck. Virgil sent a silent thank you to Joan, who had been reaching their own limits as well.

Virgil made sure Thomas was okay, then pulled back and went over to his bathtub. He turned it on hot, then stripped out of his clothes. He gathered fresh clothes from his wardrobe and hung them up in the bathroom, then decided on his favorite bergamot-scented bath bomb and dropped it in the blessedly steaming water. While that dispersed, he put his sweaty clothes in the laundry hamper, and crawled into the bath just as the bath bomb began calming down.

He lowered himself into the water and sighed, feeling the water creep up his body as he slowly sat down in the tub, smelling floral bergamot, the heat already working on his tense muscles. Focusing, he summoned a Guinness from the fridge to help him relax, pleased with his increasing abilities.

Virgil sighed, then did a few breathing exercises to help slow his mind. He checked on Thomas every now and again, but focused on finishing his drink and stretching out his sore muscles. Once his beer was finished, he washed himself quickly, dried off, set the tub to drain, and put on his favorite lotion, the one scented with oud that had shimmery mica in it. Virgil admired his nails for a moment before getting his hair and makeup in order and putting on his clothes. Virgil spied the fluffy bat slippers and smiled, Patton jumping to the front of his mind. He slipped them on in lieu of shoes, cracked his back, and wandered downstairs.

Roman and Logan were dancing in the hallway in some ballroom style, competing with each other. Virgil expertly swerved around them to get to the kitchen, and was met with a shining smile from Patton.

“Hey sweetpea! Wanna help set the table?”

Virgil reflected on how comfortable he was around them, his boyfriends, how calm and domestic
everything was. Tears sprang to his eyes.

“I love you Pat,” he said thickly.

Patton’s eyes widened, and he turned off the burner and quickly went to Virgil. Virgil just hugged Patton the second he could.

“I’m okay,” he reassured, “I’m just really happy.”

Patton laughed lightly. “Oh honey, I love you too.” He squeezed Virgil lightly and rocked them back and forth, letting Virgil cry out a bit of catharsis. After a minute, Virgil pulled back, ears and cheeks pink and blotchy and lips curved upwards. Patton booped his nose, making them both giggle.

Virgil and Patton got everything served up for dinner, and Logan and Roman came in, swearing up and down the other had lost and that they’d have to have a rematch to prove it. Virgil shook his head at the two Sides’ antics, and his mouth ran dry at the sight of Patton serving up his chicken roulade.

The tendons in Patton’s hands were taut as he carefully used hot pads to lift the baking sheet that had the chicken roulades. The muscles in Patton’s forearms were bulging, and Virgil’s eyes were transfixed to the spot. Once the baking sheet was laid down, Virgil traced up smooth biceps to thick shoulders. He had to shake his head and look away so he wouldn’t have to adjust himself. The roulades were pretty, and the Swiss cheese bechamel was amazing with it. The twice-baked potatoes with cheddar cheese and sour cream were rich and indulgent, and the glazed carrots added a nice sweet and citrus element while still going with the plate. Virgil moaned once he finished his plate.

“Oh my god Pat, this is so good.”

“Thanks honey! I thought we could use a good dinner after today!”

“That was good thinking dear. It was an excellent meal after the various stresses of today.”

Patton had a blush cover his cheeks, and Virgil wanted to kiss every pink splotch.

“Speaking of, Virgil, you seem remarkably relaxed considering today’s events.”

Virgil shrugged and looked down at his now-empty plate. “I dunno, I just took a bath and stuff.”

“Awwwww sweetie!! I’m so happy that you’re finding good ways to deal with stress and feel better!!”

Virgil flicked his eyes up to Patton. His sweet, sunny, pure boyfriend was glowing with happiness.

I feel good, I feel safe, I don’t feel on edge… I wonder what Patton looks like when he lets go?

He smirked. “Wanna feel even better in your room later?”

As expected, the pink hue returned to Patton’s face. “I’d love that honey!”

After dinner, Virgil thought he saw Roman tug on Logan’s tie out of the corner of his eye. He helped Patton clean up dinner, during which they’d sneak in little kisses. Once dinner was cleaned up, Virgil kissed Patton properly for the first time that night.

“Pat, I was thinking…” Virgil bit his lip and looked down. With Patton rubbing his thumb on
Virgil’s mid back, Virgil looked up at Patton through his eyelashes. “Would you be down to, um, havesextonight?”

Patton smiled warmly and leaned his forehead against Virgil’s. “That sounds wonderful baby.”

Virgil booped Patton’s nose, huffing at the giggle that followed.

“Can it be an in hour? I just wanna get ready and stuff, you know?” he asked, nerves spiking a bit.

“Of course sweetie, you just let me know.”

Virgil just responded by kissing Patton deeply, then saying, “Thanks Pat,” and sinking out to his room. He took a quick inventory of himself; he was fine, but there was stuff he could do in the meantime.

He started out by brushing his teeth, flossing, then brushing again, and finishing it off with mouthwash. He put on a bit of eyeliner and mascara and dabbed some glittery black eyeshadow beneath his eyes. He plucked his eyebrows and filled them in a bit, careful to not fill them in too much. Realizing he was having some growing anxiety, he did a few breathing exercises and a grounding exercise just to be sure. He looked down at himself.

*I’m wearing my old t-shirt and regular jeans. Patton deserves better than that. I can do better.*

Virgil stripped off his clothes and opened his wardrobe, happy to see the body shimmer was still there from the lotion. Grinning, he pulled his t-shirt with the cut out section on it out and tugged that on, then chose form-fitting jeans. Not wanting to do the awkward dance of taking off shoes and socks as they were stumbling around before sex, he forewent both, moving on to jewelry.

He picked up some bracelets, but paused when he felt his stomach curdle. *Nope nope, not tonight.* He opted for a simple silver ring instead. Taking a few more moments to fluff up his hair, he realized he’d only been busy for a half hour. He flopped on his bed and tried to distract himself with Tumblr.

*I can’t bother him in half the time I said I needed. I’ll be fine.* The anticipation had Virgil’s skin prickling in an unpleasant way, his mind supplying ways of how Virgil would ruin the mood.

Virgil sat cross-legged to warm up his feet when they got cold.

Realization struck him like a ton of bricks. *I can just text him and ask if I can come over early. Oh my god, duh.* Virgil shot a text over to Patton, who responded right away.

*Puffball: I’m ready whenever you are!! <3 <3 <3 <3 <3 <3*

Virgil snorted and set his phone on its charging station. Checking to make sure his bathroom taps were off, he turned off the light in his room and padded softly down the hallway to Patton’s room. From the lack of sound he heard, he assumed Logan or Roman had soundproofed whichever room they were in.

Once he got to Patton’s door, he forced himself to quickly knock before he could talk himself out of it. As expected, Patton answered the door almost right away. His eyes bulged when he saw the shirt and jeans Virgil was wearing, eyes going up and down his body before he snapped out of it.

“Hi baby! Wanna come in?”

Virgil just smiled and walked past Patton, heading for the bed but stopping once his nerves got the best of him. Patton shut the door and set a hand on Virgil’s back.
“We’re not going to do anything you don’t want sweetpea.”

Virgil looked up and allowed himself to be reassured by the sincere look on Patton’s face. He’s always sincere, God I love him so much.

He kissed Patton softly. “I’m okay, I’m just a little… nervous?”

Patton rubbed his back. “That’s okay. Want to watch some She Ra and see how you feel from there? We could just go to bed after watching TV if you want to.”

Virgil felt the tightness from his chest disappear. “Yeah, that sounds good Pat.”

Patton sat down on the bed and smiled at Virgil, letting him choose where he wanted to be. Virgil cuddled up right next to Patton and curled into his chest so he could comfortably watch TV. Patton squeezed him, clearly happy to be able to cuddle with Virgil, and they settled in to watch TV, Patton tracing his fingertips over Virgil’s arm. Over two episodes of She Ra, Virgil felt his attraction grow. He was surrounded by Patton’s gentle presence, his sweet vanilla scent, a strong arm around him, a thick body pressed against him.

Virgil made himself flush with his own thoughts. I wanna feel more of his body pressed against me.

Virgil paused the show and set the remote control aside. Patton looked down at him, to which Virgil just smiled shyly.

“Wanna make out?”

“ Heck yeah I do!”

Virgil snorted as he met Patton for a kiss. Patton was clearly holding back, only placing a hand on the side of Virgil’s face. Virgil took the initiative, quickly heating up the kiss and running his hands over Patton’s shoulders, chest, and arms.

Oh God, I want to feel so much more of him.

Virgil brought up one of his hands to tug at the knot in Patton’s cat hoodie. Patton quickly shed the hoodie, and then rested his hand at the hem of Virgil’s shirt, pulling back slightly.

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They were both panting, but Virgil spoke up first. “Can you take your shirt off first?”

“Sure baby!”

Virgil’s mouth went dry at every inch of Patton that was exposed. Patton’s body was downright erotic. The second Patton tossed his shirt to the side and smiled, glasses askew, Virgil kissed him roughly, placing a tentative hand on Patton’s waist. Patton moaned and pulled Virgil closer, so Virgil started exploring Patton’s body, teasing his sensitive nipples and doing his best to avoid spots he knew were ticklish.

The rub of Patton’s hands over his own clothed nipples had him gasping and arching. He retaliated by breaking the kiss and working his way down Patton’s neck and chest with his mouth, kissing and sucking and nipping. He marked up Patton’s neck just a little before laving attention on his collarbone. He scraped his teeth along the length of it lightly, internally cheering when Patton’s hips hitched. He closed his eyes and kissed the broad shoulders, trying to convey in actions how
hot he found Patton. He worked down to a thick chest and started placing little hickies every now and again. Patton’s hand was on the back of his head, encouraging but not pushing.

Virgil finally got down to Patton’s nipples and gave one a kitten lick, looking up to Patton to watch his response. Patton moaned loudly and his eyes fluttered shut, so Virgil did it again and took it into his mouth, rolling the hardening bud around in his mouth for a few seconds before letting it go and blowing on it, red hot sparks shooting down to his groin. He was fascinated for a moment by watching it stiffen before he kissed his way over to the other one, using his finger to trace around the darkened nipple. Patton was moaning and twitching his upper body, having moved his hand to Virgil’s shoulder so he could have something to grip, still careful to keep his touches light. Every touch and movement from the man beneath him only added to his arousal, and Virgil was worried that it might be over before he even got his pants off.

Virgil reconnected their lips, and both men were moaning into the kiss. Virgil ran his hands over Patton’s torso, intentionally brushing over reddened nipples occasionally. Patton started kissing down Virgil’s neck before scooting a bit further down the bed. Virgil was confused for a moment before Patton made eye contact and started mouthing at the patch of skin revealed by the cut out in his t-shirt. Virgil cried out in unexpected pleasure, nerve endings singing, before he clamped his mouth shut, embarrassed.

Patton nibbled at the pale skin before saying, “Don’t be embarrassed, you’re amazing,” and then going back to teasing and stimulating Virgil.

Virgil wove his fingers into Patton’s hair and let himself be as loud as his body demanded, straining painfully against the zipper of his jeans. He barely lasted a minute before begging, “Oh God, so good, please Patton, take it off!”

Patton detached his mouth with a final kiss, and put his hands at the hem of Virgil’s shirt, waiting. Virgil keened and nodded desperately. Patton smiled and slowly pulled up Virgil’s shirt, groaning when his body was revealed. Virgil decided that Patton was taking too long, so he grabbed his shirt and took it off himself, tossing it somewhere in the room. Patton took the opportunity to return the favor and play with Virgil’s nipples. Virgil whined and arched his back, finding one of Patton’s hands and tangling their fingers together. Patton brushed his thumb over the back of Virgil’s hands and only spent a few more seconds on his nipples before kissing him. Their kiss had both of their minds spinning.

When they parted for air, Virgil surprised himself by speaking first.

“How about I blow you?”

Patton was apparently surprised too, as he gaped for a moment before gathering himself.

“That sounds- yes, definitely, that sounds good!”

Virgil smirked at being able to throw Patton so well. They carefully disentangled from each other, both men a little awkward. Before Patton could change positions on the bed, Virgil put a hand on his arm to stop him.

He bit his lip. “Can we, um do this by the wall? With you against it I mean? It works and I wanna make sure it goes well.” He outwardly grimaced at his word choice.

Patton softened his face and brushed the backs of his fingers against Virgil’s cheek. “Of course sweetheart. You let me know what feels good, okay?”
“I will.”

Patton swung his legs over the edge of the bed and held a hand out to Virgil, who took it with a blush. To distract himself, he let his eyes flit over Patton’s dark lips and the small red marks he’d put on his sunny boyfriend.

Patton put his back against the wall that Virgil had led him to. “How are you feeling, honey?”

Virgil just kissed him, softly at first and then turning a little more rough.

Patton giggled. “So you’re feeling pretty good huh?”

Virgil huffed against Patton’s lips and slowly dropped to his knees, dragging his hands down the body he loved so much. He rested one hand on Patton’s hip and the thumb on his other hand on the button of Patton’s khakis and waited for Patton’s nod. When it came hurriedly, Virgil laughed and kissed his lover’s lower abdomen before he popped the button out. He knew that grabbing the zipper between his fingers wouldn’t end well, so he used his thumb to push the zipper down, simultaneously tracing the front of Patton’s cock with his thumb. Virgil felt a bit of pride at the way it jumped.

“Hey Pat? Can you wait to touch my head until I say it’s okay?”

“I can do that, you’re so good to tell me baby.”

Virgil took one of his hands and kissed the back of it, smiling at the blush that spread over Patton’s neck. He remembered that Patton didn’t like overstimulation and he didn’t want to push the sweet man, so Virgil pushed down Patton’s pants, realizing Patton had intentionally left his belt off. He touched the waistband of Patton’s boxer briefs and before he could even look up in question, he heard a breathy, “Yes, please.”

Virgil chuckled, kissed the front of the thin cotton, and pulled them down just enough to free Patton. He took Patton in his hand and stroked a few times, watching Patton’s eyes glaze over and his mouth fall open in a silent O. Patton felt amazing in his hand; smooth, not too big, hot, heavy.

I wonder what he’ll feel like in other places.

With that thought, Virgil slowly took Patton in and hollowed his cheeks, using his tongue to trace the head. Just as amazing as I thought. Patton’s head fell backwards as he groaned and his dick jumped, making Virgil groan as well. Virgil started moving up and down slowly, testing to see what Patton liked best and using his hand on the part he wasn’t taking into his mouth. He tried to take Patton to the root, but when he got close he could feel that might hit a trigger.

We’ll have to do that next time.

Virgil watched Patton closely, careful to not go too far back. Patton’s hips were twitching, but he was very good at not letting them go forward. Patton was making all kinds of high-pitched noises, and Virgil was groaning the more he heard them, a thrill going through him at the effect he was having on Patton. Every verbal and nonverbal signal from Patton was making him harder. He himself was desperate to be touched, to get some relief, but wasn’t sure how to get it at this exact moment.

Virgil moaned, then carefully pulled off Patton. More touch, I need more touch.

“You can touch me now if you want.”
Patton nodded as Virgil took Patton in as deep as he dared in one go, then pulled off until just the tip was left in his mouth. He focused on the head, putting suction on it and teasing the underside. Patton nearly shouted, so Virgil was surprised at how very tender the touch on his head was. Patton was brushing the hair off of Virgil’s forehead and running fingers through his hair.

“You’re so beautiful, oh my god Virgil, so good…”

Virgil took more of him in and began trying to bring Patton to orgasm, secretly wanting to see what his face would look like and how he’d taste. As those possibilities ran through his mind, Virgil thought he might come in his pants just from blowing Patton. He traced Patton’s bare hips with his free hand, the soft skin and slight pudge endearing.

“Virgil, you’re amazing, I-” Patton’s speech cut off with a gasp and a keen. He tapped Virgil’s shoulder twice.

“Sweetheart, I’m gonna come, I’m close.”

Virgil just tried to smile with his eyes and sped up his ministrations, focusing on the vein on the underside of his cock and the head. Sure enough, not even a minute later, Patton started coming. Virgil swallowed quickly, observing Patton had a slightly stronger taste than Logan but that he didn’t mind it one bit. When Patton was finished, he pulled off and tucked him back in, fixing his khakis and pressing kisses to Patton’s stomach. They both quietly laughed at how his muscles twitched from being so ticklish. When it was clear that Patton was going to stay standing, Virgil rose to meet him, Patton kissing him deeply and holding him in a loose hug.

Patton was still panting pretty heavily, so Virgil kissed his face gently, moving around to kiss all his favorite parts. It turned out to be quite a few kisses, since he couldn’t choose which parts of Patton’s sweet face were his favorite.

Virgil had to stop from jumping when Patton’s hands landed on his bare waist. “I need a few minutes, but then I should be good to go! Wanna cuddle on the bed for a bit?”

After a few soft kisses, Virgil smiled. “That sounds great Pat,” he said quietly.

They curled up on the bed, Patton catching his breath and Virgil holding him against his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Did any of you pick up on the foreshadowing from the last chapter? Virgil helped mix the wet ingredients.

... I could pretend to apologize, but I would be lying.
Chapter 166

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! I'll put a brief description of last chapter's and this chapter's shenanigans in the ending A/n's of this chapter, but this entire chapter is smut. That's it, just smut. Pure smut. Enjoy! :D

(And yes, it's a double update today! :D)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So baby,” Patton began, “what would you like? If you feel up to it, I wanna make you feel good too!”

Virgil kissed the top of Patton’s head. “I’m up for it.”

Patton pointedly shifted his gaze down. “I can tell!”

Virgil groaned and laughed into Patton’s hair, face red. Patton seemed to recover enough to turn over so he was holding himself over Virgil. Virgil stared at the muscles that were on display.

“Whaddya say? Want me to do what you did or something different?” he asked, the question an open one.

Virgil smiled and caressed Patton’s face, even as his cock jumped in his pants at the thought of Patton’s lips around him, tongue working him, bright brown eyes staring up at him- “I… I think I’d be okay with you doing what I did.”

Patton kissed Virgil feather-light. “Let me know if you need something or want to stop, okay?”

“I will.”

To Virgil’s surprise, Patton stayed right where he was, not moving down the bed at all. Virgil took advantage of the situation by running his hands down a back that was pure temptation. He bucked up, and Patton responded by slotting a thigh between Virgil’s legs to rub against his erection. Virgil thrust against him desperately, relieved to finally get some stimulation.

“Shhhhh baby, it’s okay, I’ve got you. I’ll make you feel good.”

Virgil let out a breath and relaxed, knowing he was safe with Patton and that Patton would make sure he’d get what he needed. He whined and arched his neck, and Patton finally started working his way down Virgil’s body. He went slowly, silently checking in with Virgil who was nearly out of his mind with need. He didn’t spend too long teasing him, knowing he was already very worked up and had been for some time.

Patton was kissing the notch at the bottom of Virgil’s sternum, and suddenly Virgil felt something in his gut twist. He tried to figure out what it was, to no avail, until Patton touched his hip.

“Yellow, yellow!”
Patton was next to him in a second. “Sweetheart, what’s-”

Virgil tried to reassure Patton by kissing him gently. “I’m okay, I just realized this might be a position that… reminds me of some stuff?”

Patton delicately took Virgil’s hand and rubbed his thumb over it. “I’m so sorry baby. I’m so proud of you for using the color system when you needed to, you did so well and used it perfectly. Are you sure you’re okay?”

Virgil smiled and nodded. “I am, I still wanna keep going, just maybe in a different position?”

“Of course honey, we can try a different position. What would be best right now though?”

Virgil smiled. “Maybe some cuddles and kissing?”

“I think we can do that!”

Virgil huffed out a laugh while Patton gathered him into his arms. Virgil wrapped his own arms around Patton’s waist and nuzzled his chest. Patton responded in kind by nuzzling and kissing the top of Virgil’s head. Virgil made sure to keep his hips angled away from Patton.

