Convergence Theory

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Convergence Theory

by Zaqwer

Summary

After the events of Season 1, the seven Hargreeves siblings are thrown back in time a week to try and undo the apocalypse. The catch: they are not together but scattered across seven alternate parallel timelines. Separately, they must try to prevent the apocalypse and attempt to mend their broken relationships with each other.

Notes

Hello and welcome! This is my first foray into this fandom, and my first fic in a while, but the idea wouldn't leave me alone. This is a rather ambitious project (because I apparently can't do things by halves), so expect a lengthy story, although I don't know how long yet. I will update as often as possible, but I make no promises.
See the end of the work for more notes.
Luther blinked and found himself in the courtyard of a still-intact Umbrella Academy. “What the hell...” he muttered to himself as his mind tried to readjust to its new reality. A moment ago he had been huddled with his family in the remains of a theatre while the apocalypse bore down on them. Now he stood in front of the four other Hargreeves siblings as a blue portal above them crackled with thunder and electricity. Even with the sudden disorientation, Luther didn’t miss that his hand was clutched in Allison’s, as she looked at him worriedly.

“I guess Five actually sent us back in time, Luther thought as a boy in an ill-fitting suit fell from the sky to land on the ground in front of them.

“Does anyone else see little Number Five, or is that just me?” Klaus said, as they edged forward. Five looked down at himself and then back at his family.

“Shit,” he said, pushing past them toward the house.

This whole scene was familiar to Luther. Too familiar. If Five had sent them back to the past, why was he acting exactly as he had the first time? And the same went for the rest of the family. Sure they seemed a bit freaked out, but they weren’t acting like they’d just returned from the brink of apocalypse.

“Five? What’s going on? What happened back at the concert?” Luther called after the retreating figure of Number Five.

Five turned around, puzzlement etched on his young face. “What are you talking about Luther? What concert?”

From the looks that his other siblings were giving him, Luther could tell that none of the others had understood him either. “You know with the moon falling and the time travel?” he tried again looking desperately at the others for some sign of recognition.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, Luther,” Five said slowly, “but it sounds like there are some things you and I might have to discuss.”

Luther felt his world tip sideways (a feeling he was getting way too familiar with) as he realized that somehow he was the only one of his siblings who had been sent back in time. Somehow, he had been the only one to survive the destruction of the world and now was alone as he tried to avert the apocalypse. Luther stood in mute shock as numb horror washed over him. Oh shit, Luther thought, was this how Five felt all the time?

* * *

Diego had his eyes squeezed closed when the world ended and then began again. The blue energy field that surrounded them in Five’s desperate attempt to whisk them away to safety made Diego’s head hurt, and that was on top of the various injuries he had sustained in the fighting that he had been engaged in intermittently for the past few hours. Not to mention that having your life force almost sucked out by your power-crazed sister didn’t do wonders for your overall state of health.

So Diego was not exactly paying attention to the specifics when Five volunteered to try and save them by time traveling. He didn’t know what exactly he was expecting to find when he opened his eyes, but being back in the courtyard with his siblings as Five fell out of a portal again was certainly not it. I guess the crazy bastard did it, Diego thought, we’re in the past. He still felt dizzy and disoriented, as if his mind was having trouble catching up to the current moment, which was not at
all helped by the utterly bizarre experience occurring before him.

“Does anyone else see little Number Five, or is that just me?” Klaus said, as they edged forward. Five looked down at himself and then back at his family.

“Shit,” he said, pushing past them toward the house.

“Whoa, hold on there, Five,” Diego said, grabbing the boy’s arm as Five moved to brush past him. “What’s going on? What’s the plan?”

Five wrenched his arm out of Diego’s grasp and stared at him with a mixture of contempt and irritation. “The plan is that I’m going to get something to eat since time travelling takes all of the energy out of me.” And he strode out of the courtyard and into the house.

“Well, I guess that’s Five for you,” Diego muttered, “never an explanation, just gotta follow him around and wait for him to deign to tell you what to do. We just get back from the end of the world and all he wants to do is get a snack.”

The others turned to face him, looking at him as if he had just gone mad. “Um, Diego? What are you talking about?” asked Luther slowly.

“What, none of you remember?” asked Diego, “It happened literally seconds ago.”

“Diego, we’ve been in this house all day; the world didn’t end. Are you alright?” Allison said with a slightly worried tone in her voice. Beside her, Vanya nodded in agreement.

“Yeah I’d think I’d remember the world ending, but I am pretty high, so…” Klaus added.

Diego looked from one sibling to the next, all of their faces reflecting some level of confusion and concern. None of them, including Five, had seemed to react to the apocalypse that Diego had just witnessed descend upon the Earth. Somehow, he was the only one who had come back to the past. Shit, he thought, What have you done to me Five?

* * *

Allison opened her eyes to find herself back in the courtyard of the Umbrella Academy, a swirling blue portal crackling with energy above her. Glancing around, she saw that the rest of her siblings apart from Five were standing around looking anxiously at the temporal anomaly in the sky. “Guys…” she started, but then was cut off by a wave of emotion that overwhelmed her. Her voice. She had her voice back. Allison didn’t realize how much she had missed the ability to so quickly and easily communicate with others. Unconsciously she raised a hand to her throat and felt tears pricking her eyes when it met smooth unblemished skin.

Her personal rejoining was cut short by a figure in a baggy suit falling from the sky to the ground. Allison rushed over to him, despite Luther’s arm attempting to hold her back. “Five, oh my God, Five, are you alright? What’s going on? Did you send us to the past?” the unspoken words from the last few days seemed to all fall out at once, as Allison reveled in her regained ability to speak.

“So I’m not the only one who sees little Number Five?” Klaus said, as the other Hargreeves siblings edged forward.

Five picked himself off the ground, ignoring Allison’s attempts to help him up. He looked down at himself and then back up at his family who were now approaching the two of them. “Shit, must’ve gotten the equations wrong,” he muttered to himself. Then he seemed to register what Allison had said. "Wait, what did you say?"
"I asked if you were alright," Allison said absent-mindedly, brushing the leaves out of his hair.

"No, you said something about sending you to the past," Five replied, squirming to get away from Allison's grip.

"Well you must have, right? I mean, that's what you said you were doing and now here we are a week ago." God, she'd missed her voice; she was babbling like a child as she dusted off Five's ill-fitting suit jacket.

Five pushed himself away from her, eyes narrowed in confusion. "I don't know what you're talking about. What do you mean, a week ago...oh. You time traveled too, didn't you?"

"Of course I did, what are you... " Allison trailed off, as she turned around to look at the rest of her family who were staring at the scene in front of them as if the world had gone crazy. "Wait, you don't remember? None of you?" Everyone shook their heads or made various noises to that effect. "Not even Ben?"

Klaus made a startled noise and looked to the empty air next to him. "No, he's just as confused as the rest of us. How did you know about Ben?"

Allison looked from one sibling to the next all exhibiting some degree of shock and concern. She turned back to Five who had a smirk on his face.

"Well, sounds like you have some explaining to do, Allison."

* * *

The first thing Klaus noticed was the wave of dopamine that nearly knocked him off his feet. He’d been sober for a couple of days now, but he would know the feeling of being high anywhere. It’s not as if he’s not accustomed to this level of drugs in his bloodstream, but he’s never had it hit him all at once like this. Through the haze of his drug-addled mind, Klaus had a vague thought that something unusual had just occurred, but was having trouble making the flood of confused sense impressions into coherent thoughts.

Blinking through the blurred and kaleidoscopic view that was his world, Klaus thought that he might be seeing a floating blue ball of energy in the sky above him, but surely that was just a hallucination brought on by the drugs. There were figures standing around him, and after a moment, Klaus was able to recognize them as his siblings. They too, seemed to be staring at the craziness in the sky, so maybe it wasn’t just in his head. The scene felt familiar to Klaus somehow, but between the noise that the blue portal was making and his thoughts feeling like molasses, he couldn’t place it.

A boy fell from the sky, quieting the storm, and allowing Klaus’ mind to subside to a dull roar rather than the jackhammer it had been several seconds ago. It was only then that the pieces finally clicked in Klaus’ head.

"Hey, Five," he said, rushing over to the kid who was still getting to his feet and putting a hand on his shoulder. “Since we’re going to be doing this again, do you mind if I kinda skip the whole kidnapping and getting traumatized in ‘Nam bit and get straight to the stopping the moon from falling and destroying the whole world, please and thank you.”

Five looked at Klaus like he had just gone off the deep end (which was quite unfair really, since Klaus had been off the deep end for years now). He opened his mouth and looked like he wanted to say something, but the words seemed to fail him.

“What no words of wisdom from my oldest and also youngest brother? No lecture about your
intellectual superiority and your obscure and convoluted plan to save the world?” Klaus put a hand to his heart in mock hurt. “I must say I’m very disappointed in you, Number Five. You’re usually good for at least a cutting comeback by now.” Klaus turned around to find that the others were also staring at him with the same numb disbelief that Five was showing, the courtyard ringing with stunned silence, as the Hargreeves siblings tried to process the impossible scene playing out before them.

“Um, Klaus,” said Diego slowly, “What the hell are you on about?”

“You know, the whole apocalypse deal and Five sending us back in time?” Klaus asked, suddenly getting very nervous. He glanced at Ben who stood slightly apart from his other siblings. Ben too displayed the same blank confused look that the others wore. “What, none of you remember the moon exploding, and the fight with those guys in scary bug masks, and—” Klaus cut himself off as he glanced at a terrified-looking Vanya who seemed to want to melt into the shadows of the buildings.

“Klaus, I don’t know what fever-dream you’ve hallucinated, but none of us know what you’re talking about,” Luther said.

Klaus put his hands on his head and let out an exhale that sounded like a cross between a laugh and a sob. “Well, shit. This sucks.”

* * *

Five grimaced in pain, straining and struggling as he tried to bend the fabric of spacetime. Around him, his family huddled together, hands linked in a last desperate attempt to save the world. Surrounding them, a blue energy field glowed and crackled, just barely containing all six of them (well seven if you included Ben, but Five wasn’t sure how much intangible and invisible ghosts counted when it came to moving through time). The effort of creating such a large and unstable rift in time was taking its toll on Five, not to mention the fact that he had nearly had his life energy sucked from him minutes before. *I can do this, I have to do this, Five thought, I will not let the world end on my watch.* He was not going to die here. He had lived through too much, sacrificed too much for it all to be in vain.

Five looked around him at his siblings, standing hand in hand (distantly Five wondered when the last time that happened was), Vanya’s unconscious form draped in Luther’s arms. He redoubled his efforts, his family was *not* going to die, Five would make sure of it. They had trusted him in this last mad throw of the dice and he would *not* let them down. Five was no longer aiming for any particular time, just *back*, so they could fix this mess that he’d made of things. Throwing his last reserves of energy into the push, he felt the bonds of time coming undone.