After a few minutes where Virgil was sure he was grounded, he craned his neck up to kiss Patton on the lips. Patton started moving his hands up and down, touching Virgil’s skin and setting it aflame once more. It didn’t take long for them to get back to where they had been, Virgil’s eyes clouded with pleasure and his need growing with every passing second.

“How do you want me baby?” Patton breathed.

“Oh fuck, Patton…”

Patton giggled. “That’s the idea!”

Virgil huffed out a laugh. “I’m not having much luck thinking straight.”

“I never do!”

They both started laughing lightly at that. Virgil couldn’t resist kissing his bright, beautiful boyfriend.

“I love you so much,” he whispered against reddened lips.

“I love you too, chocolate chip.”

Virgil felt emotion well up inside of him, so he claimed Patton lips in a passionate kiss, regrettably breaking apart to think of what he wanted.

“Oh, so… laying down doesn’t work, and I don’t think the wall would work. Um…” Virgil trailed off, mind hazy with lust.

Patton kissed the tip of his nose. “Wanna try sitting on the edge of the bed?”

Virgil nodded quickly. “Yeah that could work!”

Patton kissed him again, this time on the lips, before he slid off the bed. Virgil pushed himself up and slowly moved his legs to hang over the side of the mattress, careful to not bump or kick Patton.
Once he was there, Patton rested his hands on Virgil’s thighs and started massaging them, mouth watering when Virgil twitched.

Virgil felt okay, but something was bothering him.

“Hey Pat? Could we maybe move to the armchair?”

“Sure honey! You like sitting up?”

“Yes, I just don’t wanna make you suck me off next to the bed.”

Patton kissed the back of his hand, understanding in his eyes. “I’m okay sweetie, you’re not hurting me.”

He tugged on Virgil’s hand lightly as he stood, Virgil following him. Virgil sat down carefully in the armchair, anticipation no longer unpleasant, and moaned when Patton got between his thighs.

“How’s this?” Patton asked, faux innocence shining in his eyes.

Patton was looking up at Virgil, shirt off, skin still flushed and a little sweaty, hair mussed, lips bruised, and little hickeys that Virgil put there standing out against smooth skin.

Virgil squeaked.

“My turn, huh?” Patton asked, a mischievous smirk playing across his features.

Virgil laughed and nodded. “Just, go slow and don’t do more than you want yeah?”

Patton tilted his head and smiled sappily. “I promise honey. You’re so good to me, you know that?”

Virgil blushed and looked down, his attention drawn back to the man between his thighs when Patton started kissing up one, then slowing down and staring up at Virgil as he got close to his groin. Patton kissed around where Virgil wanted him, making Virgil grip the arms of the chair he was in.

Patton slowly, oh-so-slowly, slid his hands up the outside of Virgil’s thighs until he reached Virgil’s waistband, waiting.

Virgil swallowed as a smile broke out. *I can do this. It’s happening. I want this.* He nodded, not quite trusting his voice at the moment.

Patton seemed to understand if the look in his eyes was any indication. He slowly traced along the top of Virgil’s jeans and popped out the button. Upon receiving a smile, Patton unzipped Virgil’s jeans and opened them up. He leaned forward, keeping eye contact with Virgil the entire time. Virgil’s breath hitched as he watched Patton come closer and closer, arousal thrumming in his veins.

Patton kissed the hard outline of Virgil’s cock, Virgil having to press his hips into the cushion beneath him to not thrust up. Patton started mouthing at the tented fabric as Virgil’s cock and was a little surprised to hear how loud and high-pitched Virgil’s moans and keens got almost right away.

Before going any further, Patton needed verbal consent for his own sake. “Easy baby, I’ve got you. What do you want?”

Virgil whined. “Please, *please* more! You can take off more!”
“Okay honey, we can definitely do that.” Patton tried to rub Virgil’s thigh soothingly, but that only made him keen.

Patton pinched the top of Virgil’s boxer briefs in between his fingertips for a second, giving Virgil time to tell him he needed to stop, before slowly pulling them down. He pulled them down just far enough, not wanting to undress him more than necessary lest they stumble across a trigger.

Virgil’s dick sprang up and hit his stomach, making Virgil jump and throw his head back into the chair. Patton felt a twinge of sympathy for how red it looked.

“Please Patton!”

Without wasting any more time, Patton gently took Virgil in his hand and stroked a few times. Virgil groaned loudly and looked down at Patton, chest heaving and eyes wide. He’d never felt anything this pleasurable before. Patton’s warm, soft, gentle hand on him, the fact that it was Patton’s hand, with a wrecked Patton looking up at him in love and adoration.

“Fuck, I might not - oh fuck! - last much longer if you keep doing that!”

Patton smiled. So sensitive, I can’t wait to see more of that.

Virgil watched as Patton kissed the head, that sensation alone making sparks fly in front of his eyes, and then take him halfway down in one go. Virgil fought hard to keep his hips still, the sensation so different in the most mind-blowing way than anything else he’d ever felt.

He longed to reach out, but he had to be sure. “Can I touch you?” Oh my god, I might come before I can.

Patton smiled around Virgil and nodded, making them both laugh quietly. Virgil brushed fingers through Patton’s hair on the side of his head as Patton started moving in earnest.

Virgil’s lower abdomen was taut and he could feel himself jumping. When Patton sucked while swirling his tongue around Virgil, Virgil tapped his shoulder twice.

Oh my god, this is so embarrassing. “Pat, I’m so close already, I might-” he cut off, unable to finish his sentence through his embarrassment.

Patton held Virgil as he pulled off. “You can come in my mouth if you want,” he said, far too casually.

Virgil whimpered, helpless at that, and Patton took Virgil back into his mouth, using his saliva as lube to gently pump with his hand what he couldn’t comfortably take in with his mouth this time. He bobbed his head in time with his hand, and watched as Virgil came apart above him.

Virgil could barely hold himself together. His blood was singing with pleasure, the sensation of Patton around him was overwhelming, and he knew he wouldn’t last much longer. Patton’s milk-chocolate eyes were staring up at him, and those were the eyes he saw as the first wave of orgasm crashed over him. He wasn’t sure if his eyes were opened or closed, he just felt the red hot coil in his lower half unraveling all at once and exploding outwards through his body, his limbs tensing and shaking as pure pleasure crashed into him in higher and higher waves, erasing his thoughts and awareness until the waves became smaller and smaller, lightning still shooting through him but getting weaker. He felt Patton pull off of him and tuck him away, then succumbed to the haze.

Patton moved Virgil’s arms onto his lap, then crawled up and situated himself so his weight was supported by the armchair, a trick he’d learned with Logan and Roman. He moved Virgil’s bangs
off his forehead and leaned down to kiss his head.

Despite being in a slightly awkward position, he was rather proud of himself.

“You did so well honey, you were perfect. I’m the luckiest guy alive. I love you so much.”

Patton kept whispering to Virgil and touching him until Virgil began to rouse. Virgil blinked blearily up at him and smiled crookedly.

“Hey,” he rasped.

Patton giggled. “Hey yourself. Wanna sleep on the bed?”

Virgil closed his eyes, still smiling. “Mhm.”

“How about I carry you?”

Virgil just lifted his arms and bumped the underside of Patton’s legs. He looked at them, completely confused, until Patton crawled off the armchair.

Patton put an arm behind Virgil’s back and one underneath Virgil’s legs. “Ready?”

Virgil just wrapped his arms around Patton’s neck and nuzzled his shoulder. Patton slowly lifted him and carried him the short distance to the bed. He laid his shorter boyfriend down and quickly climbed in next to him, holding him close.

Patton knew from experience the first time experiencing that tended to knock a Side out, so he just touched Virgil tenderly and whispered lovingly into Virgil’s ear until Virgil fell completely asleep. Patton followed him a short while later, exhausted and sated.

Chapter End Notes

Look at our BEAN getting more comfortable with his sexuality!! :) I am SO PROUD of him!!

Here's the description of what happened these last two chapters for whom smut is a squick!
Virgil goes to Patton's room and hangs out with him. The start making out, take their shirts off, make out some more, and then chat about what to do next. Virgil blows Patton, and Patton needs a few minutes to gather himself. This chapter begins with them talking a bit more, then after some trial and error, Patton successfully blows Virgil! Then they fall asleep cuddling!
Patton woke slowly from a dream. The first thing he became aware of was that he was holding someone on his chest. The next was that his body felt exceptionally relaxed. When he opened his eyes and looked down, the rest of the story clicked into place.

He smiled and sweetly kissed the top of Virgil’s head. He rubbed his thumb over Virgil’s shoulder, feeling the bare skin there, his torso moving up and down as he breathed deeply in sleep. Patton kissed Virgil’s head again, just because he could.

Patton breathed in Virgil’s unique scent, lavender and oud and bergamot, paired with a bit of sweat. He brushed his hands down Virgil’s arms, frowning when he felt how cold his upper arms were due to the blanket shifting down. He tilted his head to get a better look at Virgil and saw he was still in his skinny jeans too.

He’s going to have red marks, and skinny jeans can’t be comfy to sleep in. His mind made up, Patton waved his hand and changed them both into cotton t-shirts and fluffy polar fleece sleep pants. He tucked the blankets securely around Virgil, wrapped his arms around him, kissed the top of his head one more time, and fell back asleep.

///// 

Virgil stirred awake slowly, blinking against the light. He unconsciously rumbled with how warm and soft his surroundings were, especially the person he was laying against. He heard a small giggle and looked up, smiling.

“Mornin’ Pat.”

“Morning sweetie!”

Virgil closed his eyes, still smiling, and pressed a kiss to Patton’s jaw. Patton returned the favor by kissing the crown of his head. Virgil snuggled against Patton and curled his hands in the fluffy blanket, sighing contentedly.

Patton squeezed his arms around Virgil, making sure he knew he was loved. Virgil rubbed his legs
together, taking longer than he’d like to admit that he was wearing sleep pants instead of jeans.

“Good thinking Pat.”

“Hm? About last night? I think that was your idea!”

Virgil blushed brightly, thankful Patton couldn’t see his face. “No, I mean about the clothes. I probably shouldn’t have worn tight jeans.”

“I didn’t mind!”

Virgil snorted and tilted his head up just enough to kiss the underside of Patton’s chin. “I love you.”

Patton shifted so he could see Virgil’s eyes. Virgil noticed Patton’s eyes were a little shiny.

“I love you too baby.”

Virgil stared into Patton’s eyes for a few silent moments before breaking into a grin. “I’d kiss you, but I think we both need to brush our teeth.”

“You’re right! Do you wanna do that now?”

Virgil grunted in the negative, wrapped his arms around Patton’s torso, and rubbed his cheek against Patton’s chest. He heard a small laugh from above him.

“I’m right there with you,” Patton said quietly.

Patton pet Virgil’s hair and kissed it, occasionally murmuring how much he loved him. Virgil would quietly repeat the sentiment back while lightly squeezing, meaning every word. They stayed like that for an hour and a half, laying together and trying to express their love for each other, until three precise knocks sounded at the door.

“Are you two alright?” Logan asked quietly.

Virgil’s cheeks tinged pink while Patton spoke for them. “We’re good Lolo! Just snuggling!”

Virgil huffed a laugh into Patton’s chest.

Logan spoke again, a little louder. “I’m glad to hear that. Will you be joining us for breakfast?”

Patton smooched the top of Virgil’s head. “Yup! We’ll get up now, be down in a few minutes!”

Virgil sighed and stretched. “You’re really warm and comfortable.”

“So are you!”

Virgil leaned up and kissed Patton’s jaw one more time. “Benefit of us getting up is I get to kiss you again.”

“I can’t wait!”

Virgil snorted and rolled out of bed, stretching to pop his back and stiff joints. He and Patton got ready together, kissing in the hallway before going downstairs.

“What do you think of blueberry waffles this morning?”
“Sounds awesome.”

“A sweet for my sweetie!”

Roman and Logan were looking over some papers in the living room, so Patton and Virgil went into the kitchen alone. While Virgil went about getting some of the cookware out, he saw Patton pause out of the corner of his eye.

“Virge?”

Virgil looked fully at Patton, who smiled nervously.

“What did you think about last night?”

Oh. God I love him.

“Last night was amazing Pat. I’ve never,” He choked off a little as his eyes filled with emotion. “I’ve never had that before, you know? I’ve never had it where someone undressed me and… did that and I wanted it, and you were really good.” He hastily brushed away a happy tear that had fallen. “You’re perfect for me babe.”

Patton collided with him a moment later in a hug. “You’re perfect for me too, Virgie,” Patton said wetly.

Virgil laughed and hugged him back, endeared even more by his sweet, emotional boyfriend. They hugged for a long minute, and when they pulled apart Virgil was quick to draw Patton into a kiss. Virgil rumbled happily, breathing in vanilla.

Patton smiled and kissed Virgil’s forehead. “We should really get started on breakfast.”

Virgil quickly kissed Patton before running a hand down his arm slyly and continuing to get cookware out. They made quick work of breakfast, and soon Roman and Logan filtered into the kitchen. Virgil was wondering why Roman was looking smug until he noticed how gingerly Logan sat down in his chair. When Patton sat down in his chair, Roman kissed his cheek.

Logan looked over at Virgil with a soft smile. “We overheard you two. Congratulations Virgil.”

Virgil’s face was on fire, but he managed a smile back. Breakfast passed relatively normally, and when they were done Roman kissed the top of Virgil’s head as he was walking behind him. Logan came back into the kitchen to grab a second cup of coffee, and Virgil noticed his gait.

“Looks like you and Roman had a good time last night too,” Virgil smirked.

Logan’s face remained impassive. “How could you tell?”

Roman called back, “Technically, last night and this morning!”

Virgil laughed and Patton giggled while Logan grumped over to Roman’s voice.

/////“You ready for the freezer?” the restaurant owner asked.

“Yeah, let’s do it!”

In reality, Thomas was nervous about being in a cold space long enough to film. He knew he was
nowhere near conditioned for the cold, but was hoping that his trusty brown jacket could keep him warm. They were filming in a restaurant as part of a miniseries they were doing for the second channel, and this restaurant happened to have a massive walk-in freezer that they had a few segments to film in.

The crew and restaurant owner walked into the freezer and started getting set up. Joan, Adri, and Quil were getting everything ready. Thomas felt his heart twinge; Talyn had needed to tap out of this filming since the prolonged exposure to such cold temperatures would wreak havoc on their joints. Thomas had offered to figure something else out but Talyn insisted they move ahead with their original plan, even as Thomas saw hurt on their face. He wanted nothing more than to include Talyn and to make things work, and instead he’d just excluded them and reminded them of something that caused them pain.

Thomas snapped back to the present with Joan’s call. Joan had a mild look of impatience on their face.

“You good there? I’ve been calling you for like a minute.”

Thomas slapped a smile on his face. “Yeah I’m good! Let’s do this!”

Their first take was bad, plain and simple, and it was all Thomas’ fault. He was still upset and distracted. He knew his friends were just focusing on their work, but the lack of happy expressions sent his way made it feel like the cold from the freezer was working its way directly into his heart. He managed to pull himself together enough to finish filming with only a few other hiccups, but chickened out of asking Joan for a hug outside the restaurant.

/////Virgil forced himself out of his room, performing breathing exercises to calm down. After the day Thomas had, he knew that being in his room would only make things worse.

*His friends don’t hate him, but he fucked up with Talyn. They’re never gonna want to talk to him again, which means he’ll lose Joan and everyone else and- No! Dammit, that won’t happen.*

He kept doing breathing exercises, intending to clean up leftover dishes from a very rushed lunch before working out with Saul, when he saw Patton shivering on the couch.

Oh fuck, oh shit, today was not good for him.

Virgil made his steps down the stairs louder than normal so he wouldn’t risk startling Patton. “Hey babe, you okay?”

Patton looked up in surprise, arms still wrapped around himself, cat hoodie nowhere in sight. “Hey sweetie! I’m okay, I just…” Patton trailed off with a sniffle. He hung his head and slumped his shoulders.

Virgil felt his heart shred as he quickly walked over to Patton and sat down next to him. He tentatively put an arm over his shoulders and squeezed. “Hey, it’s okay.”

Patton shook his head. “But what if it’s not?! I made Roman mess up and Thomas screw things up with Talyn and he didn’t get a hug from Joan because it’s not Joan’s responsibility to make Thomas feel better and now Thomas’ friends are sad and I’m sad!!”

Sensing Patton was about to start crying, Virgil lightly pulled Patton towards him, not surprised when Patton flung his arms around Virgil and bawled. Virgil was a little worried by how much the
Heart was shivering.

Virgil rubbed Patton’s back and held him tightly. “Shhhh, oh Pat, it’s okay. Thomas’ friends don’t hate him, and I’m sure if he asked any one of them would give him a hug. Thomas’ friends still love him.” He didn’t quite believe what he was saying himself, but he could do this for Patton.

“I just w-wanted a hug from Joan!”

_Oh fuck. “I know, and you’ll get one.”_

Virgil let Patton cry himself out, glad that he was letting out the pain. When Patton’s tears started slowing down, he focused and summoned a Kleenex box to where they were, catching it as it came in with more velocity than he intended. Patton cleaned up his face and blew his nose.

Virgil kissed Patton’s forehead. _I hope Thomas sees Joan soon._

He pulled a blanket off the back of the couch and wrapped it around Patton. He continued holding Patton, noticing that the larger man was still shivering.

Virgil fidgeted. “Do you wanna talk about it?”

Patton sent him a grateful smile. “Not right now, thank you honey.”

Virgil smiled back. “Any time.” He frowned when a particularly violent shiver went through his boyfriend.

_He’s probably feeling cold from the lack of response from Thomas’ friends, and he needed a hug..._ He felt like a lightbulb lit up over his head. “Do you wanna wear my hoodie?”

Patton turned to him slowly with sparkling eyes. “Can I?” he whispered in awe.

Virgil felt a rush of... _protectiveness?_ go through him at the idea. “Yeah, might help warm you up with the blanket and me.”

Patton nodded quickly, so Virgil shrugged off his hoodie and helped Patton into it. Patton bunched some of the fabric in his hands and hugged it. Virgil’s eyes zeroed in on where his hoodie was hugging Patton’s figure. He felt like he was protecting Patton just by having him wear his hoodie.

_“Thank you, Virgil. I’m already feeling warmer!”_

Virgil pecked his cheek. “I’m really happy about that. Do you wanna cuddle?”

_“Of course!”_

Virgil quietly laughed while he and Patton laid down on the couch, Virgil holding Patton against his chest tightly. Virgil mimicked what Patton had been doing to him that morning, gently rubbing his arm and kissing the top of his head, happy when Patton’s shivering started calming down. Virgil was a little glad when Patton dozed off; he knew Patton probably could use the nap. Virgil tugged the blanket over the two of them.

After an hour, Virgil decided he didn’t want Patton’s sleep to be thrown off too much.

_“Pat, wake up. It’s time to wake up.”_

Patton snuffled and snuggled against Virgil, not wanting to wake up. Virgil huffed and kissed the
top of Patton’s head, rubbing his arm more.

“Come on, you don’t wanna stay up all night.”

Patton tilted his head up, sweet milk chocolate eyes still sleepy. “Hey Virge,” he said in a slightly deeper voice.

Virgil felt his blood flow redirect. He cleared his throat. “Hey Pat. Have a good nap?”

Patton just hummed and rubbed his cheek against Virgil’s chest. “Mhm.”

“Oh my god you’re adorable.” Virgil internally groaned. “But we do still need to get up. We can still cuddle sitting up.”

Patton grunted but acquiesced. As promised, as soon as he’d wrapped the blanket back around Patton’s shoulders, he pulled him back into cuddling just as Logan and Roman descended the stairs.

Virgil cleared his throat and caught their eyes. “Hey guys, wanna reheat some frozen pizzas and get some hot chocolate going?”

“That is a task I can surely accomplish as a noble prince!” Roman said, a little more dramatically than usual.

“You are NOT touching the oven OR the stove, and yes we will do that.”

Patton giggled at Logan’s swift reply. “Thanks guys!”

Virgil kissed Patton’s hair. “Movie night?”

“Sure!”

The hot chocolate and pizza got to them faster than Virgil thought possible, and with the crispy edges of the pizza he figured Princey had probably tried to use magic to speed up the cooking. Patton’s hot chocolate had extra whipped cream and marshmallows with rainbow sprinkles on top and was handed to him by Logan, who kissed his temple as he sat down. Over the movie marathon, Patton would occasionally start to get upset, but his three boyfriends were right there to help him through it. They went to bed all in Roman’s room, and Patton fell asleep warm.

Chapter End Notes

I hope y'all enjoyed!! I folded in a bit of lore into the sweetness and h/c of this chapter, and I think y'all will like the next chapter! I'll see you soon!
Virgil was holding onto Roman’s elbow as they walked through the castle gardens on an overcast day, Roman excitedly talking about all of the projects the youth club was working on. Virgil was taking advantage of his hold on Roman, not-so-subtly feeling the powerful muscles beneath the uniform.

“Oh! And they created a beautiful tile mosaic in the library!”

Virgil rested his head against Roman’s shoulder. “Huh. I don’t think I’ve been to the library yet.”

“What?!”

Virgil jumped and sent Roman a slightly perturbed look.

“My apologies. But we simply must go there!”

Virgil pecked Roman’s cheek. “Lead the way, my prince,” he said lowly.

Roman grinned and quickly led them into the castle. The guards stood to attention as they walked by, Virgil smiling to himself at how detail-oriented his boyfriend was. He tried not to think about the first time he came here by himself and was mostly successful. Virgil would steal glances at his prince’s handsome face every so often, admiring how the fire from the torches lining the walls caused light to dance across his features. While he was distracted, Roman turned the corner into the library, causing Virgil to stumble a little bit.

“There it is!”

Virgil looked to the ground and saw what had to be hundreds, if not thousands, of small tiles, each one a single color but together they came together to form a scene. The scene was of Roman slaying a dragon, then trotting through the village on Arthur with the dragon’s head in one hand. Virgil thought he spied the dragon witch in the crowd. The final scene was of Roman in front of his castle with the guards around him.

“Jesus fuck this is impressive!”

“Indeed it is!! The children are so talented! Shall I show you around the rest of the library?”

Virgil looked up and took in the library properly. It was massive, old wooden bookcases towering 15 feet high, with rolling ladders seen here and there. The books varied from contemporary
paperback to thick tomes Virgil was pretty sure could be used to summon demons. Roman led Virgil around, gesturing broadly at the various sections, the study areas, the children’s play areas, until they had nearly circled the entire thing.

“And here, we have a comfortable reading nook, for those who prefer to recline while reading!”

Virgil laid his eyes upon the most ridiculous bay window he’d ever seen. There was a thick mattress, a throw blanket, and a mountain of pillows, apparently so people could sit up or lay down while reading. The windows themselves were huge, easily 10 feet tall and 5 feet wide each.

“Logan is particularly fond of this spot!”

Virgil glanced wryly up at Roman. “Have you two fucked in the window?”

Roman spluttered and turned beet red. “I- no! We have not! Logan’s rather concerned about people walking in on us!”

“And you?”

Roman just let out incomprehensible noises. After a few moments, Virgil had mercy on him and kissed him.

“Relax Ro.” He sat down on the mattress and pretended to test its firmness. A light rain started up, pattering against the glass and sluggishly sliding down. He leaned back and smiled coquettishly up at Roman. “I think there’s room for one more.”

Roman beamed and slowly lowered himself on top of Virgil, who laid down just as slowly. They met in a gentle kiss, Roman putting his hand behind Virgil’s head and guiding him down the rest of the way. Virgil got his hands on Roman as soon as he could, feeling a rippling back before drawing a hand up to Roman’s face and trailing his fingertips over the features he loved so much. Roman was similarly tender, the hand that had been behind Virgil’s head now stroking his cheek and using the other arm to keep the majority of his body weight off his lover.

Virgil started letting out little moans, occasionally matched by Roman, their kisses slow and languid as they touched each other and just enjoyed being together.

After a minute or an hour, Virgil couldn’t tell and couldn’t care less, he brought a foot over Roman’s calf and used the back of his ankle to rub against the taut muscle. Roman twitched and moaned into the kiss.

Perfect. Virgil quickly flipped the two of them so Roman ended up on his back with Virgil straddling his hips. Roman’s expression was one of surprise before it morphed into pure delight. Virgil snorted as he leaned down to kiss him.

With both hands free to touch Virgil, Roman was taking full advantage, running his hands over Virgil’s back, teasing his torso over his shirt, tangling his fingers in soft hair every so often. Virgil groaned when Roman would scratch at the base of his skull or run fingers down his spine. A few minutes later, Virgil broke the kiss to catch his breath and lean his forehead on Roman’s.

“I’m surprised you haven’t tried to flip us back over,” he panted.

Roman just grinned. “I’m quite happy where I am!”

Virgil huffed out a laugh before connecting their lips once more, neither man in any hurry. The library was silent, save for the sounds of kissing, clothes rustling, and the occasional moan.
Once Virgil started feeling tired, he rolled to the side and snuggled against Roman’s chest, strong arms quickly wrapping him in a tender embrace. He felt a kiss on the top of his head a moment later, and hands gently rubbing his upper arm.

Virgil felt unexpectedly emotional. “I love you Ro.”

Roman placed another kiss on Virgil’s hair. “I love you too Virgil.”

Virgil rumbled contentedly. He listened to Roman’s heartbeat and the sound of rain hitting the glass while watching the droplets slowly slide down. He felt his eyes droop a minute later.

*I’ll just rest my eyes for a few minutes.*

He closed his eyes, still listening to the sound of rain and Roman’s heart. He thought he might have dozed off to the soothing atmosphere, but he woke back up, warm and still held securely by Roman, who had his face in Virgil’s hair.

Virgil tilted his head up so he could see his prince’s face. Roman was staring down at him in adoration, love shining in his eyes.

So what choice did Virgil have but to kiss him again?

One of Roman’s arms kept holding Virgil securely while the other traced his jawline. A few kisses later, Virgil pulled back again.

He smiled shyly, a little nervous but feeling bold. “Wanna go have sex in your room?”

Roman’s eyebrows shot up but he smiled widely. “Yes, of course!”

Virgil snorted and pecked him on the lips, then got up with Roman. Just as he had wrapped his hands around Roman’s elbow, Roman froze.

“Ro? You okay?”

Roman sighed in defeat. “Thomas is requesting my presence.”

Virgil kissed Roman’s cheek and brushed his lips against Roman’s ear. “Then we’ll just have to have sex later,” he whispered.

Roman nodded furiously. “Yes, I think that’s a good idea!”

Virgil kissed the shell of his ear. “You should go see what Thomas needs, I’ll be fine on my own. Might visit Patton.”

Roman begrudgingly disentangled himself from Virgil. “Very well. Fare thee well, my love.”

Virgil laughed internally as Roman sank out with a flourish. With Roman gone, the castle felt suddenly very empty. He wrapped his arms around himself and started walking towards the entrance of the castle, knowing there’d at least be guards there.

*You know who else is here that you could visit…*

*Uh, fuck no?*

*The Dark Sides!*
Virgil groaned. They crossed his mind any time he came into the Imagination, but he was usually able to just brush it off.

~~~~~

*Don’t you miss getting fucked?*

~~~~~

Virgil gripped his arm, trying to ground himself. He walked faster, getting back to the guards in record time.

“Sir Virgil! What ails you?”

Virgil focused on his breathing. “Can one of you escort me back to the portal?”

“But of course!”

Virgil couldn’t stop the slightly hysterical laughter at the very Roman-like response from the guard. True to form, the guard led Virgil to the portal. Virgil focused on his breathing exercises the entire way down, and by the time they got there his panic was more or less under control.

“Here we are, good Sir.”

Virgil let out a shaky breath. “Thank you… I’m so sorry, I don’t know your name?”

“Sir Cadogen is my name, Sir.”

Virgil smiled. “Right, of course. Thank you Sir Cadogen.”

“It is my most humble honor. Fare thee well, Sir Virgil.”

Virgil sent him a two-finger salute, then crossed the threshold and landed back in Roman’s room. He shook himself, trying to physically rid himself of the thoughts about the Dark Sides. He made his way downstairs, knowing that Patton would either already be there or would be there soon. Sure enough, Patton was standing by the large window in the living room. He looked over his shoulder and beamed when Virgil came down the stairs.

“Heya cutie!”


Patton giggled and blushed lightly. Virgil came up next to him and put a hand on his lower back. “Whatcha doing?”

“Just watching the rain. It’s nice, isn’t it?”

Virgil started dragging his hand back and forth on Patton’s lower back. He leaned his head forward slightly. “It is,” he rumbled.

Patton’s blush intensified from a light pink to a cute red. Virgil closed his eyes and started kissing Patton’s thick shoulder, continuing to tease his lower back. Once his kisses became more open-mouthed, Patton started making all kinds of pretty sounds, and Virgil was determined to get him to make more. He started trailing closer and closer to Patton’s neck, Patton’s breathy noises picking up, and then he was gone.
Patton dazedly looked around, only to see Virgil walking towards the kitchen.

Virgil tossed a look over his shoulder. “Wanna help me make lunch?”

“I- Sure!” Patton called back, voice cracking. He thought he saw a smirk on Virgil’s face, but he couldn’t be sure.

/////

Roman made it back in time for lunch, and Logan made his way down from work. Thomas had decided to push a video release up by a week, so both Roman and Logan were very busy. Patton and Virgil made a comforting lunch of classic grilled cheese sandwiches with a creamy roasted bell pepper, tomato, and basil soup. Roman had to help Thomas for the rest of the day, but Logan had a reprieve until at least tomorrow. Virgil helped Patton clean up the kitchen while exchanging little kisses, but before Virgil could invite Patton upstairs, Thomas and Roman needed Patton.

Virgil sighed, a little sexually frustrated but nothing he couldn’t ignore. He smiled when he remembered one of his boyfriends was free.

_Let’s see if he’s interested._

Virgil made his way up to Logan’s room and knocked quietly on the door, nerves flaring a bit. Logan opened the door and smiled, the tension in his face easing.

“Hello Virgil. To what do I owe the pleasure?”

Virgil fidgeted a bit with the ends of his hoodie sleeves. “Hey L, how’s it going?” He cringed internally.

Logan’s eyes only held amusement. “Better now that you’re here, my dear.”

Virgil stammered a bit before regaining control of his voice. “I, uh, that’s good!”

Goddammit Virgil, just ask your boyfriend if he wants to have sex!

“Do you need something?” Logan asked more quietly, concern written across his face.

_Good job, now you’ve made him upset because you’re fucked up from the Dark Sides, fix it tell him talk say something!!!_

“Sex?!” Virgil blurted. His face turned red a moment later and he ducked his head.

Logan laughed, then lowered his head and smiled dangerously. “I can provide that,” he growled.

Virgil shivered at his boyfriend’s voice. Logan was watching him, waiting for Virgil to make a move.

“Should we go inside your room?”

Logan brushed the back of his fingers against Virgil’s cheek. “Unless you’d prefer your room?”

Virgil considered it, but he was reminded of what else had occurred in his room. “Your room’s good.”

“Very well.” Logan stepped to the side. “After you, my moon.”
Virgil blushed and ducked into Logan’s room, stopping near the bed. Logan quietly closed the door behind them and placed a hand on Virgil’s waist. Virgil admired Logan’s sharp features, strong cheekbones, and deep ochre eyes. He was getting significantly more aroused the longer he looked at his nerd.

*Let’s do this.* Virgil wrapped his arms around Logan’s neck and kissed him. Logan reciprocated by placing his other hand also on Virgil’s waist and pulling him close. Virgil moaned and bucked at that, deepening the kiss and silently begging Logan for more, fireworks exploding behind his eyes.

“Shhhhh, my darling,” Logan whispered against bruised lips, “I’ll take care of you.”

Virgil needed to have his mouth on Logan, so he started kissing, licking, and nibbling along the side of Logan’s neck. Logan lowly moaned and cradled the back of Virgil’s head, the action sending lightning down Virgil’s spine.

“Virgil, gods.”

He responded by sucking a section of skin into his mouth and worrying it between his teeth, rejoicing at how Logan’s breath hitched and his hands twitched at the action.

Virgil shrugged off his hoodie, then hesitated, unsure of where to put it. He regretfully pulled himself away from Logan’s tempting neck.

“Where, uh, should I put my clothes?”

“Wherever you want, I do not care,” Logan replied quickly.

Virgil snorted and tossed his hoodie over the back of the desk chair. He grabbed the hem of his t-shirt and paused.

“Um, hey L? Would it be okay if you took off your shirt first?”

Logan’s face softened. “Of course darling.”

Virgil placed his hands on the knot of Logan’s tie and looked at him, asking for permission. Logan just smiled and nodded. Virgil gently tugged on the knot to loosen it, then slowly pulled it down, looking at Logan from underneath his eyelashes. Logan’s deep eyes bored into his the entire time, until Virgil finally tugged the tie free and tossed it over by his hoodie. Logan dove in for another heated kiss, making Virgil’s toes curl in his socks. Virgil ran his hands over Logan’s lean shoulders and arms, groaning and pressing himself against his very own sexy professor.

Virgil traced a path to the buttons on Logan’s polo and pulled back just enough to make eye contact. He slowly undid each button, staring at Logan. When the third and final button popped out, Virgil lowered his head and started kissing and licking at the notch in Logan’s collarbones. Logan let out a high-pitched, surprised moan at that. Virgil only teased the spot for a few seconds before stopping and putting his hands at the bottom of Logan’s shirt.

“Please.”

Virgil kissed Logan quickly and pulled up his polo. Virgil’s mouth watered as Logan’s firm body was revealed. He ran his hands over Logan’s newly-exposed torso hungrily, his jeans zipper now rather painful. Logan pulled Virgil close again for more passionate kissing, Virgil moaning helplessly. After another minute of that, Logan gently placed his hands at the hem of Virgil’s t-shirt, barely-there and patient. Virgil practically ripped his t-shirt off and got back to kissing Logan.
Logan disconnected their lips and started kissing Virgil’s shoulder and neck gently, working down to the collarbone. He looked down at Virgil’s body, then back up to meet his eyes.

“Beautiful.”

Virgil squeaked. Logan just smirked and slowly kissed his way down, neither avoiding nor paying special attention to the scars. Virgil pet the back of Logan’s head, encouraging him.

Logan latched onto a nipple and sucked before rolling it between his teeth. Virgil gasped and groaned, white-hot fire shooting through his veins causing his hips to buck forward. Logan massaged Virgil’s other pec, managing to stimulate both nipples. Virgil cried out in pleasure, lost in a heady haze of bliss.

Logan kissed the nipple he’d had in his mouth before taking one of Virgil’s hands and kissing the back of it. “Shall we?” he asked, eyes soft and genuine.

Virgil nodded and took Logan’s hand, sitting down on the bed and pulling Logan with him. They laid down, and Virgil could feel through their jeans how hard Logan was. Virgil took control, initiating the kiss and turning it as filthy as he could while running his hands over Logan’s body, Logan doing the same to Virgil. When Logan nodded at Virgil’s hesitation, Virgil grabbed Logan’s ass and squeezed lightly, groaning at holding the tight yet full and soft muscle in his hand. He used his hold to pull Logan forward and against him, both men moaning at the friction. Virgil wasn’t sure why, but both of them topless and making out on a bed while wearing jeans was one of the hottest things he never expected to happen. *Is it possible to have a denim kink?* Logan thrust against him, and Virgil’s question was answered with an unconscious whine.

*We’re both hard, and we’ve been hard for a while.* “L, can you snap off the rest of our clothes?”

“Yes, absolutely.” Logan kissed Virgil’s forehead. “Are you ready, darling?”

Virgil whimpered and nodded. Logan kissed him in an attempt to soothe the man beneath him and snapped, arranging their clothes so they hung neatly over the back of the desk chair. Logan placed a hand on the side of Virgil’s face.

“How do you feel?”

Virgil took stock of himself. *Some stuff is gonna be off the table, but I think I’m okay.* “I’m good, star.” He smiled up at his intense boyfriend. “I want you.”

Logan’s eyes shifted into a gaze of desire. “And I want you. How would you like to have me? I’m very open to suggestions,” he growled.

Virgil whimpered as his hips twitched up. He ran through a few different scenarios in his head. *I think blowjobs would trigger memories that are too close to the surface, Logan fucking me is definitely not an option—*

Awwwww, why not? *Is—* ANYWAYS, I’m probably okay with hands.

Images of one particularly hot recurring fantasy popped into his head. Virgil bit his lip and shyly met Logan’s gaze through his bangs. “Could we try, um… your hands? With lube?”

Logan smiled sweetly. “Of course we can, give me a moment.” He leaned over and opened the top drawer of his nightstand, finding the lube quickly and smoothly returning to Virgil. He poured
Logan kissed a few spots on Virgil’s face. “How do you like it?” he asked quietly.

Virgil mewled. “I don’t know, I haven’t done this before.”

Logan kissed him to try to ground him. “What pleases you the most in your fantasies?”

Virgil let out a lewd moan. “I, um…” he blushed darkly. “W-with you touching us, both at the same time?”

Logan smirked. “Is that so? Is that what brings you the most pleasure?”

“Yes! Yes please!!”

Logan tenderly kissed a few more spots on Virgil’s face, tracing the lovely flush that had formed. “I’ll take care of you, you’re doing so well Virgil.”

Virgil was panting, his fantasy about to come to life. His skin was tingling, nerves firing at a rapid pace and blood vessels expanding.

Logan rested his forehead against Virgil’s. “May I touch you?”

With that, Logan slowly lowered his hand and coated Virgil’s penis in lubricant. Virgil arched up and mewled again, vision nearly whitening out. He whimpered at the feather-light touches, every stroke tantalizing but not enough.

“More, please,” Virgil whined. He opened his eyes to find Logan watching him intensely, heated gaze boring into him as he studied and catalogued every reaction. Virgil noted how Logan’s mouth was slightly open as his chest heaved, and how lust darkened his gaze.

Logan added more lube to his hand and slowly lowered himself, taking both him and Virgil into his hand.

Virgil let out a cry of ecstasy; Logan’s hand around him, his gaze on him, the velvety smooth cock against his, were all working to make him lose his mind to pleasure. The relieved sigh from above him and the grunts and groans that followed after only served to bring him closer to the edge.

Logan thrusted gently, careful to not cause any harm to his lover. The way Virgil was reacting and writhing beneath him required a great deal of focus on his part to not fall apart right away. The symphony of sounds coming from Virgil would be enough to drive any man mad, much less Logan.

Virgil groaned at the feel of Logan’s cock moving against his own, both surrounded by Logan’s graceful, sure hand. Logan’s thumb would brush over the head of Virgil’s cock, whiting out his vision, and sometimes the corona of Logan’s penis would catch on Virgil’s, making him keen. He couldn’t tear his eyes away from Logan’s, entranced. With every stroke from Logan’s hand and cock, Virgil felt lightning shoot through him. His hands had just been holding on, but he decided to do something with them. He started out by playing with Logan’s nipples, making the previously stoic man stutter and moan. He did his best to stay focused, he really did, but with Logan’s entire body available to him he could only focus on Logan’s now-dusky nipples for so long. His hands started roaming more, drinking in the warm, soft skin, moaning and arching as Logan touched him as much as he could in their current position. Logan was over him, surrounding Virgil with his taste.
and scent and sounds and body, his whole world was Logan and pleasure at that moment.

Logan’s hips began to stutter along with his breathing. Virgil could see how much Logan was trying to hold himself back.

“Let it go Logan, it’s okay, you can,” Virgil said quietly, not exactly sure what to say but trying to encourage Logan nonetheless.