“Hold on, it’s going to get messy!” he yelled as the final tendrils broke and they tumbled into the howling torrent of time.

Five fell face-first out of a portal and landed on the ground of the Umbrella Academy courtyard. It felt about as good the second time as it had the first, which was to say, it hurt like hell but that was mostly due to the side-effects of time travel, not the fall itself. His head was killing him, and his muscles trembled and shook as he tried to get up from the ground.

“Does anyone else see little Number Five, or is that just me?” came Klaus’ voice from up above. That was familiar to Five. Way too familiar.

As he stood up, he saw his family looking at him like he’d just fallen from the sky (which he supposed he had). They edged toward him cautiously, as if he might disappear if approached too
quickly. This too was familiar to Five; how could it not be when the memory of it was burned into his mind. It had been the first time he had seen his siblings as adults, or at least as living adults. (Five tried to not see their dead faces superimposed on the live ones. He failed.) The whole sorry scene was now playing out the exact same way. And if it was playing out the same that meant...

“Shit,” he said (his brain unhelpfully told him that this too was following the script). “Shit, shit, shit!”

“Five? Are you… are you okay?” It was Vanya. Vanya, who Five let down and abandoned and had caused the apocalypse that he had tried so hard to prevent. It was just another reminder of his failures. Failure to return home after jumping to the apocalypse, failure to be there for his family, failure to protect and save his sister. And failure to bring his siblings back with him.

“Do any of you remember? Any of it?” he asked, looking around desperately at his family. They all looked at him in confusion. Of course they didn't remember. He knew that as soon as he saw them. “What about Ben, does he at least remember?” There was a chance that Ben’s incorporeal form had allowed him to travel back with Five.

The stunned silence morphed into awkwardness. “Um… Five, there’s something you should know…” Allison started hesitantly.

“Not now, Allison, I know about all that,” Five cut her off. “Klaus, I need to know if Ben remembers any of it, the apocalypse, the moon, anything at all.”

Klaus stared at a patch of air beside him then turned back to Five. “I don’t know what you’re talking about, bud. None of us know what you’re on about.”

So there it was. Five was alone. Again. And once again, he would be forced to try and stop the apocalypse on his own. “Shit,” he said once more. “This is fan-fucking-tastic.”

* * *

Ben found himself standing in the courtyard of the Umbrella Academy. This in itself was not terribly unusual. After all, Ben often appeared in places without having to travel through physical space to get there, so he was used to suddenly materializing in a new location. One of the perks of being dead.

However, this particular location was one that he didn’t recall wanting to appear at. In fact, as Ben looked around he realized that he should not have been able to appear here, since it should have been destroyed with the rest of the Academy. Furthermore, Ben was pretty sure that there shouldn’t be a large portal hovering in the sky.

It all came back to Ben in a rush. The fight at the Icarus Theatre, Vanya’s awesome and destructive powers, and, oh yeah, the literal apocalypse. Ben felt that should probably be the thing he focused on, but his mind was more occupied with the fact that his siblings had seen him. They had actually acknowledged his existence, something that Ben had begun to believe would never happen given how dismissive they were of Klaus and his testimonies. But they had believed when confronted with the evidence of their own eyes. Of course, that had been mostly down to Klaus pulling out powers that Ben (and quite honestly Klaus) hadn’t known existed. Ben had to admit that it had felt good to be useful to his siblings in a fight for once rather than uselessly standing around on the sidelines yelling advice that they couldn’t hear anyway.

Glancing around, Ben saw that his siblings were standing around staring at the crackling portal in the sky. Of course none of them (with the exception of Klaus) could see him, but the scene was instantly recognizable to Ben. It was the moment that Five had fallen out of the sky and back into their lives.
Ben wished that he had been better able to reacquaint himself with his long-lost brother, but since it seemed like Five’s crazy gamble to go back in time had paid off, it seemed like he would get his chance to reconnect.

A boy in an ill-fitting suit fell from the portal to the ground. The others crept forward towards him tentatively. “Does anyone else see little Number Five, or is that just me?” Klaus said, as they edged closer. Ben frowned, shouldn’t they know what was going on?

Five looked down at himself and then back up at his family. “Shit,” he said, pushing past them toward the house.

The siblings all looked at each other and then made to follow Five inside. This wasn’t right, or rather it was too right. Everything was playing out exactly the same as it had last time. It was almost as if...

“Wait! Klaus, what are you doing?” Ben called out to the retreating figure of his brother.

Klaus turned back to face the invisible sibling. “I have no idea what’s going on here, I’m just as lost as the rest of us.” Ben noted with pain that Klaus was not referring to Ben by name, just as he always had when in the company of others. After a couple years of being castigated by the others for ‘pretending’ to talk to Ben, Klaus had learned to shut up and follow their example, never overtly acknowledging Ben’s existence.

“I mean the apocalypse and the time travel. Come on, don’t you remember?” Ben could hear the pleading in his voice. He couldn’t go back to being ignored. Even now, he could see the others entering the house, leaving their weirdo brother to his ‘delusions’.

“Nope, sorry man. All that sounds like a wild ride though, can I have some of what you’re smoking?”

“Klaus, be serious for once in your life; your powers are more than you realize, you can make me solid, the others will be able to see me.”

“Now I know you’re joking with me. Come on, bro.”

Ben sighed angrily, “You’re useless like this, you know? If you were sober, you’d be able to realize your full potential; as it is you’re a failure, even less helpful than I am.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” Klaus said coldly and turned to go after his siblings. “And I wish my powers would shut up once in a while,” he called back over his shoulder.

Ben kicked himself mentally. He knew he shouldn’t have said those things to Klaus even as the words left his lips (or whatever the ghostly equivalent was). But he was still upset. He had thought that he would finally be recognized only for it by snatched away by this cruel twist of fate. And now he had the unenviable task of trying to prevent the apocalypse while being invisible and intangible to everyone.

He sighed and went to go find Klaus and apologize.

* * *

Vanya felt powerful, she was a goddess, a being of pure energy and rage. For too long she had been kept down, held back, ignored. Well no longer. The world would know her power and she would finally be seen. The music swelled around her and her powers sang.

This isn’t right.
The theatre shook with her power, it couldn’t handle the power that she was pouring into it. That was fine, if the world couldn’t keep up with her full power then it would have to become something that could. She was done with limiting herself. If they couldn’t take the full Vanya then they could die, she no longer cared.

No, that’s wrong.

The annoying voice would be silent. She was no longer going to listen to anyone who would try to hold her back or control her. Distantly, she could make out the sound of fighting going on around her. It was irrelevant. She was the main focus of the night, and if others didn’t recognize it -- well, they would soon realize their mistake.

Stop, they need my help.

The music called to her and she answered. It enveloped her and she fed on it. She felt the sound wash over and into her, fuelling the storm that raged inside. The orchestra was gone now, but it didn’t matter -- Vanya could make the music all on her own. The fighting ceased, and some time later (she couldn’t tell whether it was seconds or years) a group of figures rushed her, seemingly trying to knock her down and stop her from finishing her concert. That could not be allowed.

As the music rang around her, Vanya unleashed her power on those who dared to keep her down. With a sweep of her bow, she caught them in beams of light and held them above the stage. They would know that she was unstoppable and capable of far more than the puny powers that they had tried to use to keep her in her place. Well, she would show them where her true place was.

Stop! Can’t you see you’re hurting them!

The figures writhed and twisted like insects impaled on a pin. She watched with cold satisfaction as they struggled and begged for their pitiful lives. She pulled their energy from them to further increase her own strength. They were naught but ants compared with her full fury.

No! Please, stop! Don’t hurt them!

The irritating voice was ruthlessly crushed and buried. Vanya would allow nothing to hold her back anymore, not her siblings, not Leonard, not even herself. The world would know her for what she was -- the most powerful being of them all. All she felt was vindictive pleasure as her siblings’ bodies turned gray and began to crumble under the weight of her full power.

And then the music shattered and she was falling, falling into darkness.

Vanya opened her eyes to find herself standing in the courtyard of the Academy. But no, she had destroyed it, hadn’t she? Above her, a blue portal crackled with thunder and electricity and her siblings (her siblings! they were alive!) were standing around arguing about what to do about it. What was going on? And why did she feel like she’d just got a wad of cotton stuffed up her nose into her brain?

As a boy fell from the portal, the pieces clicked for Vanya. This was the moment when Five had returned to them. But why was she remembering this now? Was it a dream? Vanya pinched herself. It hurt. That along with the raging headache she was experiencing seemed to indicate that all this was real.

“Does anyone else see little Number Five, or is that just me?” Klaus said, as the others edged forward. Five looked down at himself and then back at his family.
“Shit,” he said, pushing past them toward the house.

Had everything else been a dream or some sort of wild hallucination? No, that couldn’t be right either. It was very faint, but Vanya now knew what to look for. Her powers were still curled around her, waiting. But they felt different. Like they were sleeping, and had been for many years. The world also seemed more muted than she remembered, like everything was underwater and echoing. What was happening to her?

Distantly, Vanya was aware of the fact that she was now the only one standing in the courtyard, the others had all followed Five back into the house. Slowly, Vanya turned around to go follow them. Somehow, she had found herself a week in the past and needed to figure out she was going to do about it.
March 24, Timeline 2.01

Chapter Summary

In which Luther develops a sense of self-awareness, well, sort of. He's trying.

Chapter Notes

Thanks to those of you who left comments and/or kudos, it gives me so much happiness to know that people are reading and enjoying this story.

A lot of dialogue is cribbed from the show, which (shockingly) I do not own.

“So let me get this straight: the world is ending in a week, Five got stuck in the apocalypse, and then he sent you back to fix things?” Allison asked, her tone puzzled.

“No, I told you already, I didn’t send him back. An alternate version of myself that lived through the week with Luther did. What about this is so hard for you all to understand?” Five said angrily. (Luther was silently impressed that Five had somehow contrived to sound irritated while munching on a peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich.)

“Wait, but didn’t you say that you’d spent forty-five years in the future trying to stop the apocalypse?” Diego said turning to Five.

“Yes, but Luther here is apparently from a timeline where I came back and failed to stop it. I didn’t have anything to do with it.” Five was using a patronizing tone of one trying to explain a simple problem to an exceptionally slow child. “Although, I’m not sure what my alternate was thinking, sending Luther of all people back. Hardly the most inspired of choices.” This last muttered comment seemed mostly for Five’s own benefit. (Luther chose to not take offence at this; Five, after all, had had a rather rough time of it recently.)

The conversation had been going around in circles like this for what felt like hours, but was probably closer to ten minutes. The family had gathered in the kitchen as Five made himself a sandwich and had formed a circle to grill both Five and Luther about what was going on.