Virgil watched as Logan fell apart. Logan frowned and closed his eyes as his body became rigid, his jaw dropped open, and his thrusts became more erratic. Virgil could barely keep himself from coming as he watched Logan reach his peak. Virgil ignored the feel of semen on him, focusing entirely on watching Logan’s face and body. Before, he’d only been able to see some of Logan since he’d been kneeling. Now, he could see the entire show, and it was a sight to behold. Breathy gasps and moans kept escaping Logan as his body shook and spasmed from his orgasm, and Virgil could feel his own release approaching. His blood was hot, he felt like he was burning up from the inside out, and he couldn’t wait to watch Logan fall apart again and again.

Finally, Logan’s arm gave out enough so more of his weight was resting on Virgil. Virgil ran his hands up and down Logan’s back, even as Logan’s hand kept moving. Logan’s head was directly next to Virgil’s, almost in the pillow, so Virgil couldn’t see his face. He settled for murmuring into Logan’s ear, telling him how much he loved him and how good he was. The little pants and whines from Logan overstimulating himself were surprisingly arousing, and Virgil felt himself creeping closer to the edge once more.

He buried his face in Logan’s shoulder and whimpered, his body tensing. Logan pushed himself up at that, eyes glazed over and hair mussed.

“Are you approaching climax?” he asked, breath hitching. Virgil just nodded wordlessly.

“Kiss me?” Virgil asked. Logan crashed their lips together in a messy kiss, Virgil moaning at how undone Logan was. Virgil could feel the pleasure building like a massive tidal wave in his lower abdomen. Stars were exploding across his vision and Virgil could only hold onto Logan as he neared climax.

Logan ran his thumb over the head one more time, and Virgil’s vision was no more. His back bowed as that incredible cord in him snapped once more, sending waves of burning hot static electricity through his entire body. Logan worked him through each wave, and with each touch the orgasm seemed to become even more intense.

After what seemed like an eternity, Virgil felt his body relax and fall back against the bed. He frowned at the overstimulation and the hand was removed that instant. Logan’s presence stayed right there with him however, and Virgil felt himself pulled against Logan’s chest. He knew Logan was kissing his head and talking to him, but the language center of his brain was shut down and he couldn’t decipher anything his star was saying to him. He relaxed and let himself drift in the afterglow, knowing he was safe and secure in Logan’s arms.

Chapter End Notes

Way to go Virgil! He's getting some from all of his bf's!

Virgil: Wanna have sex?
Roman: 8D
Thomas: *summons Roman*
Roman: >;///
Chapter 169

Chapter Notes

Hello all! This chapter starts out with nothing but pure smut, as Chapter 169 should be. That ends at the first line of forward slashes. After that line, there are references back to consensual sexytimes, as well as very negative thoughts around sex. It leads to some pretty bad spiralling thoughts that get a little graphic at points. Other than that, no warnings for this chapter, so enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The moment Virgil had felt overstimulated, Logan cleaned his hand with a thought and pulled Virgil to him. He held Virgil closely, aware of the cooling mess on the both of them and not bothering to take care of it at the moment; he knew Virgil needed cuddles and light touches after sex.

“You did so well Virgil, I love you so much,” he murmured as he kissed Virgil’s hair. “Stunning. Absolutely breathtaking.”

His heart rate picked up as he recalled how Virgil had looked beneath him. A gorgeous man, sensuously writhing beneath him, moaning so beautifully; Logan could almost get hard again just thinking about it.

Virgil’s quiet rumble pulled him back to the present. Logan’s heart fluttered with endearment for the sweet man in his arms as he placed more soft kisses on his head. Virgil sighed and rubbed his cheek against Logan’s chest. Logan melted, unable to resist kissing his boyfriend’s lavender-scented hair again. He kept touching Virgil gently and talking to him, interspersed with the most tender kisses he could muster for his moon.

After 20 minutes, Virgil began shifting. He looked up blearily at Logan, eyes slightly unfocused. Logan had to kiss his forehead, there was truly no other option.

Virgil rumbled happily. “Hey star,” he said, voice gravelly.

“Hello, my moon. How do you feel?”

Virgil closed his eyes and smiled, nuzzling Logan’s shoulder. “Good.”

“I’m so glad to hear that.”

Virgil grimaced when the dried semen pulled at his skin. “A little sticky, actually.”

“I believe I have a solution, if you’d allow me?” Logan asked, voice pitched lower.

Virgil’s eyebrows shot up. “You ready to go again?”

“I’m flattered you’d think so, but no. However, it is a rather sexual act, although it does not require genital interaction.”

Virgil pondered for a moment. He knew he could say no, Logan had respected his no’s before, but
if he was being honest with himself he did feel like he could go for a little more.

He couldn’t help the shy tilt of his head as he said, “Yeah, go for it.”

Logan kissed him on the lips, slow and sweet, before placing a kiss on his cheek, then on his jawline, and started laving attention on his neck. Virgil groaned and rested a hand at the back of Logan’s head and put the other one on Logan’s arm. Virgil felt smaller sparks wherever Logan touched, not as intense as before but still there.

Logan spent a minute on Virgil’s neck before slowly moving down to his collarbone. He nibbled and kissed the area, occasionally focusing on his trapezoid muscle, pulling moans from Virgil. He repeated what he’d done on the other side, Virgil’s head spinning from the stimulation. When he let out a whimper, Logan came right back up and kissed him on the lips, running a hand through Virgil’s hair afterwards and looking into his eyes.

Virgil groaned and rested a hand at the back of Logan’s head and put the other one on Logan’s arm. Virgil felt smaller sparks wherever Logan touched, not as intense as before but still there.

Virgil kissed him. “I’m okay, that was just a lot.”

Logan connected their lips again, trying to ground his lover. “Do you want to stop?”

Virgil shook his head. “I think I’ll be okay as long as you don’t focus so much on the more, um, sensitive parts?” He cringed inwardly.

“Of course darling.” Logan kissed his forehead, then started slowly moving down his body, maintaining eye contact. Virgil swallowed as he watched firm muscles move beneath soft skin.

Logan closed his eyes once he was faced with Virgil’s chest. He inhaled deeply, loudly, and placed a small kitten lick to Virgil’s sternum. Virgil moaned and arched his back slightly, encouraging Logan. True to his promise, Logan was careful not to overstimulate Virgil, spending less than a minute on each nipple. Virgil jumped when Logan’s eyes snapped back up to his own. Logan flicked his tongue out to tease the middle of Virgil’s chest, then slowly dragged it up, tracing the bone between his muscles. Virgil let out a sound like someone was trying and failing to make a balloon animal.

Logan smirked up at Virgil, then he closed his eyes and kissed back down Virgil’s sternum. Logan reached up and intertwined his fingers with Virgil’s, resting his other hand on Virgil’s waist.

When he got to the drying fluids on Virgil’s abdomen, he looked up to Virgil for permission to continue. Virgil nodded, cock twitching in a valiant but fruitless attempt to harden again.

Logan closed his eyes and started licking lightly, starting out easy and letting Virgil decide if he really was okay with what was happening. With Virgil beginning to moan more loudly, Logan started licking and sucking more insistently.

Virgil watched Logan with hooded eyes. Logan was licking up their mess like ice cream, focused completely on his task and letting out little moans of his own, like he was enjoying decadent lobster mousse.

Virgil arched his back when Logan began to approach his belly button, the sensation still pleasant but bordering on ticklish. Logan stopped his ministrations, save for kissing a few areas on Virgil’s stomach where he’d cleaned, and climbed back up Virgil quickly. Virgil returned the deep kiss when it came, the taste from Logan not terrible but not the greatest either. Logan placed a few kisses around Virgil’s face, then brushed the bangs out of his face.

“Would you like me to summon a warm washcloth?”
“Yeah,” Virgil breathed. Logan kissed him and waved his hand, a warm washcloth appearing a moment later.

“Would you like me to clean you?”

Virgil was grateful for the offer; he knew trying to walk around with that might pose a problem. “Please.”

Logan cleaned both himself and Virgil, careful to get every spot and to wait for permission before gently cleaning Virgil’s genitals. Virgil sucked air in through his teeth at the overstimulation but didn’t mind too much.

Once he was done, Logan tossed the washcloth in the laundry hamper, rolled onto his back, and pulled Virgil in for more cuddles. Virgil felt cherished by everything Logan was doing, from his quiet whispers to his gentle touches.

“Would you like to be clothed?”

Virgil nodded sleepily against Logan. He heard a snap, and the two of them were in t-shirts and sweatpants a moment later. Virgil nuzzled Logan’s chest and rumbled in approval, drifting off a few minutes later. Logan watched over Virgil as he slept, feeling whole at being able to hold a happy and safe Virgil in his arms. Logan knew how much he had gone through, and was ecstatic at how far Virgil had progressed and how content he was.

Logan kept an eye on the clock so as to not disrupt Virgil’s sleep schedule, and resolved to ensure his moon’s comfort until the end of time.

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Logan gently roused Virgil from sleep an hour later and brought them downstairs to the living room couch, both men still dressed in t-shirts and sweatpants a moment later. Virgil nuzzled Logan’s chest and rumbled in approval, drifting off a few minutes later. Logan watched over Virgil as he slept, feeling whole at being able to hold a happy and safe Virgil in his arms. Logan knew how much he had gone through, and was ecstatic at how far Virgil had progressed and how content he was.

Logan kept an eye on the clock so as to not disrupt Virgil’s sleep schedule, and resolved to ensure his moon’s comfort until the end of time.

///// 

Logan gently roused Virgil from sleep an hour later and brought them downstairs to the living room couch, both men still dressed in t-shirts and sweatpants. They cuddled with each other on the couch as they worked with Thomas and helped him through his day. Virgil soaked up the feeling of Logan’s arm around him and body against him. He had his arms wrapped around Logan’s torso and would intermittently nuzzle it, trying to focus on what he was able to do instead of what he still couldn’t do with his boyfriends. When a very haggard-looking Roman and stressed-looking Patton appeared in the living room, their eyes lit up at seeing Logan and Virgil cuddling sedately in such comfortable clothing. Roman grinned and waggled his eyebrows and Patton had a mischievous glint in his eye.

“Did you two have… fun?” Patton asked.

Virgil snorted and hid his face in Logan’s chest. He felt a kiss on his head a moment later.

“I’ll take that as a yes. Shall we expect you for dinner?”

Virgil hissed, knowing exactly what Roman’s face looked like. Patton giggled while Roman laughed. Virgil felt Roman sit next to him a moment later.

“Logie? I was thinking of making chicken pot pies, and if it’s okay with you and Virgil I could use your help?”

Virgil looked up at Logan, not wanting Logan to leave but wanting Logan to make the choice for himself.

Logan brushed the backs of his fingers down Virgil’s face. “Dear? What do you want?” he asked in
Virgil smiled and leaned his head against Logan’s hand. “You can go, I’ll be fine. Yes I’m sure,” he added at the end when he saw Logan’s mouth open.

Logan smiled and kissed Virgil’s temple. “I won’t be long.”

Virgil snuggled against Roman, listening to his two other boyfriends putter around in the kitchen. Roman, true to form, had wrapped his arms around Virgil immediately and kissed his hair. Virgil felt a familiar warmth being held by the prince, but he couldn’t stop the gnawing, empty feeling.

He shifted, and Roman caught on. “Virgil?”

Virgil hid his face in Roman’s chest. Roman squeezed him gently.

“Perfect angel, what’s wrong?”

You said it was fine if Logan went into the kitchen with Patton. If you lie now, you’ll be changing your mind and that’s abusive.

“Do you want Logan back?”

Virgil whimpered helplessly and hated himself for it. Roman lifted his arm in a hurried summon, and Logan rose up before them.

“Roman, what- oh Virgil.”

Virgil sniffled, tears breaking free from his eyes. “I’m sorry!”

Logan quickly sat down next to them and took Virgil into his arms. “Shhhhh, it’s okay. I’m here.”

“I’m sorry!!”

Logan frowned and kissed Virgil’s head. “Whatever for?”

“I said I could be fine!”

Logan sighed. “Darling, it’s okay to change your mind. And some people need care after sex. That’s perfectly normal.”

Virgil took in a few hiccuping breaths. “R-really?”

“Yes, we’ve all needed support like this after sex at least a few times. Please be kind to yourself.”

Virgil nodded and took a few deep breaths, calming himself. He bit his lip as he remembered the neglected royal behind him. “I’m sorry Ro.”

“No apologies needed love!”

Roman scooted up next to Virgil and cuddled him as best he could with Logan already holding Virgil. They went into the kitchen together, Virgil feeling much better. Logan maintained physical contact with Virgil throughout dinner, his hand somewhere on Virgil’s body, and Patton and Roman kept their voices down. Unfortunately, Thomas was struggling with his e-mail and needed Logan after dinner.

Logan kissed Virgil’s temple. “Will you be okay for a little while without me, my dear? I’m
positive Thomas wouldn’t mind if you came along too.”

Virgil nuzzled Logan’s shoulder. “I’ll be okay, I wanna cuddle with Ro.”

“I’m sure he’ll be delighted. I’ll see you later tonight?”

“Later tonight L.” Virgil kissed Logan’s cheek. “Go help Thomas, I’ll be okay.”

With a final squeeze, Logan stood up and sank out. Virgil focused and tried sending a tug to Roman, but he couldn’t quite manage it. Luckily, Roman was emerging from the kitchen, grinning in a way Virgil knew meant he’d gotten to kiss Patton.

“Hey Ro,” Virgil called, smiling dreamily.

Roman brightened further, coming over to sit next to Virgil. “Hello my love,” he said lowly.

Virgil bit back a snort.

Yup, definitely kissed Patton.

“Wanna cuddle?”

“I would love to!”

Virgil laid them down so he was partially on top of Roman and had his back to the back of the couch. He sighed happily, rubbing his cheek against the powerful chest beneath him and feeling protective arms around him. Roman would kiss Virgil’s hair every now and again, but they cuddled silently, both men tired and happy to be with each other.

*Don’t you miss getting fucked?*

*Shut. Up.*

*Aw what’s the matter? Still too scared to let your **boyfriends** fuck you? You’ve gotta get over that at some point, you can’t be scared of sex forever.*

*I’ve been having sex with them!*

*Have you though? Have you **really**? Does any of what you’ve done **really** count as sex? Come on, you’ve got one last hurdle to get over, and you refuse to even try because you’re not over the Dark Sides. You’re still letting them control you.*

Virgil ground his teeth. *Goddamnit, the voice has a point this time. I need to cut off my attachment to… to Them.* Virgil felt himself starting to spiral, so he focused on what was around him. Roman’s slightly scratchy prince uniform was under his cheek and hand, he felt arms draped lovingly over him, and Roman’s breath was puffing against his hair. He smelled roses, cinnamon, and fresh air. He heard Roman’s heartbeat and breathing in one ear and Patton puttering in the kitchen in his other ear.

*Having sex with Roman wouldn’t be a bad choice. Might have to wait until tomorrow, but that doesn’t mean I can’t start things tonight.*

“Prince Roman,” Virgil said deeply.

“Yes love?” Roman asked, surprised.

Virgil closed his eyes and put his lips to Roman’s ear. “You’re really the perfect gentleman.”

Roman puffed out his chest, but deflated when he saw Remy and Saul appear in the room. Virgil continued murmuring, unaware of their presence.
“Remember that night in your quarters in the castle? You carried me into your bedroom.”

“I-” Roman squeaked. He cleared his throat. “Yes, I remember. Angel-”

“The things you did to me.”

Remy had a terrifying smile devoid of any happiness, Saul’s face was devoid of any expression, and Roman’s face was devoid of any blood.

“Raven-”

“I told you that’s the first time I’ve gotten off and wanted it right?”

“AWWWMMMMMMMMMM MY BABYYYYYYY!!” Remy squealed.

Virgil jumped violently, accidentally hitting Roman’s diaphragm and knocking the wind out of him. Virgil and Roman spoke at the same time, though Roman was wheezing.

“Oh my god, someone please kill me.” “Please don’t kill me!”

Virgil expertly flipped up his hood and groaned, hiding his face in his boyfriend’s chest, who was currently gasping for air.

Remy chortled and Saul was trying to hold back his own laughter. “You two are hilarious, and OMG BABY I’M SO HAPPY FOR YOU!! Good to know Roman’s treating you right!” Remy sent a threatening glare towards Roman, who swallowed and nodded, still pale.

“Yeah he is, can I go crawl under a rock and never emerge now?”

“Well we were going to see if you wanted to have a movie night, but I can see you have your entertainment for the night… handled.”

“Oh my god.”

Saul let a few chuckles escape him at that. “Indeed little one. I’m very happy for you. Do remember to practice safe sex.”

“SAUL.”

Saul laughed heartily. “I’m sorry, as your older brother I’m legally obligated to tease you.”

“Have fun boys!” Remy chirped, sending another pointed look to Roman as the two Neutral Sides sank out.

Roman sighed. “Welp.”

“Yeah, sorry about that. Are you okay?” Virgil asked, anxiety ratcheting up.

“I’m fine, little lark.” Roman kissed the top of Virgil’s head, which was currently a black and purple plaid hood. “How are you?”

Virgil curled into Roman. “Fine, but I think I’m done trying to be flirty for the night.”

“Understandable. How do you feel about continuing to cuddle?”

Let him fuck you let him fuck you- “That sounds good.” Virgil resituated himself so he could rest
comfortably on Roman, trying his best to ignore the cruel taunts in his head. After another half hour however, he was too anxious to just be laying down.

“Ro? Mind if I go back up to my room? My anxiety’s kinda spiralling, I think I need alone time.”

“Of course, sweet angel! I think Thomas may be needing my input soon anyway. Do let us know if there’s anything we can do to help!”

Virgil smiled and kissed the jawline of the man he loved so much. “I will. Night Ro.”

“Goodnight, my handsome prince!”

Virgil sank out and appeared in his room.

*You’ll never be a good boyfriend until you let them fuck you. They’re always going to be wanting that, and you’re never going to give it to them.*

_I will! Shut up!_

_Oh? Then why haven’t you let them fuck you?_

Virgil started biting his thumbnail.

_You need to get over the Dark Sides. You’re still letting them control you. Whatever you’re doing isn’t working. You still haven’t let your **boyfriends** fuck you. They’ve earned a go, don’t you think?_

_Well yeah, they’re awesome._

_You need to accept you’re not doing enough. It’s time to listen to other people._

_His mind supplied the memory of an article he’d found online._

_Fuck no!!_

_Look, damn near everybody says it, there’s gotta be some benefit, even if it doesn’t do everything._

_No!_

_Quit being a little bitch and deal with your shit. Your boyfriends have to deal with your shit, the literal least you can do is to actually work on it yourself._

_I have been working on it!_

_Have you thought? You’ve been only talking and shit. You haven’t actually confronted a damn thing._

_Virgil couldn’t think of a response to that._

_You’re selfish, lazy, and cowardly, and your boyfriends deserve better than that. They deserve better than you. At least make it worth their while. And do something, even if it’s hard for wittle old you._

_Virgil squeezed his eyes shut at the mocking tone._

_Stop being a victim. It’s been over a year since you’ve been sexually assaulted, time to grow a spine and do something hard for once in your useless waste of a life._
Virgil looked up and grabbed Shelly and clutched her to his chest reflexively.

Awwwwww what’s the matter, does the wittle baby-

Shut up!! I’m doing it, alright? I’m just-

Procrastinating?

Shut up!!!

Virgil did a few rounds of breathing exercises and a grounding exercise. He set Shelly on his desk and let his gaze linger.

Why do I feel like this is the last time I’ll ever see her?

Because you’re a little bitch?

Shut up.

Oooooooo, scathing!

Virgil listened through his door and couldn’t hear Roman.

They’re happier without you.

Virgil sank out to the door of Roman’s room and knocked. After not hearing any answer for a few minutes, he let himself in, and walked to stand before the wardrobe. His knees felt suddenly weak. Steeling himself, he pulled open the door and set his feet on familiar gravel, feeling more like he was floating by the second. Now that he was in the Imagination, he could be more precise with where he wanted to sink out to. He closed his eyes, and appeared at the end of a long hallway. He stared at the wall for several long seconds before turning right and going down stairs with a heavy steel door at the bottom.

Virgil reached out and ran his fingers over the cold steel. It felt like danger and dread, and Virgil’s adrenaline was almost too high. He closed his eyes and did ten rounds of breathing exercises while doing three grounding exercises at the same time. He somehow simultaneously felt worse and better.

With a deep breath, he pushed open the strong doors, hinges creaking and groaning, and voices coming from below. He had to swallow back vomit a few times before continuing down the stone stairs, shivers wracking his body.

He quickly made his way down the stairs and took a few steps in front of the iron and stone cells. The voices all stopped.

Virgil turned his head when he saw movement in one of the cells.

Deceit smiled at him, all teeth. “Hello darling. What a lovely surprise this is!”

Chapter End Notes

Heed the warnings at the top of the next chapter.
Virgil forced his posture into one of confidence, pulling his shoulders back and raising his head, meeting Deceit’s gaze head on. “Deceit.”

“Virgil.”

Virgil ground his teeth. “I came here to talk.”

“Oooooooool talk dirty to me!!” Malice screeched before laughing.

Virgil grimaced in Malice’s general direction. “I want-” Don’t tell them what you actually want, they’ll use it against you. “-to know why you hurt me.”

“Which time?” Deceit asked, the sickening smile still present. “There were so many wonderful memories.”

Virgil couldn’t stop the shudder. “Generally speaking I guess,” he mumbled, fighting against the urge to slouch. He could barely maintain eye contact without wanting to look down submissively. He could feel himself floating, falling back into obedience, wanting to do his best so Deceit and the others wouldn’t hurt him more…

He snapped his eyes back up to a smirking Deceit. Dammit!! When did I look down?! He could feel himself swaying slightly.

“You want to know why we did it? For closure? For meaning? An apology?” Deceit asked mockingly.

“I mean, an apology would be nice, but I don’t expect it from you,” Virgil shot back.

Deceit rolled his eyes. “You can’t just go demanding apologies from people. You certainly can’t expect to receive them by demanding it.”
“I know, but-”

“But, but, but!” Deceit mocked. “What did you expect to get coming here? That we’d fall all over ourselves apologizing to you and you feeling complete and whole again?” He started mock bowing. “Oh Virgil, we’re so sorry, you’re just perfect in every way! What can we ever do to make up for it? Shall we flog ourselves? Cut off our own limbs?”

“No!” Virgil nearly screamed. “I don’t want that!”

“Good, because it’ll never-” Deceit moved to stand and flinched, grunting, before sitting back down.

*No, DON’T feel bad for him.*

Deceit looked up at Virgil, panting. “Don’t mind me, just got a bad knee from slipping on the rocks.”

Virgil tilted his head. “But we heal really fast.”

Deceit barked out a laugh. “Wow Virgil, you really are such a good person! Disbelieving someone when they say they’re hurting? Yeah, you’re definitely one of the innocent good guys.”

Virgil just barely bit back an apology. He stepped closer as a compromise and couldn’t quite identify the flicker of emotion that went over Deceit’s face.

“Much better,” Deceit purred. “You want to talk, let’s talk and try to ignore Malice hm?”

*Dammit, I don’t want to agree with anything he says!* “So what are you willing to talk about? I don’t want to waste my time.”

“Oh Virgil, I can assure you I have no intention of wasting any time either.”

*Fucking ominous.* “So why did you decide to be fucking monsters?”

Malice piped up. “Fucking monsters! Get it, like monsters who fuck all the time? That makes sense, thanks Virgil!!”

Virgil attempted to fight off a flashback and was only marginally successful. He felt like he was floating sideways in the air.

Deceit sighed and looked down. “I do have something I can talk about. Being down here, I’ve had a lot of time to think. I… would like to apologize.”

Virgil felt like a ping pong ball. He only knew that he was confused. *Wasn’t Deceit just mocking me?*

“The fuck you doing?!” Rage yelled.

“Virgil, if you would?” Deceit gestured with his head, and Virgil stepped forward automatically.

Deceit looked Virgil in the eyes, and Virgil failed to suppress a shudder this time.

“Every time we’ve forced ourselves on you, marked you, branded you, hung you, whipped you, used toys on you-”

Virgil almost threw up. “Can you get to the point?!”
Deceit frowned, perturbed. “I’m trying to apologize for something major here, don’t interrupt me! It’s rude.”

“Sorry,” Virgil mumbled. He was finding it hard to focus on what Deceit was saying, much less think enough to understand what was happening.

“Thank you. Now, thinking back to every time we’ve done that, I just wanted to say,” Deceit leaned forward and trailed off into a whisper, Virgil leaning forward unconsciously as well, too dissociated to notice the arm of chartreuse green magic creeping up behind him.

A percussive eruption of sound caused Virgil to jump away from the sound instinctively and spin around to see the threat. He turned just in time to see the green magic evaporate.

He didn’t react fast enough to escape Deceit’s grasp.

Deceit had one hand on Virgil’s left hip and another on his right wrist and was pulling Virgil tightly against the bars.

ROMAN!!! “HE-” His cry for help was cut off as his left hand slapped over his mouth.

Deceit whispered into Virgil’s ear, “I just wanted to say that I’m not one bit sorry, and that’s no lie.”

Virgil tried to fight against Deceit’s hold, but he was too strong. After a minute of fruitless struggling with Deceit chuckling behind him, Virgil sagged and sobbed.

“Oh how I missed that sound!”

Virgil heard echoes of agreement throughout the dungeon, but he was too out of it to understand what they were saying. He thought he heard banging, but he wasn’t sure. Everything sounded dull and sharp all at once.

Deceit started grinding against Virgil, and Virgil could feel how hard he was.

Hot air was puffing against Virgil’s ear. “Reminds me of last time,” Deceit panted. “Such a shame we were so rudely interrupted by your new masters.”

Virgil shouted into his hand and shook his head.

“Don’t know why they’ve let you get fat, but we can take care of that later. They’re too generous with you. We actually know how to properly care for you.”

Virgil tried pulling forward again. Deceit grunted in frustration and pulled back as hard as he could just as Virgil jumped forward. He screamed and nearly crumpled to the ground as his left hip popped out of its socket, but Deceit held him up.

“You’re still letting that bother you? Weakling. We heal too fast. Of course I haven’t hurt my knee you moron!”

Virgil was screaming from the pain and crying from the horror, muffled by his own hand.

“Fuck, I’ve been cheated out of this for too long. You still want us, admit it. You knew you deserved this and that this was your place, that’s how we could get to you. That, and Thomas is terrible at focused meditation and Morality is too emotional to get anything done properly, but it’s all the same to us.”
With Virgil unable to fight in any capacity, Deceit undid the button and zipper on Virgil’s jeans and snaked a hand under Virgil’s boxers. He gripped Virgil tightly, enough to cause more pain.

“You filthy whore, you just couldn’t get enough could you? Consider this the mere beginning of your punishment.”

Virgo was torn between the many sounds around him, the overlapping voices, the weird banging noise, but he was pulled back to the present when Deceit started trying to push his hand farther back. In a final attempt to get away from Deceit, Virgil threw his body weight forward. Deceit swore as his hand was removed from Virgil’s pants. He grabbed onto Virgil again and pulled him tight against the bars.

Virgil sobbed, hopeless. Deceit was worming his way back to the front of Virgil’s jeans when the air shifted and he felt Deceit freeze. A split second later, there was a scream from someone else, a scream from Deceit, and Virgil fell forward, no longer supported by Deceit’s hold.

He ripped his hand away from his mouth the moment he could, sucking in desperate breaths between sobs. He rolled on his side in a way that had put his hip back in before, and he thanked every deity he could think of when it worked again. He heard the clatter of metal on stone and someone rush up to him. He screamed and raised his hands over his head protectively, curling into a ball.

“Virgil, it’s okay! It is I, Prince Roman!”

Virgil opened his eyes and saw Roman on one knee a few feet away with his hands up. Is that blood?! He didn’t see any obvious injuries on Roman, so he looked towards Deceit. He lost his battle with nausea and threw up when he saw Deceit’s severed arm laying next to Roman’s sword and Deceit clutching the spot where his arm would be in his cell.

“Oh my sweet! My sweet, please tell me what you want?”

“Roman!” Virgil cried, unwilling to let the Dark Sides know his nicknames for his boyfriends. “I’m here, I’m right here love, I swear. I’m so sorry, my sweet” Roman ended with a sob.

Malice cackled. “His ass is real sweet isn’t it?! Or do you like fucking his throat? Try choking him, it’s hot!!”

“I WILL FUCKING MURDER YOU!!!” Roman thundered. He softened when Virgil flinched and whimpered. “Shhhhhh angel, I’m sorry, it’s okay. It will be okay.” He pulled Virgil against his chest when Virgil reached his arms out. He got a palace surgeon headed down to the dungeons so Deceit wouldn’t bleed out. As much as Roman would want him to, he couldn’t let that happen to Thomas. He himself felt sick at what he’d done to Deceit and what his sweet Virgil had been through, but he had to focus on Virgil right now.

Roman felt a tug from Logan and Patton, both of whom were concerned. After hesitating for a moment too long, they both rose up in the dungeon.

“R- WHAT HAPPENED?!?” Patton cried.

Virgil surprised everyone by speaking. “They h-hurt-” he broke off into soul-shattering sobs. “Again!! I d-d-didn’t m-mean to, I j-j-just wanted…” I should have known better.

Roman hushed him. “We know, it’s not your fault one bit, little crow. May I take you back to my room?”
“Please!!”

“Alright. Here we go.” Roman held Virgil securely as he sank out.

Patton was wiping tears off his face while Logan was looking around the dungeon with a positively thunderous expression. He was doing breathing exercises so he could stay somewhat in control of himself. He wasn’t surprised when Patton spoke first.

“Don’t you ever touch Virgil ever again!!!”

“Awwwwwww what’ll you do to us Morality, break our hearts?”

Logan stepped in, pretending to speak to Patton, just loudly enough for everyone in the dungeon to hear. “You shouldn’t do that dear, they only have one heart. You should break each of their bones instead. There are 206 bones in the human body, although presumably several less in Deceit’s now. I’ll ensure you don’t miss any.”

“Awwwwww thank you baby!” Patton chirped, false cheerfulness coloring his tone. They sank out to Roman’s room then, leaving the dungeon completely quiet for the first time since the Dark Sides had all woken up there.

Chapter End Notes

Summary for those who need it:

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Virgil is sexually assaulted by Deceit. Deceit threatens to do more, and in the process of holding Virgil he makes Virgil's bad left hip pop out of its socket. Deceit tells Virgil that the reason they were able to get back to him before is because Virgil thought he deserved the abuse he'd been suffering and that it was his rightful place, and that Patton and Thomas didn't get the wall set up properly due to being inexperienced and distracted. Roman comes to Virgil's rescue and cuts Deceit's arm off, then takes Virgil back to his room. Logan and Patton get there just in time to hear that the Dark Sides hurt Virgil again, to watch Roman and Virgil sink out, and to threaten the Dark Sides.
Chapter 171

Chapter Notes

Hi folks! There are a few tw's for this chapter. There is more discussion of amputation in the beginning of the chapter, just slightly more graphic this time (talking about the location that was slashed), references to sexual assault throughout the chapter, references to injuries throughout the chapter, and a character is beaten up a little by another character right near the end. Take care of yourselves!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Roman had been excited to work with Thomas on their newest Cartoon Therapy video. He’d grown much more fond of the Emile Picani character since he’d manifested him to help Virgil, and couldn’t wait to share his new ideas with Thomas and the rest of the world.

However, just a few minutes in, something felt off in the Imagination. Roman shook it off, chalking it up to a small skirmish in his kingdom he might need to break up later. After a few more minutes, he suddenly felt a sharp disturbance, making him lose track of what Thomas had been saying. He refocused on Thomas, desperate to get some work done. A few more sharp, borderline painful jolts made him glance into the Imagination, and what he saw made him want to tear the world apart. He apologized to Thomas, saying something not even he remembered about his kingdom, and sank out faster than he ever had before. By the time he rose up in the dungeon, his sword was already summoned.

Deceit’s right hand was gripping Virgil’s wrist, and Roman only knew that he needed to get Deceit off his Virgil now. His vision focused on Deceit’s elbow, and that’s where he brought his sword down. When Virgil fell forward, Roman dropped his sword and went to him immediately. His heart shattered into a thousand pieces when Virgil covered himself and screamed.

All my fault, how could I have let Virgil get hurt?! In my own palace, in my realm, with them in my cells?! My fault, my sweet angel, I’m so sorry...

After a bit of reassurance, Roman was able to pull Virgil against his chest. He quietly vanished his sword and the severed arm, all while protectively cradling a sobbing Virgil. He felt physical pain in his chest at what he’d witnessed, at what Virgil had just been through.

My sweet crow, my perfect orchid, I am so sorry for causing you harm. A knot twisted painfully in him, the pain so great it almost made him vomit as well. The guilt sat heavy in his heart, causing him heretofore unknown levels of agony.

When Patton and Logan showed up, a new layer of guilt manifested.

I’m no hero, I’m no prince.

“R- WHAT HAPPENED?!”

I have failed my love. I have brought him harm.

As Virgil stumbled through his broken explanation, Roman felt his rage, guilt, and horror only
increase. Roman checked the stability of Deceit’s cell and when Virgil agreed to go back to Roman’s room, Roman felt comfortable sinking out, knowing the other two pieces of his heart wouldn’t remain for long. On the way, he fixed Virgil’s clothes, red-hot fury flowing through him.

He rose up next to his bed, holding a still-crying Virgil in a bridal carry. When they finished rising up, Virgil yelped, then shouted in pain. Roman quickly set Virgil down on the bed, brushing his bangs out of his eyes.

“Sweet angel, what’s wrong?! Are you injured?”

Virgil shook his head. “N-not t-too b-b-bad?”

Another piece of Roman’s heart chipped off. “Love, perfect love, if you’re injured I want to help.”

A few sobs punched out of Virgil. “J-just m-m-my hip. But it’s b-back in p-place n-now!”

Roman ran his fingers through Virgil’s hair. “Do you need any medical attention, my raven?”

“No, please, I don’t want to!!” Virgil froze and continued in a whisper. “I’m s-sorry, I’m s-s-sorry, I d-d-didn’t mean-”

Roman couldn’t bear to listen to another second. “Shhhhhhh, no apologies raven. I won’t touch you if you don’t want me to.” He swallowed back bile when he heard the relief in Virgil’s next wails. “Oh love, what can I do?”

Virgil grasped Roman’s sash in one hand and his should in another. “Please, Ro! Need you, please!”

Roman crawled into the bed carefully next to Virgil, careful to not make the mattress move too much and watching Virgil closely. He had to use one arm to hold himself up, but used his free hand to brush the backs of his fingers against Virgil’s cheek. To his distress, Virgil still hadn’t stopped crying.

“I n-need you Ro,” Virgil repeated brokenly.

“I’m here, for as long as you’ll have me,” Roman vowed, starting to wipe tears away with his thumb.

Virgil leaned up to bury his face in Roman’s shoulder and weep uncontrollably. Roman wrapped his free arm around Virgil’s back to help support him.

*I let you be hurt by them for so long.*

Roman hid his eyes in the shoulder of Virgil’s hoodie to hide his own tears, thinking back to the many minutes of torture and sexual violence Virgil had been subjected to in Roman’s own kingdom because he’d been too busy and self-centered to care.

Roman pulled himself out of his thoughts when Virgil began trying to choke out words. It took him a few moments, but he eventually got out,

“*Dads!!*”

Roman didn’t sense anyone rising up in his room, so he sent a summon to Remy and Saul. Sure enough, they were in his bedroom a moment later, quickly joined by Logan and Patton, who was holding an ice pack and water bottle.
“Sugar pie!”

“OH MY SWEET BABY!!!”

Remy jumped and looked over at Patton, surprised at the volume but quickly turning back to Virgil.

Virgil spotted Remy and Saul first. “Da-ads!!”

Remy and Saul quickly joined Roman and Virgil on the bed, with Logan and Patton moving to stand next to where Roman was. Roman moved to let Remy get a better look at Virgil, but Virgil just whimpered and gripped Roman’s sash more tightly. Roman stayed right where he was, and Remy laid on his side.

“Sweetpea, can you tell us what happened?” Remy asked gently.

Virgil tried and failed to steady himself with a few deep breaths through his cries. “Th-th-the Dark S-Sides!” he managed to get out before dissolving into tears again.

“Shhhhhh sugar, they can’t hurt you anymore.” Remy soothed. He frowned when Virgil’s crying became almost violent.

“Th-they d-d-did!!” Virgil wailed.

Remy felt like he’d been doused with ice water. “What?” he breathed.

Virgil sniffled. “Th-they… I w-went into th-the dungeons in R-Roman’s c-c-castle b-because I w-wanted to g-g-get over it. A-and,” Virgil let himself sob a few more times. “A-and they said h-h-horrible things and I can’t repeat them a-and then there was green and sound and Deceit h-hurt me!! A-and my h-hip and h-h-head hurt!” Virgil burst into uncontrollable tears again.

Remy felt like he was falling as his eyes burned. “No…”

Saul wrapped an arm around Remy’s waist and pushed his face into his hair, letting out a single sob. Remy put a hand over his mouth as his chest started jumping with barely-contained cries. He looked to Roman, who had shame written across his face.

Son of a bitch let this happen to my baby. His kingdom, his fault. That son of a bitch.

Roman and Remy comforted Virgil as best they could for the next hour to little effect, with Saul, Logan, and Patton helping when possible. Remy’s outrage at Virgil’s violation built the entire time, a dense, red fog in his torso.
All of a sudden, Virgil quieted and his entire body relaxed.


Logan spoke up. “Virgil, you mentioned your head and hip hurt. May I examine your injuries?”

“You don’t have to if you don’t want to,” Remy said quickly, glaring at Logan, the red fog entering his mind.

“Of course, it is your choice Virgil.”

“We won’t let anything happen to you, coffee bean,” Remy whispered into Virgil’s ear, maintaining eye contact with the Light Sides. Patton just burst into tears.

Virgil nodded, a few more tears escaping his eyes. Roman gently dabbed at Virgil’s face with a handkerchief.

“Evening primrose, how would you like Logan to look at you? I will stay right here if you so wish.”

Virgil sniffled weakly. “I-it’s okay, I’ll b-be f-f-fine.”

“Are you certain, sweet love?”

At Virgil’s nod, Roman gently kissed his forehead and soaked a few more tears up with his handkerchief before slowly, oh-so-slowly, moving off the bed and over to Patton. Logan took his place smoothly yet quickly. Virgil lightly grazed Logan’s upper arms with his fingertips, staring at his face. Logan paused, recognizing the grounding for what it was. Virgil froze when he got to Logan’s face, so Logan smiled encouragingly. Virgil tentatively traced Logan’s face for a minute.

“Logan,” Virgil whispered absently.

“Yes, that is me.”

Virgil let himself cry as his hands fell to his sides, Remy catching one of his hands. Logan let Virgil weep for as long as he needed. Once Virgil had calmed slightly, Logan dried his face with a Kleenex.

“Darling? Are you ready?”

With a gentle squeeze from Remy, Virgil nodded. Logan studied Virgil’s face, tension in the air making it thick.

“How did you get the injuries, darling?”

Virgil whimpered and visibly bit back sobs. “D-Deceit pulled on my bad hip and it popped out again, and then I think I hit my head on the metal bars?”

“Alright. May I examine your hip?”

“Yeah, it’s my left one. But you won’t make me use it right away like they would so it should heal really fast!”

He’s trying to make me feel better. I love you so much Virgil. “Alright moon, I’m glad it will heal quickly. I’m going to start now, is that alright?”
Logan frowned lightly when Virgil’s eyes darted away, but set a hand on Virgil’s waist. Virgil seemed a little uncomfortable, but nodded and met Logan’s eyes. Logan could feel how wounded Virgil was from his ordeal. He removed his hand and lightly set it just above the waistband to Virgil’s jeans.