“Well, if this were anyone else, I’d probably say you were having us on,” Klaus slurred from where he was perched on the kitchen table. “But since it’s Luther, I’m going to say that you lost whatever was left of your sanity up there on the moon.”

“Hold up,” Vanya asked Five, “If you were stuck in the future, how did you get back? And why didn’t you come back sooner?”

“In the end I had to project my consciousness forward into a quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time.” Luther didn’t bother pretending that he understood Five’s explanation, even hearing it a second time.
Fortunately, Diego was there to give voice to everyone else’s reaction to that sentence. “That makes no sense.”

“Well, it would if you were smarter,” Five said taking a bite out of his second sandwich, “To answer your second question: Time travel is a crapshoot, just ask Luther. I came back to stop the apocalypse, so naturally I was aiming for 2019, but I wasn’t exactly sure when I’d end up.”

“So why are you thirteen?”

“My body is thirteen again. My consciousness, however, is fifty-eight.”

“How does that work?” Allison pressed.

“Delores kept saying the equations were off,” Five let out a mirthless chuckle, “Bet she’s laughing now.”

“Delores?” Vanya asked. Luther remembered the legless mannequin Five had lugged around with him. He also remembered Five pointing a rifle at him while he held the mannequin out a window. Luther decided that it was probably best to not mention Five’s relationship with a clothing display item. It certainly wouldn’t do much for his credibility.

“We’re getting side-tracked here,” Five said putting setting the jar of peanut butter down on the table with a thud. “What we need to do is figure out what Luther remembers about last time, so we can come up with a plan to stop the apocalypse.”

“Well as much fun as that sounds, I have some, uh, errands to do,” Klaus said, launching himself off the table and made to exit the room. “I’ll leave you doomsday-preppers to it,” he said shooting a wink at Luther before leaving with a little pirouette.

Luther frowned to himself. He probably should have made Klaus stay. Especially since Klaus was the only one who would back him up about Ben’s continued existence (not that it would count for much anyway, Luther thought grimly, remembering all the times he and the others had yelled at Klaus for making stuff up). Oh well, he would have to bring that up with Klaus later and figure out how to break it to the rest of the family.

Diego rolled his eyes at their brother’s antics. “So what’s our plan, Number One?”

Luther squirmed nervously. “I, um, well, I’m not really sure I should be the one coming up with a plan.” He fidgeted with a glass that had been left on the table.

“What do you mean, Luther?” Allison asked with concern.

“I mean my plans didn’t really turn out so well, last time we tried this,” Luther said, not meeting any of their eyes. He remembered the feel of Vanya -- his little sister -- in his arms as he choked the breath from her lungs while she struggled and cried. “I don’t think we should do anything I’d suggest.”

“Oh come on Luther, you can’t give up now, you’re our Number One,” Diego said in that mocking tone Luther had come to despise. That was the problem, wasn’t it? All these years Luther had thought of himself as the Umbrella Academy’s Number One, that he had to be the leader, the dutiful son, the one to stay behind. And where had it gotten him? Shipped to the moon just because Reginald Hargreeves couldn’t figure out anything better to with him. And when he’d come back, he’d been no better at the job. He’d literally led them all to the end of the world. Well, no more. He was done with it.
“No. Not anymore. I’m done. One of you can be Number One, I resign.”

“Whoa, whoa, hold on there, big guy,” Diego said, “you can’t quit. The world needs you. I mean, come on, your plans couldn’t have been that bad.”

*You have no idea*, Luther thought. His first plan had involved choking his sister and then locking her in a soundproof cell. Then he had brilliantly suggested that to stop her in the midst of unleashing her full destructive power that they *all try to run at her at once* in the hopes that one of them would be able to knock her over. No, looking back on it, Luther felt pretty sure that his plans *had* been that bad.

“I can’t believe I’m saying this, but Diego is right. If we want any shot at stopping the apocalypse we need whatever information you’ve got.” Five said.

“I meant what I said. Look, I’ll still help you however I can, but you can’t make me be Number One anymore.

Five sighed, “Well at least tell us what you remember about the apocalypse. Do you know who’s responsible? Anything about how we can stop them?”

Luther glanced at Vanya. He didn’t know what had caused to go apocalyptic last time (although he suspected being locked in a soundproof cage couldn’t have helped), and didn’t want a repeat performance. He also didn’t want to throw her under the bus right now, and besides, at this moment she (probably) didn’t even know about her powers.

“You -- I mean, the other you, last time, he said that he’d found that the guy who causes the apocalypse was named Harold Jenkins, but I don’t really know anything about him.”

“Well that’s something at least,” Five said, “Anything else?”

“Um, no, not really.” Luther raised the glass of water in front of him to his mouth and took a swig. “Wait, no, there was one other thing. There were a couple maniacs after you last time. You said their names were Hazel and Cha-Cha.”

Luther noticed Allison eyeing him suspiciously, but she didn’t say anything.

“Shit,” Five muttered.

“You know them? Who are they?” Diego asked.

“Colleagues,” Five said, getting up from the table. “Well it’s more to go on than I hoped for.” And with that he disappeared in a flash of blue.

Diego raised an eyebrow, “Haven’t missed that,” he said.

* * *

By the time sundown came, the skies had opened up and rain was pouring steadily down. The family, including Grace and Pogo, made their way to the courtyard for the ceremony. Everyone but Luther and Diego had an umbrella (although Luther suspected that Klaus’ tiny umbrella wasn’t doing much to keep him dry). In Luther’s case, it was because the water didn’t bother him with all the coats, hair, and muscle he had on. In Diego’s case, he suspected it was because Luther was doing it and Diego was trying to prove his toughness.

“Did something happen?” Mom asked looking a bit disoriented.
“Dad died, Remember?” Allison looked concerned.

“Oh. Yes, of course.” Mom replied, but Luther could see that she was still confused.

“Is Mom okay?” Allison asked.

“Yeah, yeah she’s fine,” Diego replied. He looked at the android with affection, “She just needs to rest. You know recharge.”

Luther remembered how strange Mom had been acting in the days leading up to her being killed. He also remembered Pogo saying that her programming had been altered to carry out Dad’s suicide plan; he supposed that must be the explanation for her unusual behavior. But Luther didn’t know what had caused her to revert back or even to revive in the first place. He wished he had paid a bit more attention last time instead of getting so wrapped up in his own issues. Oh well, at least he had another shot at it.

“Whenever you’re ready, dear boy,” Pogo said. Pogo, who had lied to him about the moon. Who had lied to them all about Dad’s death and Vanya’s powers. Who knew what else the old chimp was hiding. Pogo had been their friend and confidant while they were all growing up, but he was just another one of Dad’s tools, wasn’t he? Just like Luther had been.

Allison cleared her throat.

“Right, yeah,” Luther said shaking himself out of his thoughts. He turned the urn over and scattered the ashes. Like last time, they fell straight down to land in a sad little pile on the ground. “Definitely would’ve been better with some wind,” Luther muttered.

“Does anyone wish to speak?” Pogo asked. No one made a move to speak, the silence stretching until it became uncomfortable. Eventually, Pogo cleared his throat and began his eulogy. However a few lines in, he was interrupted by Diego.

“He was a monster. He was a bad person and a worse father. The world’s better off without him.”

“Diego!” Allison said sharply.

“My name is Number Two,” he replied. “You know why? Because our father couldn’t be bothered to give us actual names. He had Mom do it.”

At the sound of her name, Grace perked up, “Does anyone want something to eat?”

“No, it’s okay, Mom,” Vanya interjected.

“Oh, okay,” she said sounding a bit disappointed.

But Diego was still going, he now stepped into the middle of the circle to address them all. “Look, you want to pay respects? Go ahead. But at least be honest about the kind of man he was.”

Luther knew now that Reginald had never cared for them, but that still didn’t mean that he wanted to hear this right now. It was the man’s funeral, for God’s sake, couldn’t Diego wait a bit before abusing him?

“Diego, you should stop,” he said quietly.

“You know, you of all people should be on my side here, Number One,” Diego said turning to face him.
“I told you not to call me that anymore,” Luther said, but Diego wasn’t listening.

“After everything he did to you? He had to ship you a million miles away. That’s how much he couldn’t stand the sight of you!” This last comment was punctuated by a sharp jab at Luther’s chest.

Luther knew that Diego was picking a fight with him; it was what Diego had always done when he was upset and didn’t know how to release his emotions. But that didn’t mean that what Diego had said was any less true or hurtful. Reginald had shipped him away simply because he no longer knew what to do with a super-soldier who couldn’t stand the sight of his own body anymore.

And Luther was angry. Angry at Dad, angry at Pogo, and most of all angry at himself for having been so easily led. Everyone else had seen what Dad was years ago and gotten out, but Luther had to be the dutiful one, the one to stay and complete the mission. Well the joke had been on him, hadn’t it? The others could all laugh at the failure he was simply because he’d never been able to wake up and see the world for what it really was.

So Luther threw a punch. He knew it wasn’t Diego he was mad at, but it didn’t matter at the moment. It would feel good to get some aggression out of his system. If Diego wanted a fight, Luther would give him one.

Diego dodged the punch, as Luther had known he would, and the fight began in earnest. They danced around each other, Diego got in some hits here and there, but they barely affected Luther. He could hear Pogo and Vanya yelling at them to stop, and Klaus egging them on, but none of that mattered now. Luther grabbed hold of Diego’s collar and threw him to the ground, but he quickly sprang up and danced away. A series of back and forth blows later, and Diego stood between Luther and Ben’s memorial statue.

“Come here, big boy!” Diego called out.

Luther knew what was coming next, but his fist swung forward anyway of its own accord. Diego dodged, and Luther’s fist connected with the metal statue, knocking it off its pedestal. It fell to the ground with a crash and the head shattered off, bouncing to a rest a few feet away from the body.

“And there goes Ben’s statue,” Allison said, exasperatedly turning back to the house.

“Sorry, Ben,” Luther muttered in Klaus’ general direction. He turned around to find Diego, only to see him pull out a knife.

“Diego, no!” Vanya called, but it was too late. The knife curved in the air to slice through Luther’s sleeve. The cut barely hurt, but Luther could see the hair poking through the gash in his arm. He quickly covered it up with his other hand and turned to glare at Diego.

“We’re done here,” Luther said coldly and marched off into the house.

* * *

Later that evening, when all the others had left the house, Allison came to find Luther. She found him sitting in the parlor lying on one of the couches staring up at the ceiling.

“Hey,” Allison said, breaking him out of his reverie. “What were you thinking about?”

Luther sat up. “Oh nothing much, just listing all the mistakes I’ve made. It’s taking a while to go through them all.” He attempted a laugh, but it came out more as a grunt.

Allison sat down next to him putting a hand on his shoulder. “It’s okay, Luther. You can talk to me if
Luther wanted to flinch away from her touch; he didn’t want her to have to feel the monstrous body he now inhabited. But he forced himself to stay. Even more than he wanted to be rid of this skin, he needed Allison and her comfort.