Virgil started crying. “Please, no, I don’t want to! Please!” he cried, fat tears rolling down the sides of his face once more.

Logan leaned back and raised his hands in surrender. “I can’t,” he stated, jaw wobbling and eyes becoming shiny.

“Shhhhhh coffee bean, Remy and Saul are here,” Remy murmured, using every trick he could to soothe Virgil and help him feel safe.

“Dads!!”

“We’re here little one,” Saul said quietly.

Remy calmed Virgil for a few seconds before Virgil turned to Logan. “Logan!” he whimpered in a slightly higher-pitched voice, making grabby hands at the older Side. Logan quickly returned to Virgil, suspecting he may have regressed.

“It’s okay Virgil, I’m not going anywhere. Can you tell me how old you are?”

Virgil just shook his head and grabbed a piece of Logan’s polo in his hand. Logan rested his hand over the fist.

“I’m going to get some food,” Roman said quietly. Patton was still crying, albeit more quietly, and started biting his cuticles the moment Roman stepped away. Remy felt the now-much-younger Side trembling in his arms, and felt his rage come to life, full-force from how it had been festering.

Remy kissed Virgil’s hair. “I’m gonna go help Roman with the food, okay hun? I won’t be gone long, you know how clumsy that boy is.”

“Oh Rem.”

Remy kissed his hair again, and met Roman’s eyes, his own filled with vengeance.

*There WILL be consequences for hurting my baby!*

Remy followed Roman out of the room, noticing how uncharacteristically hunched Roman’s shoulders were.

*That’s right, someone knows now. You hurt him!! In your realm!! You son of a bitch!! I won’t fail my baby again!!!*

With that thought, Remy sped up and reached Roman in three steps. He grabbed Roman by the shoulder, spun him, and slammed him into the wall.

“*YOU SON OF A BITCH!!*” Remy screamed. “*HE WAS IN YOUR REALM!! AND HE STILL GOT HURT!!*”

Roman slumped. “I know,” he said thickly, tears falling.

*Not good enough!* Remy pushed him back into the wall, the back of Roman’s head hitting and
stunning him.

“AND WITH CAMERAS?! YOU SICK FUCK!!! IT’S YOUR FAULT HE GOT HURT AGAIN!!”

Virgil rounded the corner just in time to see the right hook that took Roman to the ground. His instincts took over, and it only took a few limps before he was able to throw himself over Roman, which made Remy stop. Unfortunately, not in time before Remy had kicked Roman a few times. Grey watercolor splashed across his vision from the sheer pain of his hip dislocating again, adrenaline flooding his system. He opened his mouth to scream, and remembered to close it just in time.

Saul pulled Remy away from Roman. Having only just gotten there, Roman was bleeding but thankfully still conscious despite the sucker punch and kicks that followed. He was trying to comfort Virgil who was next to him on the ground, nearly screaming in pain. As Saul tightened his grip, he realized something.

Roman hadn’t even tried to fight back.

Chapter End Notes

(please don't hate me) (it gets better I promise) (eventually)

Thank you all so much for your patience while I deal with life! I post updates on my Tumblr @lilfellaasblog, so if you wanna check that out for updates feel free!

Updates will be coming more frequently and consistently moving forward, so you've got something to look forward to there!
Remy stared down at Virgil and Roman in shock, two Sides trying to protect each other.

From him.

Saul was holding him tightly, just enough to keep him where he was. Virgil was on the ground, jaw tight and muffled screams emanating from him. Roman’s face was half covered in blood, yet he was still trying to cover and comfort Virgil. Remy was grateful he’d seen Virgil in time to stop so he wouldn’t hurt his coffee bean.

You still hurt him.

When Virgil turned his eyes to meet Remy’s, Remy felt sick. He heard Logan and Patton round the corner, and didn’t dare even glance at them. He started sinking down slowly so Saul could catch on.

Remy and Saul appeared in the Neutral Side living room, slightly separated from one another. Remy stared desperately into Saul’s eyes, typically loving gaze now hardened. Remy felt only grief, devastation of what Virgil went through again now pairing with having his life partner furious with him.

Remy gasped in a shaky breath. “Babe-”

“No. You…” Saul looked off to the side and ran a hand through his hair. “You hurt him. You attacked Roman, and now Virgil’s hurt.” Remy began crying at the softened, apologetic look Saul sent him. Oh god, he’s leaving me!

Saul sighed. “I’m sorry. I need some time.”

Saul walked past Remy into the bedroom and closed the door. Remy collapsed onto the couch, buried his face in his hands, and wept.

/////  

“My love, my dark knight, what do you need?” Roman asked desperately. He couldn’t stand to see Virgil in such pain.

“R-roll,” Virgil gritted out. Roman loosened his hold on Virgil slightly, feeling as though a hole was punched through his chest when he did so but the desire to help Virgil outweighing that.

Virgil took as deep a breath as he could manage and rolled away, shifting the muscles around and
putting pressure on his hip, relaxing his muscles at the last second to let the bone back back into the joint. He hated himself for not being able to stop the scream of pain from doing that.

Roman had his hands on Virgil immediately. “Angel!”

Virgil sucked in a breath and had to swallow to keep from exhaling right away. He repeated that a few times while his boyfriends hovered over him.

*I want my dads!*

Virgil whimpered as he started crying again.

Logan knelt next to Virgil’s head and ran gentle fingers through his hair. “Are you hurt further?”

Virgil looked at Roman, whose face was covered in his own blood. *I can’t worry them too much.* “N-no, my hip j-just popped out a little. I got it b-back in, that’s what h-hurt.” He tried to breathe deeply to calm himself enough to talk normally.

“How do you want me to carry you?” Roman asked.

Virgil flinched, remembering the pain when Roman had carried him before. “C-can I just have s-some help getting up and w-walking p-please?”

“Of course love.”

The three Sides helped Virgil to his feet, and Logan and Roman each took a side of Virgil to help support. Patton hovered nearby, mostly successful at keeping his distress to himself. They slowly got Virgil back into Roman’s room and helped him lay back down on the bed. Roman moved to step back and let Logan make sure Virgil was okay when Virgil reached out for him.

“You’re hurt R-Ro,” he said, voice cracked.

*He’s just been through unimaginable horrors, and yet he’s concerned for me.* Roman’s eyes filled up and overflowed with tears as he smiled sadly at Virgil. “I love you Virgil.”

Virgil sniffled as he became more emotional. “I love you too Ro.”

Roman held Virgil’s hand as Logan sat down on the bed.

“Moonlight, how does your hip feel?”

Virgil shifted slightly, testing it. There was the usual sharp warning pain, but it felt like it had gone in correctly. He flexed his toes to check for pinched nerves and didn’t find any.

“I th-think it’s okay.” Virgil felt the pain of needing his dads’ touch again. “I want-” *I can’t ask for that! Roman!!* Virgil just started crying.

“Honey, what do you want? It’s okay to ask for things, I swear!”

Virgil could practically feel Patton’s arms around him. “C-can you hold me p-please?”

Patton sank out and rose up on the other side of the bed so he could hold Virgil as fast as possible. Logan turned his attention to Roman.

“May I tend to your injuries Roman?”
Roman flashed a brave, half-copper smile. “You don’t have to do that, gorgeous genius!” I’ve already failed to protect Virgil twice today, I don’t deserve your kindness and care.

“I’m aware I’m not obligated to help you, but I would like to. May I?”

Roman’s smile faltered a bit. “Love, really, you don’t need to.”

Logan tilted his head to the side, and Roman fell in love with him a little more. “I believe we’ve covered that. I am aware I’m not obligated to help you, but I would like to. May I?”

I can’t. I can’t bear taking his help. But he wants to… “Sure! I won’t say no to a handsome man caring for me,” Roman finished with a waggle of his eyebrows, which made him wince a moment later from the pain.

As Logan went to retrieve medical supplies, Virgil focused as much as he could on Patton. His scent, his warmth, the feeling of arms around him, the places that Virgil was holding onto for dear life. Virgil was laying on his back and Patton was laying on his side so he could embrace Virgil while keeping him comfortable.

I want my dads, but Remy hurt Roman. Remy would never hurt me, but I can’t upset Roman by seeing my dads! Patton tried to soothe him as he started to weep once more. The agony of not being able to have his dads to comfort him felt like he was getting cut open, his body just a yawning maw of psychic pain. His cries increased in volume and intensity. I can’t even ask for them! I want Remy and Saul to hold me! I don’t want Remy to have hit and kicked Roman!

Virgil broke down completely, inconsolable. Patton was doing his best to soothe him, to no avail.

“Shhhhh, sweetpea, it’s okay baby. It’s okay honey, I promise.”

“No it’s not!”

Patton let his head fall on the pillow above Virgil. “You’re right baby, I’m so sorry!” Patton began crying along with Virgil. I’m so sorry I couldn’t protect you! I’m so sorry you got hurt again! I’m so sorry I can’t help you now!!

He did the only thing he could think of, and just held onto Virgil. He knew that as long as he was holding him in his arms, Virgil was safe. He held Virgil like he was trying to keep both of them together with his embrace. His shadowling was so upset, trembling violently, and the thick hoodie was brushing against Patton’s skin and reminding him of happier times.

Logan finished patching up Roman, thankfully all of the injuries were very minor, and laid down next to Virgil. He rested his hand on Patton’s cheek and waited until Patton looked him in the eyes. Logan kept his gaze even on Patton’s wet, puffy face for a moment before kissing his forehead, then leaning down to kiss the top of Virgil’s head. Roman cautiously got in behind Patton and rested his arm on Patton’s side, gripping his shoulder.

After a horrible, painful hour and a half, Virgil’s cries slowed down. He would start saying something before cutting himself off and crying more. Logan offered to get the ice pack for his head or hip, but that had only made Virgil cry harder and say it reminded him of being hurt so Logan didn’t offer again.

Patton had pulled himself together, partially out of sheer exhaustion, and kissed Virgil’s hair. “Do you want water sweetie?”

Virgil sniffled miserably. “M-maybe a little? But s-sitting up hurts! My hip and head hurt!”
Patton gently squeezed him. “I’m so sorry baby. If we helped you lean up just a little do you think you could drink some water?”

Virgil shuddered but nodded. Patton slowly, so slowly helped Virgil lean up just enough so Logan could help him drink. Virgil only managed a few sips before his boyfriends saw him starting to get upset again, so Patton helped lay Virgil back down. Roman summoned a cotton blanket to drape over all of them, and Patton summoned the stuffed blue dog from his room he’d noticed Virgil liked before quickly wrapping him up in his arms again. Virgil fell asleep after 20 minutes, but it took the other three Sides much longer to find rest for themselves.

///// 

Roman was the first to wake, roused by the sound of birds chirping by the window to the Imagination. He felt sick just thinking about the Imagination, so did his best to ignore the sound. Instead, he breathed in the scent of vanilla and sweat from his love in front of him. He resisted the urge to move Patton closer to him, wanting his loves to get all the rest they could.

He tried to do a grounding exercise, but the only thing that flashed before his eyes was the previous day. Nightmarish images of Virgil being hurt, of his loves devastated, of Remy beating him all tormented his waking mind as much as they had taunted him in his sleep.

I am no prince. Roman swallowed as he used his magic to exchange his prince uniform for dark-wash jeans and a long-sleeved maroon shirt. I am a horrible boyfriend. I do not deserve these wonderful men. I do not deserve comfort. I let my love come to harm when I’d vowed never to allow that to happen. I allowed not only harm to come to him, but allowed it to continue because I was too selfish to stop doing what I wanted to do. Tears broke free from his eyes. No wonder Virgil fears me more than the others and sees me as likely to take advantage of him.

Roman tensed and tried to sink further into the mattress, using Patton as a shield between Virgil and himself to protect Virgil, although he still stuck out above Patton slightly.

Oh, why couldn’t I have a smaller frame?!

Anxiety swirled in his chest until Logan began waking up, with Patton soon following. Roman’s heart twinged when Virgil remained asleep. He had to resist the urge to kiss the back of Patton’s head. I don’t deserve such an honor.

“Logie, can you go make some breakfast and bring it up here please?” Patton whispered.

“Of course, my dear.”

“I can help!” Roman whispered as loud as he dared. Damn me to hell, but I still long to be useful in their eyes.

Patton twisted his neck as far as he could while still holding Virgil, although he ended up more facing the ceiling. “You’re hurt too baby, you don’t have to.”

He doesn’t trust me alone with Logan. Roman nearly threw up from the twisting in his gut. “I want to! May I?” Oh no, oh God, now he’ll think I’m trying to convince him to let me be alone with Logan!

Before he could backpedal, Patton sent a small smile his way. “If you’re sure baby.”

Yes!! I can do something right!! “Completely sure padre!” He held his breath when his outburst caused Virgil to snuffle and stir. Patton’s head snapped back down to the man in his arms, and
everyone let out a breath when Virgil settled again.

Roman thought about saying something, but opted to just shamefully slink out of the bed. He dared a glance back at his loves, and Patton was wearing a determined expression that meant unless Virgil asked him to, he wasn’t going to be letting go of Virgil anytime soon. He tore his eyes away when Patton looked his direction. Roman heard Logan get up behind him and follow him. Logan tried to catch up to Roman in the hallway and on the stairs, but Roman made sure to walk just fast enough.

Once they got to the kitchen, however, there was no escape.

Roman tensed for what felt like the millionth time that morning as Logan walked up behind him.

“Roman.”

He couldn’t help the reflexive, silent sob that got punched out of him.

Logan swallowed thickly, unable to stave off his own tears. “It will be okay Roman.”

Roman shook his head as he shuddered. No. No it won’t be. I love you all too much. I’ll either hurt you by staying or kill me inside by leaving. Virgil lost his parents when he needed them the most because of me. He was violated and hurt because of me. The abuse continued on for so long because of me. And none of you should ever trust me ever again. Roman cursed the muffled cry that came from him. None of you should ever love me again.

Logan placed a hand on Roman’s back, not surprised when Roman brought his hands up to his face and wept. He stepped around to his prince’s front and pulled him into a hug. Roman sobbed into Logan’s shoulder, and Logan allowed himself a few silent tears.

After a few minutes had passed and Logan still heard the same amount of pain in Roman’s voice, he got concerned.

“Darling?” he asked roughly.

Roman pulled away, choking back his cries and wiping at his face, much to Logan’s distress.

“I apologize! I’m… I’m not sure what that was!” Roman tried, smiling as more tears spilled from his eyes.

Logan reached forward and delicately brushed a tear off Roman’s bruised cheekbone, causing Roman’s face to crumple once more.

“Darling, truly, if you’d rather rest upstairs with Patton and Virgil-” he was cut off when Roman cried out and fell to Logan’s feet.

“Please!! Please let me be useful!! I can be!!”

Logan stared at him for a moment, bewildered. “Roman, I know you can be, but you don’t have to be,” he tried to clarify.

“Please let me!!”

“Okay, do you want to make the eggs?” Logan said, anything to get Roman off the floor. He felt sick and upset.

Logan startled at how fast Roman rose up to his feet and spun around. “Yes, I can do that!! Thank
you Logan!!"

Logan took a few deep breaths to try to stabilize himself. “Of course.”

With Roman furiously seasoning and scrambling eggs, Logan began making coffee and pouring apple juice. He decided to toast some bread and cut up fresh mango as well. They worked silently, Roman’s pained gasps the only sounds coming from either of them. Once the eggs were done, Roman got out a tray, silverware, and flatware, and got everything served up and arranged.

Before Roman took hold of the tray to bring it upstairs, Logan rested a hand on the back of Roman’s arm. Roman jumped in surprise and looked at Logan.

Logan stared into Roman’s eyes, unblinking. “You’re wonderful, Roman.”

Roman smiled sadly, not saying anything and just grabbing the tray. Logan sighed and followed Roman upstairs.

When Roman got in the room, the first thing he noticed was Virgil stirring. Patton looked up and smiled sympathetically.

_You made such a ruckus, of course now you’re making your exhausted boyfriends do emotional labor. And on top of that, now you’ve woken Virgil prematurely!_

“I’m sorry,” Roman whispered to Patton. He looked to Logan, who had come to stand next to Roman. “I’m sorry.”

Logan smiled and rubbed Roman’s back. “It’s okay Roman,” he whispered. “I love you.”

Roman tried and failed to hold back tears. _Dammit!!_ “I love you too. All three of you.”

Virgil grunted and snuffled, and the three awake Sides collectively melted.

Virgil blinked blearily up at Patton. “Hi Patt’n,” he slurred.

Patton grinned and let out a relieved sigh. “Hi chocolate chip!”

Virgil giggled and hid his blushing face in Patton’s chest. Patton kissed the top of his head and lightly squeezed him.

“Do you feel up to breakfast baby? Roman and Logan made it!”

Virgil peeked his head out of Patton’s chest, noticing Logan and Roman were also in the room.

“Food sounds good,” Virgil said shyly.

Patton moved his head, and Roman came over with the large tray of breakfast. As Virgil sat up, however, he sucked in a pained breath. Everyone froze for a moment, just long enough for memories to play behind Virgil’s eyes. Virgil curled into Patton, who immediately held on and tenderly kissed his hair. Roman summoned a cart to put the tray on and spelled the eggs, toast, and coffee to stay warm. He stood next to the bed, unsure of what to do next, until Virgil whimpered, “Ro? Please?”

Roman got under the covers next to Virgil, who turned to wrap his arms around Roman’s torso.

“Keep me safe?” Virgil asked shakily.
“I…” Roman held himself back from making any promises he couldn’t keep. “That is my greatest desire, my sweet.”

It seemed to be good enough for Virgil, as a few minutes later he pulled back apologetically and rubbed the tears off his face with the sleeves of his hoodie. Logan had settled on the other side of Patton, and once Virgil seemed soothed Roman put the tray over Virgil’s legs. Virgil nervously took a few eggs, a piece of toast, and a single slice of mango.

“Do you want coffee sweetpea?”

Virgil grimaced at the thought of the bitter drink but nodded his head.

Patton frowned. “Can you say how old you are honey?”

Virgil chewed on his lower lip and hunched his shoulders. “Um… 5?”

“Okay sweetpea! You don’t have to have coffee if you don’t want to! And you can have more food if you want!”

Virgil looked around the tray, then asked, “Are you sure?”

Patton pitched his voice up to hide the fact that he was about to start crying again. “Of course sweetie! Take as much as you want of whatever you want!”

Virgil shoveled a few more eggs onto his plate and took two more slices of mango, along with a glass of apple juice. Once he cleared his plate, he ended up taking another slice of toast as well. He neatly put his silverware, flatware, glass, and napkin back on the tray, subtly leaning against Patton for warmth and comfort. When Patton felt him start to shake, he quickly wrapped up his own breakfast and put an arm around Virgil.

“Are you okay sweetheart?”

Virgil buried his face in Patton’s shoulder. “I know we’re boyfriends.”

Patton tenderly kissed the top of Virgil’s head. “We are!”

Virgil sniffled wetly, and Patton felt moisture on his shoulder a moment later. “Do I have to kiss you or… or anything like that?”

Patton felt like he was about to lose his breakfast, and his other two boyfriends weren’t far behind him. “Of course not baby! For one, we don’t want anything from you that you don’t want. For another, you’re too small to consent right now, so we wouldn’t do that anyways.”

“Do you promise?” Virgil asked in a broken voice.

Patton clutched Virgil to him. “Of course we do!!”

Virgil started crying. “I j-just d-didn’t l-l-like what the d-did to m-me! They h-hurt m-me!” he sobbed a few times. “Deceit hurt m-me! L-last night!”

Patton held Virgil as tightly as he dared. “I know sweetpea. I’m so sorry!!”