“Yeah, yeah, I know. I just… God, I was so stupid. I should have left with you. You all saw what Dad was years ago, but I was too naive. I thought that Dads should love their kids. I guess I was a fool.”

“Oh Luther,” Allison said sounding close to tears, “You’re not a fool for wishing that Dad was a better father. I think all of us had that fantasy at some point, that everything he was doing was because he actually loved us deep down. It’s not your fault that you were too good to see the bad in him.”

He let out a half-hearted chuckle. “I suppose that’s one way of putting it. But I still should have stuck by you; we were going to be together forever remember? And then you left and I stayed.”

“Hey, it’s okay, Luther. We’re all messed up in our own ways. How could we not be growing up here?” Allison gave him a small smile which Luther returned.

“Yeah, I know. Hey, you’ll get to be with Claire again, I promise.”

She looked at him sharply, “How do you--”

Luther smirked, “I’m from the future, remember.” (He had to admit that it was fun to occupy Five’s role in the conversation.) “And I know how much you love her. You’re going to be a much better parent to Claire than Dad ever was to us. You just need to work out a few… kinks.”

At that, Allison let out a long, loud laugh and before he knew it, Luther was joining in. They stayed like that, laughing and holding each other for a little while. Right then, Luther thought he might be the happiest he had been in years.

Suddenly Luther felt the need to get it all off his chest. “You know how I found out that Dad never loved me?” Luther took her silence for permission to continue. “I was looking for the research he did on my moon data; I hoped that it might have something to do with the apocalypse. And you know what I found? All the packages I sent, sitting unopened; he never even bothered to read them. He sent me to live alone on the moon for four years for nothing.”

“What an asshole.”

“Yeah, in a way, Diego was right. Dad sent me up there on a pointless mission because it was his way of giving me a purpose. I don’t know what’s worse: that he thought I couldn’t live without a mission or that he was right.”

“That’s not true Luther, you don’t need a mission to live, you can be happy without needing to be Number One all the time.”

Luther sighed. “I don’t know Allison. You didn’t see me just after the experiment, there were some days when I just wanted to end it all.”

“Wait, what experiment?”

That was right, they didn’t know yet. Well, might as well get everything out in the open. He sighed again. “There was a mission. It went… badly. I almost died. Dad saved me, but in order to do so he
had to turn me into, well, this.” And as much as he hated it, he pulled back his sleeve to uncover the ape arm he now bore. Allison gasped, putting a hand to her mouth. “It’s like this all over,” he continued, revulsion in his voice. “I’m now more animal than man.”

“Oh my God, I’m so sorry, Luther. I should have been there, I should have stayed --”

“No,” he cut her off, “No, you were right to leave. If you’d been here, Dad would’ve just done the same to you and I’d never forgive myself if I let you go through what he put me through.”

“Still, you shouldn’t have been alone. I can’t imagine being isolated by myself for four years, I wish… well…” she trailed off.

“Anyway,” Luther pressed on, “that’s why I can’t be Number One. I’m not a leader, Dad knew it, I know it, and now you know it. All my plans blew up in my face and caused more damage. Frankly, it’s a miracle I survived long enough to even have a shot at getting back here. Hell, even today, I let myself be baited into that fight with Diego. I knew what was going to happen and I still did it.”

Allison cleared her throat, “Yeah about that whole apocalypse thing, back there in that conversation with Five? I could tell you were leaving something out.”

“What? No, I…” he started, but Allison fixed him with that Don’t give me that bullshit look. “Fine. You’re right, how’d you know?”

“I may have not seen you in twelve years, but I know you, Luther. I can tell when you’re trying to hide something.”

“Okay, well, I wasn’t completely lying when I said Harold Jenkins causes the apocalypse, but it’s more like he’s the fuse. The bomb is Vanya.”

Allison stared at him in shocked silence for a few seconds. “I’m sorry, what?!?”

“Yeah, our sister Vanya. Turns out she has powers just like the rest of us. Well, not exactly like the rest of us. I don’t think anyone else can blow up the moon and cause the end of the world.”

Allison was still staring at him like he’d grown a second head. “And you know this how?!” she asked, sounding almost hysterical.

“Pogo told me. And also I saw her doing it when she was tearing down the Academy and at her apocalypse concert. She’s quite a sight when she gets going. Beautiful, in a terrifying, world-destroying sort of way.”

Allison seemed to be having trouble processing this information. “Wait, slow down, Pogo knows about this? How long did he know? Why didn’t he tell anyone?”

“He said that Vanya’s powers were kept dormant and she was persuaded to believe that she was ordinary when Dad became convinced that they posed a threat to her and others. He only told me after… well…”

“After what, Luther?” Allison’s voice was dangerously low.

Luther sighed. “After she cut your throat.”

“What? Why would she-- oh. Oh no. Oh no, no, no. Shit, this is bad. I’ve got to find her and apologize right now.” she made to spring off the couch, but Luther grabbed her arm and held her back.
“Whoa, whoa, apologize for what? No, nevermind, that’s not important right now. You can’t go off and tell Vanya she’s got powers. I don’t think she knows yet and she probably won’t react too well if we burst in and tell her that she causes the apocalypse.

Allison sat back down reluctantly. “Okay, okay. You’re right. It can probably wait. But you said she destroys the Academy?”

“Yeah, um, I’m not super clear on the details, but I think Harold Jenkins manipulates her into mistrusting us and she goes all apocalyptic on us.”

Allison crossed her arms. “Luther, what aren’t you telling me?”

“I, uh, may have knocked her out and put her in the soundproof cell in the basement,” Luther said nervously.

“You what!?” Allison screeched.

“Yeah, I know, it’s not my proudest moment,” he said ducking his head.

“Why would you--? What were you--? She’s our sister, Luther!” Allison spluttered.

“Yeah, you had a similar reaction last time,” he said quietly. “In my defense-- and I know it’s a lousy one-- I was under a lot of stress at the time. You were just beginning to recover, and I had just found out about her powers. It definitely wasn’t my best decision, but at the moment, I couldn’t think of anything better than to keep her away from everyone until we figured out what to do.”

“I suppose this was one of your plans that blew up in your face?”

Luther gave her a half-smile, “How’d you guess?”

Allison rolled her eyes. “Fine,” she said, “I’ll agree that we can’t go tonight, but tomorrow morning we find Vanya and figure out how to help her and keep her safe.”
March 24, Timeline 2.02

Chapter Summary

In which Diego and Five team up to try to stop the apocalypse.

Chapter Notes

Thanks again for your comments and kudos. It really makes me so happy to see people enjoying the story.

Once again, a lot of lines are stolen from the show, which (for some reason) doesn't belong to me.

Diego stood in the kitchen surrounded by his siblings who were looking at him with a mixture of skepticism and bewilderment.

“Look, I’m telling the truth here, I really did come back from the future. The apocalypse is coming and we only have a short deadline to stop it,” he said.

“Diego, are you okay?” Allison asked worriedly. “You’re sure you didn’t hit your head or something?”

“I’m fine, Allison. Well, apart from the phantom pain from fighting time-traveling assassins and nearly being killed by the Moon crashing into the Earth.” Diego’s reply clearly didn’t convince his sister.

“Okay, this is too crazy even for me,” Klaus said heading for the door.

“Wait, Klaus, come back, I can prove it, okay? Ben’s here, right? I know that you’ve been telling the truth about him for years now.” Klaus turned around in the doorway and fixed Diego with an incredulous stare.

“Okay, now I know you’re crazy,” Luther said. “Klaus can’t talk to the dead unless he’s sober, which he hasn’t been for years.”

“No, no, he’s right,” Klaus said quietly. “Ben’s the only one I can see. I don’t know why, but he’s always there. Stubborn bastard.” A pause, then, “Oh, shut up. Said with love!”

“Touching as this family reunion is,” Five interrupted, “we have bigger problems to deal with. For instance, what’s the date? The exact date?”

“The twenty-fourth.” Vanya said vaguely, looking like she was still trying to catch up with events. (Not that Diego could blame her, it’s not like it was every day that a long-lost sibling returned, another sibling told you the apocalypse was coming, and that a dead brother was still around as a ghost.)
“Of?” Five snapped, clearly having no patience for this.

“March.”

“Good. Well, I must say, this wasn’t what I was expecting when to find when I made it back,” Five said, chewing on his sandwich, “But it’s certainly a lucky break for us. We have eight days to stop the apocalypse. Okay Diego, spill: What do you know, and how do we stop it?”

“No, hold up. As far as I’m concerned, I’m still the leader of this family and we still haven’t addressed what’s going on with Five.”

Five sighed with irritation. “Fine. What do you need to know so desperately that it can’t wait for the literal end of the world?”

“It’s been seventeen years. Where did you go?”

“I went to the future. It’s shit, by the way. And it’s been a lot longer than seventeen years for me. Anything else you want to know, or can we get back to stopping the apocalypse?”

“Yeah, how’d you get back?” Luther pressed on, seemingly oblivious of the fact that Five looked like he wanted to strangle him.

“In the end I had to project my consciousness forward into a quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time.”

“That still makes no sense,” Diego said.

“It would if you were smarter,” Five said giving him a look that clearly said I am surrounded by idiots. “Honestly, I don't know what my alternate was thinking sending you back. Were you the only option or something?”

“Well, I don’t think you were planning on sending just me back. You were trying to bring us all to the past, but somehow I’m the only one who made it back.” Suddenly it hit Diego that he was only one who had survived. All of his siblings must have died in the apocalypse. Shit, Diego thought, They’re all dead. Luther, Allison, all of them, gone. Just like Eudora. He made a silent vow that this time, he would protect them all. No one was going to get hurt on his watch.

“Hm. Guess I’ll have to check my equations,” was all that Five said.

“So about this apocalypse thing…” Klaus said, breaking Diego out of his thoughts.

“Right, yeah. You-- that is, the you from last time-- brought back a message that the guy responsible is Harold Jenkins.” Diego thought about telling them about Vanya and her powers, but decided against it. As angry as he’d been at Vanya for writing that book and exposing their lives to public scrutiny, he hadn’t liked seeing her locked up in that cell. He shuddered mentally remembering the image of her silently screaming and begging for help. If it all possible, Diego wanted to ensure that none of them ever felt the need to lock her up like that again. Besides, if they got rid of the boyfriend, they could probably deal with Vanya’s powers safely without her causing the end of the world.

“Wait, brought back a message? From where?” Five asked.

“Dunno,” Diego said pulling out one of his knives. “You weren’t very forthcoming with information, it was very annoying.”

Five gave a snort, “Well I’m sure you wouldn’t have understood it anyway, even if my alternate had
tried to explain it. Anyway, about this Harold Jenkins, what do you know about him?”

“Well lucky for us, and unlucky for him, I know where he lives, and he doesn’t know that we’re after him yet,” Diego said with a grim smile.