Logan looked to Roman, and frowned when he saw Roman had tangled his fingers in his hair and was pulling so tightly his knuckles were white. Logan waved his hand to vanish the dishes and tray and moved around the bed to try to give comfort to Roman. When he got close, Roman shrunk back and shook his head, splaying his fingers out in a “stop” sign. Logan thinned his lips in
concern; clearly, there was something going on that Roman wasn’t being forthcoming about, and he had to get to the bottom of it.

*Perhaps trauma from Remy attacking him?* Logan mused. He felt anger at Remy on several levels; not only did he attack his boyfriend, but he has also now effectively removed himself from Virgil when the youngest Side needed him. Logan refocused on the scene before him; Roman had removed his hands from his hair, thankfully, and relocated them to his sleeves. Virgil had quieted mostly, and Patton looked devastated and exhausted.

“‘M tired and my head hurts. Can I go back to sleep please?’ Virgil asked.

“Of course sweetie! Do you want some space or do you want me to stay?”

“Please stay!” Virgil cried, his voice starting to break again.

“Okay! Okay, I will!” Patton rushed to reassure. Virgil calmed a few seconds and deep breaths later. Patton scooted them both down the bed so they could lay back down, Virgil curling up on Patton’s chest and falling asleep within minutes. Logan walked up and adjusted the blanket so both Virgil and Patton were covered while Roman left his bedroom.

Patton made sure his arms were secure around his shadowy songbird and kissed the top of his head. “I promise it’ll be okay.”

Logan watched them for a moment longer until he was satisfied they’d be alright by themselves. He left the bedroom as well, quietly closing the door behind him and looking around.

Only to find Roman wasn’t anywhere in sight.

Chapter End Notes

Welp, things continue to fall apart at the seams. Where could Roman have gone off to? What will happen to the relationship between Remy and Saul? These questions will be answered eventually!
Hi folks!! We have some tw's for this chapter! There are very negative thoughts from just about everyone, with the main theme being self-blame. Virgil also has very self-blaming thoughts that are heavy in victim-blaming and repeating back to him what the Dark Sides have told him, so be careful around that. If I forgot any, please lmk! My Discord server is here and you can dm there if you want, otherwise you can hop on my Tumblr and send me an ask or dm me. I unfortunately have to have anon off for the asks, but I will absolutely respect people's requests for triggers!

Logan tried sinking to Roman’s location again, despite knowing his efforts were futile. He thought Roman might be in the Imagination, but he couldn’t quite tell. He rubbed his head, a migraine forming. Logan checked on Thomas, and winced when he found Thomas was starting to get a migraine as well. He sighed heavily.

*I cannot help Roman if he will not accept my help.*

The images of Roman begging at his feet to be helpful flashed through Logan’s mind, along with the images of Roman, bloodied and refusing to accept help. Logan shook himself and went downstairs, getting some soup prepared for easy consumption. He wasn’t as much of a chef as Patton, but he still knew how to make a healthful meal.

He started by boiling brown rice in vegetable stock and seasoning it with a bay leaf and some paprika. While that was cooking, he finely diced a few carrots and set those aside. He grabbed a handful of carrot greens and drained and rinsed three pounds of scallops. He put 6 cups of vegetable stock in their large stockpot and added the carrot greens, a minced onion, minced garlic, lemongrass, ginger, basil, coriander, cardamom, star anise, dill, olive oil, and a bit of chilli, and set that to boil. Once the brown rice was done, he set it aside in a separate container so it wouldn’t make the soup gummy. He boiled vermicelli in more vegetable stock and added the carrots and scallops to the stock for ten minutes. He removed the large and inedible seasonings, and put everything away in the fridge.

Logan looked around and realized what a mess he’d made. He felt tired just looking at everything.

*How does Patton do it?*

Logan cleaned and dried the dishes and counters, and collapsed on the couch. He looked up at the clock.

12:36 P.M. Oh dear, Thomas!!

Logan focused on Thomas’ world, where he was currently dealing with a migraine while trying to work. Logan made Thomas get up to grab headache pills to help his migraine, some food and milk, and darkened the room lights. Once that was done, Logan redirected Thomas back to editing, anxiety low but present enough to motivate him. The presence of anxiety reminded Logan of what had happened just the previous night and how their lives seemed to be coming apart at the seams.
He resolutely focused on helping Thomas, despite the streams of tears coming from his eyes.

Virgil groaned and shifted, tensing when he felt arms around him. He looked over, confused as to why he was laying on his back and why Patton was holding him like that. He tried to roll over to cuddle with Patton more effectively, but was stopped by his injured hip.

*Oh right. That bitch.*

He teared up, thinking of how much he’d been through in the past day and how much he’d lost.

*Remy, Saul... My boyfriends deserve better than me. I can’t even get them off anymore! They’re going to see I’m too much work, I’m worthless, and now I’m stained and gross again!* 

Virgil rubbed his head. *And of course I have a headache.* Virgil thought back to the morning. *Fuck, I have caffeine withdrawal.*

He looked over at Patton; Patton seemed to be sleeping, but there was a line between his eyebrows.

*I’m so sorry Pat.* Virgil wanted to reach out and smooth the line between Patton’s eyebrows, but he didn’t want to get any more of his gross on his loving boyfriend. He winced at the twinge in his genitals; he hadn’t wanted to tell Logan, but he was pretty sure he would be sporting some impressive bruises down there.

*Boyfriend for now, anyways.*

Virgil started trying to wriggle out of Patton’s hold, but Patton just held onto him more tightly in his sleep. Virgil started to panic, pushing more insistently against Patton, who finally woke up and let him go.

“Virge?” Patton mumbled.

Virgil tried to catch his breath through his pain and panic. “I’m sorry Pat.”

“No baby, you don’t have to apologize! Can you tell me what’s wrong?”

*Tell him you want to break up with him.* “Gross,” Virgil gritted out. “I’m gross.”

“You’re not gross honey! What they did to you doesn’t mean you’re gross!”

Virgil didn’t have the energy to argue with him. “C-can I,” he had to breathe through the pain a few times. “Can I have a shower?”

“Of course sweetpea! Can you tell me how old you are?”

Virgil bit back his irritation. “I’m 24, I just feel gross.”

Patton sighed sadly. “Okay. Do you think you can shower safely or will you need help?”

Virgil wanted to retort that he could manage on his own, but he also knew that 1) standing in a shower would probably not end well, and 2) getting in and out of a clawfoot bathtub would also not end well.

“If I can get to my room, I kind of built my shower for times like this?”
Patton’s face got undeniably sad before he forced a smile. “That can work! Do you want me to carry you or help you walk?”

“Helping me walk would be better I think.”

Patton quickly moved to the other side of the bed to help Virgil.

“Alright honey, one, two, three, up!”

Virgil stood shakily, his hip twinging, head pounding, and bruises screaming.

“Do you feel up to eating anything?”

Virgil’s stomach answered that with a painful lurch.

“Not right now, thanks Pat. I would literally murder for some coffee though.”

Patton giggled. “I was worried when tiny you didn’t take the coffee.”

“Tiny me is stupid.”

“*Tiny you is the cutest thing on this entire planet!!*”

“No, that’s you.”

“**AWWWWWWW**!”

Virgil rested his head against Patton’s shoulder, trying to show the affection he had for the older Side, before remembering how gross he was. He whipped his head off of Patton’s shoulder, just in time to pass Roman in the hall. Roman smiled tightly at the pair.

“Greetings, lovely citizens! Would you mind terribly if I changed in my room?”

“That’s chill, I’m gonna shower in my room anyways, it’s a little easier on my hip.”

“Excellent timing, little crow!”

Patton and Virgil continued their journey, and Roman swiftly went to his room, the glamour hiding his red eyes and face falling away. He locked the door to his room and blocked anyone from sinking in. He also soundproofed his room after a thought. He took a quick shower, enough to get the sweat from his recent duel with the Dragon Witch off, and went to his walk-in closet.

*I am no Prince. I do not deserve to wear the uniform. But what shall I wear instead?! I cannot very well go flashing my poor... friends.*

Roman bit his fist in an attempt to bawl into it.

*I’ve lost my boyfriends!! Oh god!!*

Roman’s knees buckled and he wept, kneeling on the carpet of his walk-in closet.

*They shouldn’t even consider me a friend. I caused so much harm to befall Virgil! Oh Virgil, my sweet, I am so sorry!!*

He thought back to every time he’d touched Virgil since rescuing him, and had to swallow back bile.
My god, he didn’t want me to touch him!! I’ve assaulted him further!

It took Roman twenty minutes to pull himself together enough to stand.

I must still represent Creativity, but I must not pretend to be noble.

Roman walked past his formal wear and sparring uniforms, past the business and business casual section, and into his casual wear section.

Something plain, nothing expensive.

After agonizing over his racks and drawers of casual clothes, Roman settled on medium-wash jeans, a red pullover hoodie, white socks, and red running shoes. He walked out of his closet, head hung in shame. When he dared a glance in the mirror, he began weeping for his lost dignity and uniform.

It is what I deserve.

Roman wanted to go back to his lo- acquaintances to help, he really did, but he also didn’t want to force them to do emotional labor. He sank out to his chambers in the Imagination, curled up in his bed, and cried.

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Just like Virgil had feared, he had some significant bruising where no one should be bruised. He scrubbed himself almost raw, and would have done more if he wasn’t worried about Patton getting worried.

He turned off the water and made sure to make enough noise so that Patton knew he was safely out of the shower and moving around. He kept going back to the previous night, the sounds, the smells, the pain…

They’re never going to want to touch you again. You’re forcing them to touch you because you’re guilting them into it. Manipulator. They probably never wanted to touch you or have sex with you, and now you’re going to be so much more work, even more than you already are. At least suck them off, that way there’s minimal touching. You’re making Roman think it’s his fault.

What?! It’s not!!

Oh, but I bet he thinks that way, wouldn’t you say? And-

“Do you need help sweetie?”

Virgil smiled, his sweet boyfriend managing to break through the darkness that had been clouding his mind. “Nah, I’m good. Thanks Pat.”

“Any time sweetheart!”

Virgil shook his head fondly. He finished drying off and tugged on clothes that he could tell Patton had manifested to be freshly-laundered, then limped out to meet his boyfriend, who was right outside the door.

Patton dove to get an arm around Virgil.

“Easy there chocolate chip, I’ve got you.”
Virgil was grateful for the help; his hip always hurt so much whenever it would pop out. They trekked back down the hallway, just in time for Roman to rush past them.

Virgil raised an eyebrow at the hoodie. “Stealing my look there Princey?”

“Oh, you’re too funny Virgil!” Roman rushed out as he fled.

See? He doesn’t like you, he doesn’t want to spend time around you anymore. You ruined what you had. Whore. You missed the Dark Sides so much, and now you’ve ruined your relationship with Roman. You dirty slut. Why would any of your boyfriends want to touch you? You should just accept your new role and be done with it.

As Virgil fell deeper and deeper into thought, his anxiety grew.

“Hey Pat?”

“Yeah sweetpea?”

Virgil chewed on his lip. “I… you don’t have to help me if you don’t want to. I’ve dealt with this on my own before, I can do it again, you don’t have to.”

“Well that’s the thing! I want to help you!”

Virgil internally cursed when he tasted blood. “If you’re sure…”

“I am!”

Virgil accepted help to Roman’s opulent bed. Once he got settled, Patton ran fingers through his hair tenderly and smiled at him.

“Do you want me to stay?”

You’re fucking up his day, you’re fucking up his life, you’re forcing him to spend so much time with you.

Virgil fidgeted. “No, that’s okay. I have work I should get done anyways.”

“Okay honey! Just let me know if you want me or someone else up here! Do you want Lucas?”

Virgil nodded shyly, not speaking since he was getting choked up. Patton summoned Lucas and handed it to Virgil, who clutched it to his chest and buried his face in it to hide his tears.

Patton smiled warmly. “I love you baby.”

Virgil sniffled. “I love you too.”

Patton frowned in concern. “If you need me to stay, I don’t mind. I love holding you!”

“No thanks Pat, I’m good.”

“Okay. If you need anything, text or summon us okay?”

“I will.”

Patton slowly left the room and quietly closed the door behind him. Virgil let himself start crying more loudly with the door closed, though he had to lift his face out of Lucas to breathe.
I’m losing them. I’ve lost them. They don’t want me after what happened. They don’t want to touch me. I’ve been stained, and I’m still stained after the shower.

He wept for everything he’d lost. He thought back to the kisses, the cuddles, the makeout sessions, the dates, and when he’d had sex with them.

*They don’t want to be my boyfriends anymore.*

Virgil tried to get himself under control, doing a few breathing exercises before attempting a grounding exercise. However, when he looked around the room, he realized how alone he was.

*This is stupid, the Dark Sides are locked up, they can’t hurt me.*

He knew it was illogical, but he felt scared. He felt like the Dark Sides would appear any second and hurt him again. Despite trying breathing exercises, he could feel his breaths become more desperate as his heart rate sped up. He held Lucas tighter and tighter, and it suddenly felt like the air that he was breathing in wasn’t reaching his lungs.

*I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, oh god I’m gonna die!! They’re gonna get me, they’re gonna bring me back down to the Dark Side, they’re going to hurt me again!!!*

In his panic, Virgil didn’t notice the Side rising up in the room.

**Chapter End Notes**

I wonder who it could be? 3>:)

And check out this [amazing HBW art by CI!!](#)
“Virgil, love…”

Virgil flinched and turned terrified eyes to Roman, panting in a desperate attempt to get more air. He whimpered from fear before recognizing Roman.

Roman felt sick. *My little crow doesn’t trust me not to hurt him. And I have him in my bed!! Oh Roman, you’ve really bungled this one.*

“R-Ro?” Virgil rasped. *Please don’t hate me Roman, please don’t think I’m disgusting.*

Roman raised his hands in surrender and started slowly backing out of the room. “I think I should get Logan.” With that, he turned and fled the room.

Virgil felt like his heart was ripped from his chest. *He’s repulsed by me. He doesn’t want to touch me or be around me. Do Patton and Logan even want to be around me? Roman’s not subtle, he’s honest, he’s easier to read. My boyfriends don’t want to be with me anymore!!* He began bawling. He felt like he was drowning and only sinking faster and faster.

“Darling!”

Virgil looked up just in time to have Logan sit on the edge of the bed next to him. He had to physically hold himself back from launching himself into Logan’s arms.

*I ruined it. I ruin everything. I blew my chance at the best possible thing, and now I don’t even have my dads!!*

Logan’s eyebrows were knit together. He was leaning forward slightly, aching to bring his distraught boyfriend into his arms but not sure if it was wanted or not.

“Shhhhhhh Virgil, it’s okay. Do you want me to hold you?”

*Oh god, more than anything! But I can’t hurt you!!* Virgil shook his head as more cries got punched out of him.

“Alright. Can you tell me what happened?”

“I, um…”
Awwwwww, are you going to say you got scared because you were alone? If they respected you before, which is highly unlikely, they’ll never respect you now.

“It is okay Virgil, there is no need to be ashamed. Can you tell me what happened?”

**You can’t tell him the truth if you don’t want to keep being a selfish whore.**

Fighting off tactile flashbacks, he forced out a few words. “I h-had kind of a f-flashback? W-with s-some other s-s-stuff? Y-you don’t have t-t-to help if you don’t w-want t-to!!”

Logan frowned. “I do want to help, my moon.” He jumped when that caused a fresh wave of tears to erupt from Virgil. “What would be beneficial right now?”

Virgil whimpered as a result of trying to hold his cries back. *I can’t tell him, I can’t tell him, I can’t tell him...* “I’ll b-be okay, I j-just w-want T-Thomas to get his w-work done.”

“I can assist with that. May I work on the bed next to you?” Logan tried to keep the fact that he was begging out of his tone. *I can work, I can do that. That’s how I can help Virgil.*

“Oh no, not this again. “You’re not forcing me. If I didn’t want to help you, I would leave.”

Virgil whimpered at the last word.

Logan softened. “My dear, you are suffering, and it pains me to see you suffering. That is the truth. However, it does not make me love you any less. I simply want to help. So please, may I?”

Virgil’s resolve crumbled. “Please stay.”

Logan crawled into bed on the opposite side of Virgil and scooted close enough that Virgil could cuddle with him if he wanted. Logan summoned his notebook and tablet and started working while Virgil calmed himself down. With his boyfriend next to him, it was fairly quick.

*You gave in, and now you’re forcing him to be around you again. You’re a terrible person. You’re knowingly hurting someone who lets you hurt them because they feel obligated to help you. You are fundamentally bad.*

*I know.*

Once Virgil had allowed resignation to drown out his grief, he focused on Thomas’ realm to help him work. It was all he could do.

/////\\

Over the course of the next 3 weeks, Virgil’s injuries healed, and he moved back into his own room. He isolated himself from the Light Sides, and Roman kept his distance, working himself to the bone to help his loves. They’d all noticed how Roman hadn’t put his uniform back on since rescuing Virgil, and Virgil blamed himself.

*I tainted his kingdom, no wonder he doesn’t feel like a prince anymore. I’ve taken that away from him.*

His pain grew as time went on, knowing he couldn’t just break up with them when he still wanted to be with them but also knowing that he was only bringing sadness into their lives.
I haven’t even kissed them yet.

He would often have to snap his room soundproof to grieve the loss of his brothers and dads. He found he seemed to be crying more often than not lately, and it was getting worse. He hadn’t seen them, and he wanted them more than anything. He felt anger, heartbreak, guilt, and shame. He hated that he had new trauma, just when he felt like he was making a lot of progress. He hated that he’d lost everything.

I hate that I ruined everything good in my life because of my own stupidity.

Virgil had gone downstairs for breakfast, to the now-familiar forced smiles and air of melancholy that seemed to hang around them. Logan was overworking himself, and Virgil hated seeing his boyfriends suffer. They were all hesitant around him, and he only received touch when he broke down and begged for it. The touch-starvation monster was back, clawing at the inside of his skin. He knew that going to see Dr. Picani would be a good idea, but this just seemed too… big.

It also hadn’t gone unnoticed by Virgil that his boyfriends were avoiding touching him.

You’re too disgusting. They know it’s your fault and that you secretly wanted it. You’re too gross to touch.

Lunch had gone the same way, largely silent with his boyfriends not touching him. Virgil knew he couldn’t survive another meal, so he begged off dinner, saying he wasn’t feeling well. Patton left his door without a fight, just saying that he’d save a plate in the fridge for him.

Currently, Virgil was curled up on the floor of his room, trying to breathe through a flashback-induced panic attack. He could still feel the pain and feel breath puffing against his ear.

His stomach turned. Thomas needs me, and I can’t get myself together enough to help him!! I’ve been hurting my boyfriends, and now I can’t stop hurting Thomas!! Thomas, I’m so sorry!! Virgil writhed as another wave of mental anguish tore through him.

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There’s a way you can stop the pain. You can smooth it out so you can focus. You know what it is.

No!! I won’t do that, I’ve been clean for too long to fuck up now!!

You’ve already fucked up, past the point of no return. At least be useful. Roman thinks you’re so disgusting that he can barely stand to be near you. He doesn’t love you. No one loves you. What’s a few more scars on your ruined body?

Virgil tried to expel his pain by wailing for several more minutes until he realized that wasn’t going to work. He slowly stood and walked to his bathroom, hating himself more with every step. The lights were too bright unless they were at their lowest setting. He popped out a blade from his razor and examined it, entranced by how the light was reflecting off the steel.

I don’t want to, I don’t want to, I don’t want to!! I don’t want to, I have to, oh god I have to!!

The tiles were warm against his feet, but still uncomfortable. He went back into his room and sat in the middle of it, silently crying. He shrugged off his hoodie so he was just in a t-shirt. He couldn’t help but feel relieved that the pain would stop, just for a little while.

I can’t take this anymore.
Virgil put the blade to his skin, and winced at the slight pinch from the corner of the blade. He could almost feel the cuts numbing him up, the relief flowing through his veins, his brain turning fuzzy so he could not feel like shit for just a short time…

*I don’t want to.*

He lost the battle of keeping quiet at that moment, every emotion overwhelming him at once and breaking the hold he had on his room’s walls.