“That’s something,” Five said draining the glass of water in front of him.

“Oh, and two psychopaths called Hazel and Cha-Cha were chasing you.” Diego said, spinning the knife in his hand.

“She sent them after me? Shit, that’s just great. Well they are the best of the best, apart from me, of course, so I suppose I should take it as a compliment.”

“You do realize none of what you guys are saying makes any sense, right?” Allison asked from where she had been standing dumbfounded.

“Well, I guess we better head out and get this Harold Jenkins guy,” Five said getting up and looking to Diego.

“What are you going to do to him?” Vanya asked quietly.

“Kill him, remove the threat to the world,” Five said casually, as if this were a completely obvious and normal thing to be talking about.

“Whoa, you can’t just go out and kill someone!” Luther practically yelled.

“Why not?” Five asked, bewildered.

“Well, it’s murder.”

Five looked at him as if to say So what?

“This guy hasn’t done anything yet, for one,” Luther said then paused. “Has he?” he asked turning to Diego.

Diego shrugged. “Don’t know, don’t care. But he did spend twelve years in prison for murdering his father, so there’s that.”

“Don’t be so naive, Luther,” Five snapped. “It’s one life against seven billion. I know math was never your strength, but surely even you can do that simple arithmetic.”

“Well, regardless, you can’t go now. We’re having the memorial service in an hour. You can go do your vigilante thing afterwards, if you think it’s so important.”

Five rolled his eyes, “Fine,” he said, “I’ve waited forty-five years, I suppose I can wait a couple more hours.”

* * *

The memorial ceremony was just as rainy and miserable as Diego remembered. The entire family all trudged out to the courtyard under umbrellas to pay their last respects to good old Sir Reginald. This time, Diego accepted the offered umbrella. While part of him still wanted to reject it out of a sense of pride and stubbornness, his more pragmatic side remembered how cold and wet he’d been last time. So now Diego stood with others huddled under an umbrella while Luther held the urn of their father’s ashes, the rain rolling off his prominent shoulders.
“Did something happen?” Mom asked looking disoriented.

“Dad died, Remember?” Allison said worriedly.

“Oh. Yes, of course.” Mom replied, but Diego could see that she was still confused.

“Is Mom okay?” Allison asked quietly.

“Yeah, yeah she’s fine,” Diego replied, looking at Grace, “She just needs to rest. You know recharge.”

But Diego was worried himself. He remembered the odd way Mom had been acting leading to his eventual painful decision to turn her off. The oblivious and distant behavior she had displayed over the preceding couple of days was very different from the attentive and caring nature he remembered from his childhood. Five and Klaus had told him that her programming had been changed as part of Reginald’s suicide plan, which he supposed was part of the reason for her strange demeanor. But how had she miraculously recovered and returned to her normal cheerful and loving self? Diego had never gotten an answer to that question, but to be honest, it had been low on his list of priorities at the time; he had just been so happy to have her back. And then he had lost her again in the destruction of the Academy. Diego made himself another promise that he wouldn’t let it happen again. This time, he would protect all those he loved.

“Whenever you’re ready, dear boy,” Pogo said, making his slow way into the gathered circle. Luther tipped the urn and the ashes fell to the ground in a sad heap.

“Probably would have been better with some wind,” Luther said awkwardly.

“Does anyone wish to speak?” Pogo asked. No one said anything and the silence stretched until it became uncomfortable. Eventually, Pogo cleared his throat, “Very well,” he said and began to speak. “In all regards, Sir Reginald Hargreeves made me what I am today. For that alone I shall be forever in his debt. He was my master… and my friend, and I shall miss him very much.”

Diego felt himself growing more and more irritated by the second. He had never been comfortable with the practice of eulogizing the dead. It felt too much like flattery and ass-kissing to him. Diego was a direct and honest person; he wore his feelings on his sleeve and didn’t see much use in pretending to like a person and say nice things to them when you really felt otherwise. It was even worse when it came to Reginald. The man had been an absolute asshole in life, and even in death he had done nothing but bring more strife and misery into everyone’s lives.

“He leaves behind a complicated legacy--” Pogo continued, and Diego’s patience with this farce finally snapped.

“He was a monster,” he spat. “He was a bad person and a worse father. The world’s better off without him.”

“Diego!” Allison said sharply.

“My name is Number Two,” he replied. “You know why? Because our father couldn’t be bothered to give us actual names. He had Mom do it; that’s how little he cared for us.”

At the sound of her name, Mom perked up, “Does anyone want something to eat?”

“No, it’s okay, Mom,” Vanya said.

“Oh, okay,” she said sounding disappointed.
Diego stepped into the middle of the circle and turned to face the others. “Look you want to pay your respects? Go ahead. But at least be honest about the kind of man he was.”

“You should stop talking now,” Luther growled.

Diego turned to say something cutting and cruel to him, but stopped himself. He remembered the sight of a depressed Luther hunched over the bar, drinking his sorrows away as the apocalypse bore down on them. He’d suffered as much as anyone at the hands of Reginald Hargreeves. Getting into a fight now wouldn’t make anything about their situation better. Instead he sighed, “Alright, fine,” he said, raising a hand in the air lazily. “But at least I’m not deluding myself,” he said quietly, not being able to resist taking a parting shot. He turned away, his umbrella scattering rainwater in a wide arc.

As Diego resumed his place, Pogo fixed him with a stern glare, “I know it is hard for you to believe, but your father loved you all very much. In his own way.”

“Yeah, well that was the problem wasn’t it?” Diego said, steadfastly not looking at anyone.

The rest of the ceremony was awkward and rushed after Diego’s outburst, which was just fine with him. The sooner it was over, the better, as far as he was concerned. Then they could get back to actually saving the world.

However, as the group was splitting up to get out of this miserable weather, Diego noticed that Mom was still standing where they’d left her, staring blankly ahead of her. “Mom?” he said as he approached her. She started and seemed to notice him, but she still looked confused. “Let’s go inside, come on.” Dazedly, she allowed him to lead her into the house.

* * *

Once inside, Grace seemed to revive a bit. She smiled at Diego and her strides became more purposeful. Diego noticed that she was heading to the kitchen. “Do you want cookies?” she asked.

“Sure, Mom,” Diego said tiredly. Even if this was a pale shadow of his mother, Diego couldn’t resist the urge to spend time with her. Despite his offer to help, Mom insisted on doing it all herself. “Don’t be silly, I can do it myself,” she said bustling about the kitchen. She sat him down at the table while she mixed the ingredients and shaped the dough.

“Hey Mom, do remember anything about the night Dad died?” Perhaps there was something that could be useful in figuring out how she had been altered or a clue that he could use to bring her back.

She turned around from the counter where she was rolling dough, “Of course. Sunset, 7:33 pm. Moon was waxing crescent, dinner was cornish hen, wild rice and carrots.”

“No, I mean after that. Later that night. Do you remember going to his room or anything?”

Mom chuckled in a confused way, “I don’t recall,” she said and turned back to her work.

Damn, whatever had altered her programming seemed to have wiped her memory as well. Not that it really surprised Diego. Dad had viewed them all as useful tools; it was no wonder that he had used any and all power he had over her. Hell, if Diego and his siblings’ memories could be erased, he had no doubt that Reginald would have taken advantage of it.

Mom hummed as she worked, seemingly happy that she had a proper task to complete and someone to serve and mother. It broke Diego’s heart to see her working so hard on a task in an attempt to make him feel better. What had it been like for her alone for years in an empty house with only Pogo and Reginald for company?
“Was it hard for you after we all left?” he asked.

“Oh there were days. You kids kept me oh so busy and then…” she broke off, her body going stiff.

“What? What were you going to say?”

“Cookies are ready!” she proclaimed in an overly cheery tone, and bent down to pull the first batch of cookies out of the oven.

Diego felt a wave of sympathy thinking of Mom bustling around the empty house fondly remembering the hubbub of seven rowdy children. She had clearly missed them a lot, if her present actions were any indication.

Suddenly, Diego felt very guilty about leaving her alone. He had been so eager to get out from under Dad's thumb that he hadn't thought about what it would mean for her. “I should have stayed with you. Or taken you with me. Or come back to visit. Something.”

“Don’t be silly, Diego. You had your own life to live. You shouldn’t be tied to your old mother for the rest of your life,” she said with a smile.

And what a life it was. He spent the days mopping floors at the gym and the nights fighting, either legitimate opponents in the ring, or criminals on the streets. A far cry from his childhood dreams of being a beloved superhero.

“Still, you shouldn’t have been left alone. Now that Dad's gone, I'll come back. Check in on you more often. Would you like that?”

Mom smiled, “Yes, that’d be sweet of you. Now, have a cookie! Careful, they’re still hot!”

Diego took a cookie from the proffered plate and took a bite. They were still the best cookies he had ever tasted. “Thanks, Mom,” he said. He didn’t know how he’d do it, but he swore that he’d find some way to restore her back to the way she was supposed to be.

“And I’ve got an extra special present for you,” Mom said, “Now, close your eyes while I give it to you.” Diego complied with the request, knowing what was coming. Mom slipped something into his open hand and gently closed his fingers around it. “There. Now run along, Diego. I’m sure your siblings need you for the mission.” She shooed him out.

Standing in the hallway outside, looked down at the object clutched in his hand.

It was Dad’s monocle.

* * *

Five was pacing up and down the entrance hall when Diego found him. “There you are,” he said impatiently. “Can we get going now?”

“Sure, meet me at my car in a minute,” Diego said and was unsurprised to see Five immediately jump away in a flash. He sighed and turned around to traverse the physical distance between him and the car.

On the way out he ran into Klaus. “Oh hey, Diego, how’s it hanging? You know, every time I close my eyes, I see a diarrhetic hippo about to shit on my face. It’s terrifying!” his brother said clapping his hands on Diego’s shoulders.
“Wonderful, well, if you don’t mind I’m kind of in the middle of going to save the world,” Diego said trying to extricate himself from Klaus.

Klaus seemed to deflate a little bit at that. “Yeah, no problem, just, I wanted to talk to you about what you said. About Ben, and all that.”

“Tomorrow, okay Klaus? I promise,” Diego said as gently as he could. “Right now, I’ve got an asshole to kill.”

Klaus gave him a small smile and a little wave with his Good Bye hand. “Right, later then, have fun!”

By the time Diego got to his car, Five was sitting in the passenger seat, clicking a pen impatiently. “What took you so long?” Diego opened his mouth to respond, but Five cut him off. “Don’t answer that. It was purely rhetorical. Just get in the car and let’s go.”

Diego rolled his eyes and started the car. “So what’s the plan for dealing with this Harold Jenkins guy?” Five asked as Diego pulled out onto the street.

“Figured we’d just break in and take him out.”

“Just like that? Any special abilities that might cause trouble?”