*Roman doesn’t love me, he hates me, and so does everybody else. And they should! I just have to be a good Anxiety until hopefully a better one forms.*

Virgil pressed the blade against his skin and broke down.

*I don’t want to!!*

Virgil nearly jumped out of his skin when powerful knocks sounded at his door. “Virgil, ang-what’s wrong? Are you okay?!”

*He won’t even call me his angel anymore! I’m not his angel anymore!*

That drew several more cries from Virgil. He felt like his world was falling apart.

*I want my dads to hold me! I want my boyfriends to hold me! I need someone!!*

“Virgil, I- Virgil, may I come in, please?”

Virgil felt a deep shame at making Roman feel like he had to beg. He snapped to unlock his room.

Roman came in immediately and started walking towards a still-crying Virgil, but froze when he saw the razor clutched in his hand.

“Virgil, love,” he began, “what’s going on?”

Virgil shook his head. “I don’t w-want to!”

Roman slowly got down on one knee, both hands in the air. He heard his two other - *friends?* - come up to the door and freeze. “You don’t have to!” he quickly assured, scooting forward a bit, not wanting to startle Virgil but *desperately* wanting to take the blade from him.

“I c-can’t…” I can’t do this alone anymore.

Roman’s heart broke as tears made their way down his face. “You can. We’ll help you, as much as you need. We want to. We *love* you,” he said gently. He curled his fingers to stop from reaching out at Virgil’s heart-wrenching sobs.

Virgil looked up to meet the eyes of his boyfriends. Patton and Logan’s faces were difficult to see because of the light from the hallway, but Roman’s face was illuminated. He looked devastated, desperate, full of love…

...and *honest.*

Virgil broke down completely then, the foundation of his beliefs for the past three weeks crumbling. For the first time since he’d been assaulted, he felt catharsis from his tears. He could hear Patton muffling his own tears from the doorway.
“Let us help you,” Roman begged, voice thick.

Virgil forced himself to look at Roman directly. “D-do you w-want to t-touch m-me?”

_I don’t want to frighten him or make him feel forced, but damn me to hell I can’t keep pretending I don’t long to take him into my arms and keep him safe. “More than anything.”_

Virgil dropped the razor and practically threw himself into Roman, who caught him effortlessly and vanished the razor.

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“Oh love,” Roman whispered. “I’ve missed this. I love you, we all do.”

Virgil held on for dear life, the body against his and the arms around him seeming to knit his mind back together.

“Th-then w-w-why haven’t y-you b-been t-touching me?” Virgil sobbed. “A-am I g-gross?”

_I’m an idiot!! “No, not at all!! I’m so sorry I’ve made you feel that way my sweet!”_

“I-it’s m-my fault t-too,” Virgil rasped, throat like sandpaper.

Roman kissed the top of his head, breathing in the lavender, oud, and bergamot he’d been missing for so long. “We can talk about that later if you truly feel that you’re at fault for something, but let’s make up for lost time yes?”

Virgil nodded wordlessly against Roman’s neck. Roman held onto Virgil as he stood and walked them to Virgil’s bed. He gingerly sat Virgil on the edge of the bed while Logan and Patton closed the door on their way out. He summoned a bottle of water and started gently rubbing Virgil’s back with his free hand.

>Your throat sounds dry, dearest angel.”

Virgil let loose a few muffled sobs at hearing the pet name again and took the bottle, drinking about half of it before setting it on his night stand.

He looked to Roman nervously. “D-do you wanna stay?”

Roman tipped Virgil’s chin up with a finger and smiled. “I would love nothing more.”

Virgil ducked his head as he smiled and blushed lightly. Roman snapped them into polar fleece sleeping pants, and brought Virgil to his chest.

He kissed the top of Virgil’s head again. “I’m so sorry, my sweet raven.”

Virgil nuzzled against the thick hoodie that Roman was wearing. “It’s not all your fault.” He didn’t have the energy to talk about it, so he changed the topic. “Trying to steal my look Princey?” he teased.

“I wouldn’t _dream_ of it. You wear it so well, how could I possibly compare?”

Virgil blushed more darkly and grumbled. Roman huffed out a laugh. “Sleep well, my love.”

“You too. Night.”
Remy picked at his salmon. Normally, he’d dive in, but the past few weeks haven’t been normal in the slightest.

Saul had come back the next day and said that he didn’t want to break up with him, but that he and Remy had to work on some things. They’d had some conversations, and Saul understood why Remy did what he did, but still found it unacceptable. Remy had been spending each day out on the couch, and they barely spoke to each other except when Saul would agree to sit down and talk.

At the moment, Saul was quietly finishing 3 fillets of salmon and a stack of brown rice and vegetables, and Remy couldn’t take it anymore.

“Do you actually want to be with me?!” He took a deep breath. “I’m sorry. I’m just, hanging here!”

Saul’s eyes got shiny. “Yes, without a doubt. I love you Remy,” he said, voice becoming thick at the end.

Remy’s own eyes pricked with tears. “I love you too Saul.” He sniffled loudly. “What do I need to do?”


Saul’s back straightened. “I’m glad to hear that. I want to be with you, but in order to get back to where we were, I need to see you working on it.”

“I… how should I do that?!”

Saul swallowed. I’ve gotta say it. “I need you to go to therapy. I need to see you’re working on both the present issue and the underlying causes in a professional setting.”

Remy twisted his glass around. Okay fuck. I was hoping to avoid that. “I can do that. I should be able to get to the Imagination through the Subconscious easy enough. Same thing as helping manage dreams right?”

Saul nodded. “Yes, I suppose so.”

Remy stood and put his plate in the fridge. “I’m going now, I’m not hungry.”

Saul just nodded, then sent him a small smile. “I’m proud of you. I know this is not easy.”

Remy waited until he turned to wipe a tear away. Saul saw anyways.

Remy opened one of the doors to the Subconscious and walked into the fog. He knew the path to the Imagination, and he took comfort in the familiar swirling grey mist. The echoing silence helped soothe some of his prickly emotions, and by the time he got to the Imagination he felt a little more even-keeled.

Remy frowned; the pale gold and white path to where the figment of Dr. Picani resided was dull, like it hadn’t been used in some time.

Coffeebean, you need therapy.
His own hypocrisy hit him, which he ignored in favor of going into the pathway and landing in a waiting room.

*That princey boy does have an eye for detail.*

Remy surveyed the room, and saw that more energy was clustered near the back of a nearby hall. He made his way to the room where it seemed the most energy was concentrated, and took a seat. After a moment, he nearly jumped out of said seat.

“It’s the moment you’ve all been waiting for! Dun, dun dun dun dun dun dah…”

Remy watched the performance with wide eyes and a slack jaw. The figment panted a few times throughout, and *finally* took a seat.

*Oh damn he’s cute.*

“New patient! Do you how do? I’m Dr. Picani, he/ him, and you are?”

“I’m doing great, sweetie,” Remy drawled, winking at the doctor. “Name’s Remy, he/ him.”

Chapter End Notes

Was that better? :3
Hi folks! There are a few warnings for this chapter, but nothing too major. There are a few very brief references back to a near-relapse of self-harm, as well as a few very brief references to past sexual assault, and it deals with slightly nsfw themes briefly, but that’s it for this chapter! As always, lmk if I missed any warnings!

Dr. Picani smiled congenially, knowing Remy was likely just trying to flirt to deflect discomfort.

“Great to meet you Remy! Welcome to my little office! During our first visit, we usually just go over our objectives, discuss what therapy is going to look like, and all that jazz! We’ll start by setting some goals, working towards them, and checking in after a few weeks or a few months to see how things are going! How does that sound to you?”

Remy smirked. “Sounds great sugar.”

“Fantabulous! Now, what are some things you’d like to work on in therapy?” Dr. Picani asked casually, bringing pen to paper.

Remy winced and looked down and to the side, face falling for a moment. Dr. Picani knew it meant shame.

“I, ah… am a little overprotective of someone I see as my little bro-slash-kid?” Remy offered.

Dr. Picani made a few notes. “Gotcha! And it sounds like you want to bring that down to a healthier level?”

“Yes.”

“Okay! That’s definitely doable!” Dr. Picani felt for the Neutral Side when he slouched in relief. “Is there anything you want to add to that?”

“Nah babes, I’m good.”

“Okay! And is there anything else you’d like to work on in therapy?”

Remy curled his hands into fists and pinched a piece of his jeans between his thumb and index finger. “Yeah,” he said quietly.

Dr. Picani brought his energy down to match Remy’s. “Okay. And what would that be?”

Remy dropped his shoulders. “I… hit someone. Because of the overprotective thing. And I don’t…” he sighed and looked to the left. “I don’t know.”

Dr. Picani nodded. “Alright. Who did you hit?”

After a beat, Remy managed, “Roman, one of his boyfriends.”
“Okay. You did really well telling me that, I could tell that was hard.”

Remy tried to smile, though it came out as more of a grimace. “So doc, think you can help me?”

“I sure do! What kinds of goals would you like to set for this?”

Remy leaned back on the couch. “How do I set goals for being less crazy?” he mused out loud. “I dunno doc, I think I’m gonna have to take your lead on this one.”

Dr. Picani tapped his pen on his chin. “Well, I’d start by breaking down the issue a little more so we can understand it. Are there any common triggers you’ve identified that seem to set off your over-protectiveness?”

Remy swallowed thickly and looked up at the ceiling. “His boyfriends. I know they’re good people, but if any of them hurt my baby—” he cut himself off and looked at the doctor apologetically. “Well, ah, there was a demonstration?”

Dr. Picani smiled encouragingly. “That’s okay! It definitely helps me see where that comes from! Are there any other triggers you’ve identified?”

Remy closed his eyes and frowned. “When he’s hurt.”

Dr. Picani tilted his head. “When he’s been hurt in the past?”

Remy sniffled as a tear rolled past his sunglasses. “A few weeks ago,” he said wetly before silent sobs started shaking his entire frame.

Dr. Picani felt a stab go through him; he hadn’t seen Virgil in a few weeks, but he’d thought Virgil was just trying to see if he could go without therapy. He’d also grown attached to the younger, brave, hurting Side.

Remy continued. “And I thought Roman had set it up to happen and that he’d filmed it for his own… pleasure,” he spat. “And I shouldn’t have, but that’s where my brain went and I followed him out into the hall and hit him and then kicked him when he was down. Literally.”

“Emotions were high,” Dr. Picani offered solemnly.

Remy nodded. “And I haven’t been able to see my baby since then! When he needs me! Because I fucked up!”

Dr. Picani made a note to include that later in therapy. “Okay. How long was it between when you found out Virgil had been hurt and when you hit Roman?”

“I dunno, maybe a half hour, an hour?”

“Were you thinking about Roman the entire time?”

“Noooo, I….” Remy deflated. “Kinda maybe? I was thinking about how my little Virgie was hurt and scared again, and my mind kept going back to Mr. Prince Charming. And I kept on getting more and more pissed, and then he went to get some food from downstairs when he could easily magic it on up, and I followed him out into the hall and yelled at him and…” Remy summoned a sugary iced coffee drink. “You know the rest, I guess.” He took a loud sip and twisted the plastic back and forth in his hand.

Dr. Picani stretched his hand out after writing so quickly. “I do. And if you don’t mind, I was
wondering: you mentioned Virgil being hurt was a trigger and that was what precipitated this whole event. Is there a specific kind of hurt or any kind of hurt that is triggering?"

The plastic cup loudly complained when Remy reflexively clenched his hand. “He… any hurt, but this last time he…” Remy hung his head. “Th-they t-touched him!!”

Dr. Picani knew it was likely, but he’d been hoping for anything else. “I’m so sorry Remy. Was it the people who have hurt him in the past?”

Remy nodded, more tears slipping out from underneath his sunglasses.

“I have no idea how to apologize to them,” Remy admitted.

“We can definitely talk about that.” Dr. Picani said gently. “It sounds like once you get triggered, it’s hard to leave that train of thought?”

“Omg you have no idea. Wait, maybe you do. Anyways, I can sometimes stop myself, but other times it feels like I’m not… in control.” Remy winced. “That sounds awful.”

“It’s very common, don’t worry! We can definitely work on that! Do you know what initially established this trigger?”

Remy shook his head, face completely crumpling, before leaning forward and slipping his free index finger and thumb under his sunglasses and over his eyes. “I can’t,” he whispered.

“That’s okay, we’re not in any hurry here. Would you like a grounding exercise?”

Remy shook his head and started dabbing at his face with a Kleenex. “No, I’m good.” He straightened his back and stared at Dr. Picani. “So, goals?”

Dr. Picani picked his pen back up. “Yep! For this first one, why don’t we check in next session to make sure it’s a good plan? Let’s see how you feel about looking at pictures of the Light Sides and if any emotions come up, and then you can write them down. How do you feel about that?”

Remy’s eyebrows shot up. “I really like that idea, you surprised me boo! I thought I was beyond saving…” he laughed humorlessly as he slowly brought his straw up to his mouth.

“Not at all beyond saving! Now when you’re looking at pictures of the Light Sides, if you feel any negative emotions I’d like you to start using some breathing exercises. Are you familiar with those?”

Remy winked at the doctor. “You bet babe!”

“Great! Being conscious of our thoughts and emotions is a key step in figuring out how to manage them, and starting to disassociate negative feelings from people we don’t want them attached to can help with triggers! Would you like any more goals to talk about?”

“I think those are good to start with, but I’ll let you know if I need any more of your wisdom,” Remy grinned.

Dr. Picani chuckled. “Great! And you know where to find me! Let’s talk about Finding Nemo.”

“Wait what?”

/////
Remy walked through the door into the Neutral Side of the Mindscape, a weight off his shoulders but nerves building in his stomach. Saul looked up from where he’d been working at the kitchen table.

“How’d it go?”

Remy put as much false confidence as he could behind his smile, despite knowing it was futile. “Really good! We should have everything worked out in a few more sessions!”

Saul raised an eyebrow. “Really? A few sessions?”

Remy faltered. “Well, the big stuff at least! There might be smaller stuff to work on after that, but the big stuff should be good after a few sessions!”

“Do you think you’ll keep going after that?”

Fuck. “Yeah, just long enough so I can take it from there. We set up goals and all that… cool… stuff?” Remy winced outwardly at his stumbling.

Saul took Remy’s hand and, maintaining eye contact, kissed the back of it. “I’m proud of you babe. I know this is hard for you.” He sent what he hoped was an encouraging smile Remy’s way.

Remy relaxed and had to focus on not crying. “Thank you, I…”

Saul saw Remy struggling for words. He stood and slowly enough so Remy could back out if he wanted to, hugged him. Remy sagged against him and started crying quietly into his shoulder. Saul held onto him and kept them standing.

\\\\

Virgil groaned as his migraine hit him full-force. He tensed when he felt a body moving underneath him.

Roman. Oh fuck, Roman.

“Good morning, my beautiful emo love.”

FUCK.

Virgil stalled by rubbing his forehead.

“Are you alright, my love?”

“Uh, yeah, headache.”

“I shall slay it!!”

Virgil cringed at the shout.

“My apologies, dark angel.”

“It’s fine. I’m, uh, sorry about last night.”

Virgil felt Roman freeze beneath him. “What… which part?”

Virgil squeezed his eyes shut. “I freaked the fuck out, and then freaked you the fuck out. I’m
“Oh! Oh my sweet, you care so much for others!!” Roman squeezed Virgil and nuzzled the top of his head.

After several long moments of silence, Virgil had to fidget. “Um, I’m sorry?”

“You don’t have to apologize!” Roman took a moment to press a loving kiss to Virgil’s hair. “My love, I am sorry you were in so much pain, much of it due to my actions, or lack thereof. I only wish to reassure you that I am very much in love with you. I am glad I found you before you harmed yourself.” Roman squeezed him tightly. “Please never feel like you have to hide your pain again. Please never suffer in silence for my sake, and I know I speak for our other two loves as well.”

Virgil shifted. “But me being upset and… almost relapsing upset you.”

“And you know how you can avoid that in the future?”

Virgil nearly puked from the sudden nerves. “How?”

“By never hiding your pain or suffering in silence for our sakes.”

Virgil relaxed. “Dork.”

“I’m right though.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

Roman chuckled, the vibrations from his chest causing goosebumps to shoot down Virgil’s spine.

“Shall we meet our loves for breakfast?”

Virgil did not want to go out into the bright lights of the hallways and the full sensory experience that was breakfast with a migraine, but he knew he should make an appearance to soothe his boyfriends. Roman excused himself to get ready for the day, and Virgil hopped out of bed to pop four ibuprofen and four tylenol, and to glare at his morning wood.

What the fuck are you doing here?! My head is killing me!

Upon not receiving an answer, he turned on the cold water in his shower.

You coward.

Somehow, the migraine got worse after the medication, but Virgil still rubbed some eyeshadow underneath his eyes, a little sparkly brown eyeshadow on his lids to make up for shunning his boyfriends for weeks, and threw on his usual outfit. He tapped Shelly for good luck, then made his way downstairs. As expected, the kitchen was sensory overload, and he thought his eyes might pop out of their sockets.

“Sweetpea!” was Virgil’s only warning before a light blue mass of love nearly tackle-hugged him. Despite the searing pain in his forehead, he couldn’t help the laugh that escaped him.

“Hey Pat,” he said before it hit him that Patton was holding him and wanted to hold him. He had to hide his face in Patton’s shoulder to soak up the tears.

Patton wants to touch me. He loves me.
Virgil tried to memorize the feeling of being held by Patton, vaguely recognizing the feeling of touch starvation. Patton was in no hurry to let Virgil go, even when the smell of burnt eggs reached their noses. There were hushed whispers of “Roman, take that off-” and “I am, Sir Snotty!” from behind them. The exchange made Virgil snort, and Patton kiss his temple.

“Mind if I rescue our kitchen?”

Virgil pulled back and looked at Patton’s lips before flicking his eyes up. Do I want to kiss him? Am I ready? Should I do it now? Am I doing this because I feel I have to or should?

The question was answered for him when Roman swore and ran to the sink to run cold water over his fingers.

Patton started moving towards Roman immediately. “Roman, sweetie, are you okay??”

Virgil watched Roman for a moment until he was convinced the burn wasn’t too bad, then felt the world stop when Logan smiled at him.

“Hello darling.”

Virgil smiled lopsided. Dammit face, stop being stupid! “Hey!” he said as his voice cracked. Dammit!!

Logan lifted an eyebrow and the corner of his mouth, oh-so-subtly.

Bastard knows what he’s doing. I’m gay, I’m doomed.

Logan approached Virgil, and Virgil felt the touch-ache monster start growling.

“Can I have a hug?!” he blurted, then blushed, groaned, and hid his face in his hands.

Logan bit back laughter. “Of course you can.” And wrapped him in a gentle hug.

Virgil melted into the embrace and rubbed his cheek on Logan’s shoulder, allowing himself a rumble despite knowing the pain that would lance through his head a moment later.

“Hey fellas, breakfast is hot and ready,” Patton said quietly.

Logan and Virgil reluctantly parted, with Logan staring into Virgil’s eyes for a moment while tracing a hand down his arm. He smiled, then sat at his spot at the table. Virgil raised his eyebrows in question when he caught Patton looking at him in concern.

Goddammit, now he knows I have a headache, and everything hurts. Was coming down here really worth it?

“You okay chocolate chip?”

Virgil smiled. “Yeah, just a migraine.”

Logan stuck his hand out, a small white pill in his palm. “This is sumatriptan, it will help your migraine.”

Virgil took the pill right away, tired of the pain.

“Eat for sustenance!”
“Roman is, surprisingly, correct.”

Virgil muffled his laughter at the offended Princey noises that followed.

Yeah. Yeah, this was worth it.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sure everything will be fine now. :)

Works inspired by this: Betrayal! Or: The one in which Princey should just stay in his lane, honestly, by Jasper01, Soul Bound [UNDER RECONSTRUCTION] by patton_pending, The Broken One by MoreFdUpThanRiverdalesWriting

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