“He’s just an ordinary guy with a grudge against us. No special powers or anything. He doesn’t even know we’re coming. It’ll be simple and easy.”

“Oh. How does he cause the apocalypse then?”

“Don’t worry about it. Once we kill him, it won’t matter anymore.”

The conversation lapsed into silence. The only sound filling the car was the low rumble of the engine and the occasional chatter on the police scanner.

“So is this what you do every night?” Five asked. “Brood in the shadows while cruising the streets listening to police broadcasts and looking for trouble?”

Diego shifted uncomfortably. “Yeah, some nights. Other times I do wrestling matches on the side.”

Five let out a snort, “Not much of a life, is it?”

Diego felt himself becoming defensive, “Yeah? And how much better was your life sitting out there alone in the apocalypse, surviving on the scraps of civilization? Doesn’t sound like you’re one to talk.”

“Well, at least I had an excuse,” Five said caustically.

Diego drove in silence after that. He made several turns and noticed a pair of headlights tailing them. “Don’t look now, but we’re being followed,” he said.

“What?” Five said, quickly turning around in his seat to look behind. "I don't suppose you recently pissed someone off?" Diego shook his head. "Shit. How'd they find me so fast?"

“Who are they?”

“Commission.”
“You mean Hazel and Cha-Cha?”

“Possibly, but more likely hired local muscle. That’s the standard procedure; temporal assassins are usually only sent after difficult targets like Presidents or Generals.”

“So what’s the plan?” Diego asked, continuing to drive like nothing was wrong.

“How far away is the house?”

“About a block away.”

“Okay. Well, we can probably deal with these goons quickly. Then we can get on with what we came here for.”

“Alright, if you say so,” Diego said, and brought the car to a park outside Harold Jenkins’ house.

Behind them, a white van stopped and disgorged its occupants. “Come out with your hands up!” one of them called.

“Better do what they say for now,” Five said getting out of the car. Slowly Diego followed, making sure that his knives were securely strapped to his body. He stepped out to find himself surrounded by six black-clad men menacingly pointing assault rifles at him and Five.

“Oh, let’s be professionals about this,” the man who was apparently the leader said, approaching Diego cautiously. “Hands behind your heads, and come with us. They want to talk.”

“Well that’s too bad,” Five said casually, “Cause I’ve got nothing to say.”

The leader looked from Diego to Five and back. “It doesn’t have to go this way.”

“I’m with him, nothing to say,” Diego said while slowly moving his hands down his back to grasp one of his knives.

“Come quietly and we can all deal with this like civilized people. You think I want to shoot a kid?”

“Well, fortunately, you won’t have to,” Five said and blinked out of existence in a flash of blue.

Diego took his cue to dive for cover behind the car as gunfire erupted, shattering the quiet suburban night. He heard a cry of pain and then the thud of bodies hitting the ground. Diego pulled out a couple of his knives and sent them out at his assailants. More shouts of pain as they buried themselves in the flesh of their targets.

Suddenly Five was beside Diego. “Quick, one of your knives,” he hissed. Diego handed him one, and Five was gone as quickly as he’d come.

“Hey assholes!” Five shouted from a couple dozen yards away. The sound drew gunfire from the remaining men, but Five had already jumped away.

Diego took the distraction as an opportunity to look out and survey the scene. Two men lay unmoving in pools of blood. Another was groaning faintly and trying to crawl away. Diego sent a knife into his skull and he fell silent. That left three goons to deal with.

It quickly became two as Five suddenly appeared next to one of them and slit his throat with Diego’s knife before disappearing again. Diego was readying another knife to throw when Five reappeared between the two remaining men, shouted for their attention, and jumped away again. Their bullets passed through the spot Five had occupied moments before and found their homes in the body of
their fellow. The two corpses fell to the ground with a soft thump. In all, the fight had lasted less than thirty seconds.

Five walked over to him, adjusting his tie with bloody hands. “That… that was something,” Diego said somewhat stupidly. Five gave him a look that clearly said, You’re such an idiot.

Five knelt by the side of the body of the leader and rooted around his pockets. Diego noticed something sticking out of the man’s eye. “Did… did you stab him with a pen?” he asked, still feeling a bit dazed as his brain tried to catch up with recent events.

“I used what I had available,” Five said distractedly. “Ah, here it is,” and he pulled out what Diego recognized as a tracking device from the man’s jacket. “I’ll have to borrow another one of your knives, Diego,” he said rolling up his sleeve.

“What, why?”

“To get the tracker out,” Five said, as if this were the most normal request in the world. “Now, Diego,” he snapped when Diego continued to just stand there.

Wordlessly, Diego handed him another knife and proceeded to watch Five slice open his arm and dig around in it until he pulled out a small device with a blinking green light. He held it up to the streetlight, his hand still dripping blood.

“Wait, why was there a tracker in your arm?”

“Commission protocol. All temporal assassins have one. It allows them to find us when we’re in the field to deliver messages and so forth.”

“And you didn’t think to mention it before now?”

“Didn’t think it would stay in me once I time traveled. You know, new body and all that. Guess they thought of that too,” he said, tossing the tracker into the gutter.

Five tore a strip of cloth from his undershirt and tied it around his arm as a makeshift bandage. “I’ve got a first aid kit in the car,” Diego said, “could get you stitched up.”

“No time for that,” Five said. “We’ve got to deal with Harold Jenkins before the police arrive.”

They crossed the street to the house and went up the front steps. Diego tested the door. Locked. “Stand back,” he said to Five and launched himself through the door. The glass exploded and Diego landed with a grunt in a mess of broken glass and wood.

Five appeared next to him with a flash. “Real subtle. You know I could have jumped in and then opened the door for you.”

“Yeah, well my way works too,” Diego said with a groan as he got to his feet. “Now where is this bastard?”

“I’ll take the upstairs,” Five said and jumped away. Diego made his way through the rooms downstairs. There was plenty of evidence of it having been lived in: a newspaper casually tossed aside, dirty dishes on the countertop, and, most disturbingly, Vanya’s book lying open face down on the couch. But there was no sign of Harold himself anywhere.

“Hey Diego, come look at this,” Five’s voice called from above. Making his way upstairs and into the attic, Diego saw what Five had found.
“Yep, creepy murder shrine, still here,” he said staring at the images of the Umbrella Academy as children with all their eyes scratched out.

“This is crazy. I know you said he had a grudge, but this is insane,” Five muttered. “What happened to him that made him hate us this much?”

“Dunno,” Diego replied, “but he’s not here right now.”

“Well let’s go after him then,” Five said.

“I don’t know where he is right now. Maybe the shooting scared him off or maybe he wasn’t here tonight. Regardless, we’d better get out of here before the cops show up. We want to be long gone when they start looking for who killed those guys.”

“Fine, I suppose we can track him down tomorrow,” Five said and turned away after one last glance back at the melted-off faces of his siblings.
March 24, Timeline 2.03

Chapter Summary

In which Allison reveals some long-buried secrets.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all again for your comments and kudos. I'm so glad to see people enjoying the story.

Once more, a lot of lines are from the show, which I still don't own.

“Okay Allison,” Five said once they had gotten to the kitchen, “Spill.”

And so Allison was forced to try and explain that she was from the future, that the world was going to end in eight days, and that no, she hadn’t just gone crazy. Meanwhile, Five jumped around the kitchen assembling a peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich offering (what he must have considered) helpful additions about the nature of time travel and his own experiences with it. However, in Allison’s opinion, Five’s explanation that he’d “projected his consciousness forward into a quantum state version of himself that exists across every possible instance of time” to return to the present (as if that explained anything) only served to make the story sound more like the insane ramblings of a mad scientist. The others stood around in various states of shock, occasionally making stunned noises of disbelief.

After about the sixth question relating to how had come Allison back, Five finally snapped. “For the last time, I didn’t send Allison back, an alternate version of myself from another timeline did. Why is this so hard for you to wrap your heads around? I'm not sure why only Allison came back if he was trying to bring everyone. I’ll take a look at the equations and figure it out, but for now would you please just drop it.”

Allison was feeling rather pestered herself so when Luther once more asked her about Reginald’s death, she bit back with a sharp retort. “I don’t know how Dad died, and what’s more, I don’t care. The world is ending and all you care about is your stupid revenge quest. We’ve got more important things to deal with, so move on with your life.” Luther sat back down looking a bit like a kicked puppy. Allison felt bad about yelling at him, but they all needed to be focused on the actual mission, not a made-up fantasy.

“Can we back up and talk about Ben?” Diego asked. “Is he here right now?” he turned to Klaus.

“Uh, yeah, he’s here,” Klaus gestured awkwardly to the air beside him. “He says hi, by the way.”

“How is that possible?” Luther asked. “I thought Klaus’ powers only worked when he’s sober, which he hasn’t been for years.”

“Yeah, mostly,” Klaus said. “But Ben’s the exception. He’s always here, even when I don’t want
him to be, the stubborn bastard.” A pause and then, “Oh shut your piehole, Ben. Said with love!”

“But how did you know about it?” Luther turned back to Allison.

“Klaus summoned him during the fight at the theatre. I saw him. We only survived that fight because
of him,” she said.

“Hold on there, you saw him? How is that even possible?”

“Yeah, I would also like to know that,” Klaus said airily.

“I don’t know, maybe Klaus got sober or something. I wasn’t really paying attention to what was
going on there.”

“Weren’t paying attention?!” Diego practically shouted, “Our brother develops new powers out of
nowhere and you weren’t paying attention?!”

“Look, it was a busy week, okay?” she snapped, “I got my throat cut and was trying to protect my
sister and stop the apocalypse. I’m sorry I didn’t pay attention to every detail.”

Multiple voices all started talking at once.

“Your throat was cut?!”

“It’s hardly a minor detail!”

“Well, ex-squeeze me for not being important enough to worry about.”

Five drained the glass of water in front of him and then threw it to the ground. The loud crash and
shattering of glass caught everyone’s attention and shut them up. “You’re all useless, you know,” he
growled. “We have an apocalypse to stop and you’re wasting time with trivialities. It’s incredibly
unfortunate that my alternate didn’t succeed in coming back himself. It’d be so much easier if I could
just do this on my own without listening to your pointless nonsense. Now, let’s get to the actually
important questions. Who causes the apocalypse and how do we stop them?”

“Your other self said that the person responsible was a man named Harold Jenkins. We were able to
track him down, but not before he started the chain of events that led to the apocalypse,” Allison
turned to Vanya, who had been the quietest of all her siblings through this whole incident. “He also
goes by the name Leonard Peabody. Have you met him yet?”

Her sister shook her head.

“Good. If you do meet him, don’t trust anything he says. He’s just trying to manipulate you to get at
us.”

“Manipulate her how?” Five asked.

“He uses her to end the world.”

“What? How?”

Allison took a breath. There was no good to come from trying to keep secrets from one another. It
was what had gotten them into this mess to begin with. Maybe, if everything was out in the open,
they would be able to actually work together to stop the apocalypse instead of fracturing into small
groups and running off without telling anyone else. But she wouldn’t allow Vanya to feel left out
and isolated again. This time, Allison would make sure that her sister was included in the family and
she would fight tooth and nail before she allowed Vanya to be locked up again. Well, here it goes, she thought.

“With Vanya’s powers,” she said softly.

And pandemonium broke out.

* * *

It took almost another hour or so to explain about Vanya’s powers and the whole sorry story of how they had led to the apocalypse to all the others. There were many questions (as was to be expected) and many tangential comments and heated arguments (also to be expected from her siblings), but Allison answered as much as she could as honestly as possible. However, she noticed that Vanya was very quiet and subdued throughout the whole affair. Allison allowed that some of it might be from shock at the news that so much of her life had been a lie, but she was still very concerned for her sister. Unfortunately it was hard for Allison to coax Vanya out of her shell when their brothers were all right there clamoring for attention. Allison resolved to privately speak to Vanya away from the others. Besides, Allison had omitted one crucial fact from the story. She felt that it was something that Vanya needed to know before anyone else.

By the time everyone was satisfied (as far as that was possible) with her explanations, they had to dash off to get ready for Sir Reginald’s memorial ceremony. As they were all putting on jackets and grabbing umbrellas, Allison hurriedly told Pogo about Five’s return so that he wouldn’t be shocked (or at least, not as shocked) when Five turned up after being gone for seventeen years. She left out her own travels through time, figuring that explaining that craziness would take too long at the moment.

And so, once more, they all trudged out into the driving rain to hold a ceremony for a man none of them (with the possible exception of Luther) had really liked. Once again, Diego and Luther refused umbrellas preferring to prove their manliness by getting soaked.

“Did something happen?” Mom asked looking a bit disoriented.

“Dad died, Remember?” Allison said, remembering herself how strange Grace had been acting in the days leading up to her death. She had never really gotten an answer to why that was happening. Maybe her hardware really was degrading, as Luther had suggested. But that couldn’t be right. After Mom had revived, she had expertly treated Five’s shrapnel wound (and probably Allison’s own injury, she realized). Allison made a mental note to figure out what was going on with her later.

“Oh. Yes, of course.” Mom replied, but Allison could see that she was still confused.

“Is she okay?” Vanya asked.

“Yeah, yeah she’s fine,” Diego replied. He looked at Grace with affection, “She just needs to rest. You know, recharge.”

Pogo made his way to the circle. “Whenever you’re ready, dear boy,” he said looking to Luther who held the urn of their father’s ashes.

Luther turned the urn over and the ashes fell straight down into a sad little pile on the wet earth. “Probably would have been better with some wind,” he said stiffly.

“Does anyone wish to speak?” Pogo asked. The silence that met his question spoke for itself. Eventually, Pogo cleared his throat, “Very well,” he said. “In all regards, Sir Reginald Hargreeves made me what I am today. For that alone I shall be forever in his debt. He was my master… and my
friend, and I shall miss him very much. He leaves behind a complicated legacy--"

Just like last time, Diego snapped. “He was a monster. He was a bad person and a worse father. The world’s better off without him.”

Klaus let out a high-pitched chuckle. Allison couldn’t blame Diego for his outburst. It was all true after all. Reginald had only sown misery and distrust in his wake. His actions had helped cause the very apocalypse he had spent so much time trying to prevent.

“Diego, that’s enough,” Luther growled.

“My name is Number Two,” he replied. “You know why? Because our father couldn’t be bothered to give us actual names. He had Mom do it.”

At the sound of her name, Grace perked up, “Does anyone want something to eat?”

“No, it’s okay, Mom,” Vanya said.

“Oh, okay,” she said sounding a bit disappointed.

Diego was still going, he stepped into the middle of the circle to address them all. “Look, you want to pay respects? Go ahead. But at least be honest about the kind of man he was.”

“You should stop talking now,” Luther said in a dangerously low voice.

“You know, you of all people should be on my side here, Number One,” Diego said turning to face him.

“I am warning you.”

“You were always talking about how we needed to stick together and be a team. Dad made all of our lives so miserable that we got out of here as soon as we could. He locked our sister up and took away her powers. He shipped you a million miles away. That’s how much he cared about you!” This last comment was punctuated by a sharp jab at Luther’s chest.

Luther swung a fist and Diego who dodged, and the two of them began to dance around each other, trading blows.

Allison knew what was coming next. “Stop it now, both of you!” Allison yelled. Luther and Diego broke off and stared at her. “The world is going to end and here you are bickering like children. It’s stupid, selfish behavior like this that led to the apocalypse the first time! We need to be a family and actually work together for once, not be a bunch of emotionally-stunted man-children!”

Surprisingly, this seemed to work. Both Diego and Luther backed away from each other, looking at the ground sheepishly. “Sorry, Allison,” she heard Luther mutter.

“Thank you, Miss Allison,” Pogo said looking at her curiously.

The ceremony was rather awkward and rushed after that. When it was over, everyone dispersed back into the house, but Allison lingered outside. She stared at Ben’s statue, still upright. It was a small thing, but it was proof that things could be changed.

“You know,” Five’s voice came from behind, “when you first arrived and said that you’d been the only one to come back with memories of the apocalypse, I thought that it was an awful choice on my alternate’s part.”
“Thanks,” Allison said sarcastically, turning back to face her oldest brother.

“I mean, what I remember about you from when we were children is… not particularly flattering. You were always obsessed with your looks, or some new celebrity gossip, or some other silly nonsense. That version of you certainly wouldn’t be up to the task. But you’ve changed. Grown up, I guess. Now I think that you being the one to come back might be the luckiest break we’ve gotten. Who knows, Allison, you might just be able to whip this family into shape.”

* * *

After the ceremony everyone went their own separate ways, Allison tracked down Vanya in the entranceway. Allison wasn’t intending to eavesdrop on the conversation, but what she heard caught her attention and she couldn’t help herself.

“Did you know?” Vanya asked softly.

Pogo sighed deeply. “Yes, Miss Vanya. I knew.”

Allison recalled the last time she had seen Vanya and Pogo together. Just thinking about it made her shudder. Even if she lived a hundred years in a hundred different timelines, Allison didn’t think she would ever get the image of Pogo, her friend and confidant when she was a child, impaled on the wall, his lifeblood staining his chest. Allison told herself that this time it wouldn’t end the same way. Vanya didn’t know how to use her powers yet, and she was still under her medication. But still, Allison was uneasy.

“Why? Why would you do this to me?” Vanya’s voice was quiet, but Allison could hear the emotion in it.

“Your father discovered that you were capable of great things. Much like your brothers and sister. But your powers were… too great. He only wanted to protect you from yourself. As well as your siblings. He thought that it would be better for you, better for everyone, if your powers were suppressed.”

“And you agreed with him?”

Another sigh. “I tried every possible argument to convince him otherwise, but he was certain that this was the only way.”

“Did you ever regret it?”

“Yes, Miss Vanya. Every day. It is my greatest shame and the deepest regret of my life,” Pogo said.

“But not enough to tell me,” came Vanya’s response and Allison heard the bitterness in every syllable. “You made me isolated for my entire life. I was excluded and left out. You and Dad did that to me. You ruined my life.”

“Your father commanded me. I had no choice,” was Pogo’s quiet response.

“There’s always a choice.”

Pogo sighed deeply once more, and Allison heard the sound of his cane slowly tapping its way away and further into the house.

Eventually, Allison emerged from the doorway she had been hiding behind. She saw her sister with her back to her, standing stock still and staring blankly into space.
“Hey Vanya, are you feeling okay?” Allison asked, gently touching her shoulder.

Vanya turned around, and Allison could see that her face was even paler than normal. “Yeah,” Vanya said shakily. “Yeah, it’s just… it’s a lot to take in at once.” She offered Allison a weak smile.

Allison understood. Vanya’s whole world had just been shaken to its foundations. Everything she thought she knew about herself had turned out to be a lie. Allison knew how Vanya must feel because it had been how she felt when Patrick had filed for divorce and taken Claire with him. Her whole image of herself as the perfect sibling with the perfect life had been shattered. The illusion on which she had built her entire life had vanished and she had been forced to rebuild her life with the knowledge of the ugly truth. It was hard work, but Allison had made it a point to not hide from it. She would face up to the truth and not take the easy way out any more.

“I’m sorry Vanya, maybe I shouldn’t have told you all at once, but I didn’t want to keep it from you any longer,” Allison said. “I do want to be here for you, though. If you need anything, just let me know and I’ll be there.”

Vanya let out a shaky laugh of disbelief. “You only care about me now that I have powers. If you didn’t know, you wouldn’t bother spending any time with me. Just like you always did,” she said bitterly.

“That’s not true. I want to be a good sister to you. I know I haven’t always been the best at it in the past–”

“Hadn’t noticed,” Vanya said under her breath. With a pang, Allison remembered Vanya saying something similar last time.

“Ouch,” Allison said, “Tell me how you really feel.”

“Maybe I will,” Vanya said with a small smile.

“But I do want to be your sister,” Allison said, encouraged, “I want to be your friend, and get to know you-- the real you, not the one who’s drugged out of her mind all the time.”

At that, Vanya grimaced. “I keep wanting to take one of my pills to calm my nerves, even now that I know what they do. That’s weird, isn't it?”

“Yeah, I guess so,” Allison responded, “but you’ve been taking them almost your whole life, you’re bound to still be a little dependent on them.”

“Yeah, I guess” Vanya said, and an awkward silence filled the room.

Allison steeled herself. She had come to say something to Vanya and now was the time. “Listen, Vanya, there’s one thing I didn’t want to mention in front of the others. I thought you should be the first to know. And once I tell you, you might hate me, but I just want you to remember that I’m your sister and I love you.”

“You’re starting to scare me,” Vanya said, her forehead creased.

Allison took a deep breath. The last time she had told Vanya about this, Vanya had cut her throat. Allison told herself that that wouldn’t happen again. Vanya would understand her this time. She hadn’t spent days feeling ostracized and hated by her family, and she wasn’t also being told that her boyfriend was a serial killer. And Harold Jenkins hadn’t gotten his claws into her yet.

“When Dad first put you on your pills to take away your powers, he did something else at the same
time. He brought me down to the place where he was keeping you. And he had me do something that I never understood, not until the first time I saw you using your powers. He made me use my power on you, to make you think you were ordinary. He made me an accomplice in his plot.”

Allison glanced at Vanya who was staring at her in mute horror. “I was four years old; I didn’t know to question it, and I never realized what it meant, and oh my God, I am so, so, sorry,” Allison finished in a rush.

Vanya smiled again, but there was no warmth in it. “Well, now I know why you didn’t want to say it to the others. You didn’t want them to know what you really are. You didn’t want them to think badly of you for being a pawn in Daddy’s little schemes.” And now her voice was tinged with rage. “That’s all you really care about, isn’t it? Your reputation and what people think of you -- that’s all you care about. That’s all you’ve ever cared about.”

A horn honked from the street. “That’s my ride,” Vanya said coldly and turned to leave the house.

“Wait Vanya!” Allison cried, and grabbed her sister by the arm. Vanya whirled around, eyes flashing fury. For a second, Allison thought she saw the woman who had cut her throat and destroyed the Academy.

“Let go of me,” Vanya said slowly and deliberately.

Allison complied, but continued to look her sister in the eyes. “I know you’re upset right now, and I know that you probably hate me. But I do care about you. When you’re ready, give me a call. I’ll wait. I love you.”

Vanya didn’t say anything, just turned around and marched out the door of the Academy.

Well, Allison thought, that could have gone worse.
March 24, Timeline 2.04

Chapter Summary

In which Klaus wrestles with the ghosts of his past and is really high.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all again for all your kudos and comments, you don't know how happy it makes me to see such interest in my crazy, convoluted plot.

A lot of lines are from the show which continues to not be owned by me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Klaus was once again sitting on the kitchen table while Five casually moved about the kitchen preparing a sandwich for himself as if this was a totally ordinary occurrence. It was a rather surreal experience, if Klaus was being honest, seeing a scene from play out beat for beat exactly the same as his memory. Maybe it had all been a hallucination; Klaus was pretty high, after all. Maybe this was some kind of weird déjà vu? Was that something drugs could do? Or maybe this was the hallucination and he was really still back in the theatre about to be crushed by a giant moon rock while his mind constructed an elaborate fantasy.

While Klaus tried to figure out the nature of his reality, Five was busy with his sandwich and deflecting all of his siblings’ questions.

“So, are we going to talk about what just happened?” Luther asked. When Five didn’t answer, he stood up confrontationally. “It’s been seventeen years.” Luther said looming over Five.

Five scoffed. “It’s been a lot longer than that,” he said and jumped around Luther to grab some marshmallows.

“I haven’t missed that,” Luther muttered.

“Where’d you go?” called Diego, not even bothering to look at Five.

“The future. It’s shit by the way,” Five said jumping back. He sighed and went to grab the peanut butter. “I should’ve listened to the old man. You know, jumping through space is one thing, jumping through time is a toss of the dice.”

Five looked up at Klaus. “As you’d know, Klaus. Nice dress, by the way,” he said.

“Oh, danke,” Klaus said twirling the tassel, until what Five had said caught up with him. “Wait, what?”

“You’ve time traveled,” Five said as if this were the most obvious thing in the world. “You’ve got all the symptoms: jet lag, full-body itch, the feeling like you’ve had a box of cotton shoved up your nose into your brain. And besides, you were spouting some nonsense earlier that only makes sense if
“Klaus is just high, he says crazy stuff all the time,” Luther said. “Don’t pay any attention to him.”

“No, no, he’s right,” Klaus said slowly. And boy, were the drugs not making this whole conversation any easier; the world was swimming in and out of focus and his thoughts seemed to be bouncing all over the place. Whatever cocktail of drugs he was on did not mix well with the time-travel side-effects at all. “Well, I am high, but also, I did come back from the future. This is a week in the past for me. Well, actually it’s about ten months, but that’s a whole different story.”

“Is there a way to shut up that part of your brain that always screams out to be the center of attention?” Luther snapped.

“Oh grow up, Luther,” Five said dismissively, but the effect was somewhat ruined by the fact that he was currently inhabiting a thirteen year old’s body. “He knows about the future, how do you explain that?”

“How do you know? He’s probably just stoned out of his mind.”

“What part of ‘I’m from the future’ do you not understand?” Five shot back.

“Wait, hold up,” Vanya said. “If you’re from the future, how did you get back?”

“In the end I had to project my consciousness forward into a quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time.” Five said as if anyone would follow that gibberish. Klaus didn’t even bother trying to figure out what any of it was supposed to mean, all he knew was that he wanted to project the contents of his stomach forward onto the floor.

“That makes no sense,” Diego said, echoing everybody’s thoughts.

“Well, it would if you were smarter,” Five said. “Anyway, let’s talk about what’s actually important,” he said turning back to Klaus. “What do you remember about the apocalypse?”

Klaus squirmed in his seat on the table. “Oh, you know, the usual stuff: moon exploding, fighting an army of guys in bug masks, meeting God -- she’s a real bitch, by the way,” Klaus said, still battling the headache that pounded like a chainsaw in his brain. “The music was fantastic though, if you ignore the fact that it was ending the world. Oh and Ben was there and you all saw him!” He gave a small wave to Ben, who had been standing by the counter silently observing all the madness that was playing out. Ben just rolled his eyes at Klaus.

Luther scoffed “He’s clearly just delusional, don’t bother with him.”

“Or maybe I’m just as sane as you are, Luther dearest,” Klaus said, blowing him a kiss.

“Not now, Klaus. This is serious,” Luther dismissed him.

“Hey, that’s not fair, I can be serious,” Klaus protested.

But Five and Luther were getting into it now. “Listen to me, idiot, the very fate of the world is at stake! We need that information and we need to do whatever it takes to stop the apocalypse!” Five said, a dangerous steel in his voice.

“You can’t just go gallivanting off to who knows where for however many years and just turn up back here and expect us to just go along with whatever insanity you’ve concocted!” Luther shouted.
“You don’t know the things I’ve seen -- the things I’ve done -- just to get back here and save your sorry skins,” Five hissed. “And if you think I’m just going to let your stupid, short-sighted, ignorance get in the way of what I need to do, you’re even dumber than you look.”

“Um, guys, maybe we should --” Diego started.

“Shut up, Diego!” both Luther and Five snapped then glared at each other.

Klaus just wanted to disappear -- it was so unfair that only Five had the ability to teleport. From the looks of things the others felt the same. Allison opened her mouth to speak up, but clearly decided that she didn’t want to get into the middle of this fight.

“I don’t think following the ramblings of a drugged-out wacko is going to get you very far,” Luther said towering over Five.

“Well, having my addict brother be the one to come back wasn’t my first choice, but I’m going to take any chance I’ve got to stop this!”

“Would you all please shut up,” Klaus moaned, “everything’s too bright.”

“You’re useless. You’re all useless,” Five said with disgust, and strode out of the room.

* * *

The memorial ceremony was just as cold and miserable as Klaus remembered. Once again they all trudged out into the rain under umbrellas. Once again Diego interrupted Pogo’s speech and once again he and Luther got into a fight that toppled Ben’s statue. (“I never liked it anyway,” Ben said, just like before.) And once again Klaus was left alone in the courtyard after everyone else had gone inside.

“Well, Ben,” Klaus said chewing on his cigarette, "we're in a real pickle here aren't we?"

"It would help if I knew what was going on," Ben replied. "Or are you going to pull that same shit with me that you did with Five and the others?"

"What do you mean?" Klaus asked feigning ignorance.

"I mean that you know more than you let on to Five, but for some reason you don't want to talk about it with them."

"Fine, yeah, you're right. It's just… a lot's happened for me over the last week and I just don't want to have to talk about it right now."

“Do you want to talk with me?” Ben asked.

Klaus looked at Ben. Ben who had never given up on Klaus, never abandoned him, despite all of Klaus’ bullshit. Ben who had always served as Klaus’ conscience and angel on his shoulder.

“Yeah,” Klaus breathed.

“Come on, let's go inside, then,” Ben said, “you must be freezing.”

“Nah I'm good,” Klaus responded. “I need the cold, gets my blood flowing and my heart pumping.”

“And you want to avoid the others,” Ben remarked knowingly.

“That too.”
Ben sighed and sat down on the bench next to Klaus. He looked like he wanted to put his arm around Klaus, but he held himself back knowing what would happen if he tried. Klaus was thankful for that. He knew that his brother was dead, but he didn't like experiencing the proof of it whenever Ben's incorporeal body passed through his own.

“You know, last time, I was able to make you solid. Well, not all the time, but sometimes. I could try it again. Would you like that?”

“I guess, what would it take?”

“I’d need to get sober again,” Klaus said.

“Okay. Don’t worry about it. Tell me what you can,” Ben said comfortingly.

Klaus thought about all the things that had happened over the last week/ten months of his life. It had certainly been an exciting time, that was for sure. What with fighting in ‘Nam, dying and meeting God, and having the literal apocalypse descend upon him, there was no shortage of things of things to tell Ben about.

Klaus thought about Vanya. Some time in the next week, she was going to learn about her powers and then get locked in a cell in the basement for them. Klaus didn’t know how or why it happened, but he would do anything to prevent it. He shuddered, seeing her there had dredged up too many memories of the mausoleum for him. Unfortunately, since nobody ever told him anything, he had no idea how she had developed powers or how to make sure that the others didn’t see her as a threat. And his baby sister had looked so meek and scared that he didn’t have the heart to tell everyone that she had ended the world.

And Klaus thought about Dave. Dave, who he’d met in the midst of the closest thing to hell on earth. Klaus had never believed in the sort of love that poets and singers wrote about. But that was before Dave. With Dave, Klaus had felt that undying love for another person that he’d only heard about before. With Dave, Klaus had felt as if a hole in his life that had always been there was finally filled. And then Dave had been killed. Klaus remembered the scene vividly. If he lived for a thousand years, he would never forget it. It would haunt him for the rest of his days. He would always live with the desperate cries for a medic, the sound of gunfire and helicopter blades, and the feeling of Dave’s lifeless body cradled in his arms, just at the edges of his consciousness.

“I met someone. The only person I’ve ever truly loved more than myself. And I lost him,” Klaus said with a sigh. “I tried so hard to see him again. I got sober for him. But -- nothing. All I got was a visit from Daddy dearest, over there.” Klaus gestured to the pile of ashes.

“Do you still want to see this guy again?” Ben asked quietly.

“Yes. Yes, I do,” Klaus decided.

* * *
Vanya got back to her apartment late that night. After leaving the Academy she had felt too worked up to go home immediately. Just being around her siblings again dredged up all the unpleasant memories from her childhood that she’d tried so hard to move past. Of course it hadn’t helped that she’d written that book and made everybody upset and angry with her, but so what? She’d had every right to publish what she’d gone through; the world deserved to know what their precious Umbrella Academy had truly been.

So instead of heading back to the apartment, Vanya had gone and taken a walk. She had picked up some groceries, dropped off some checks at the bank, and done some paperwork at her music school. Doing chores had always helped clear her head and calm her down. The mundanity of the tasks soothed her and somehow made her feel more at ease and in control of herself. It also helped that she couldn’t think about her siblings and their drama while her mind was occupied with the tasks at hand.

When Vanya finally returned to her apartment, it was late at night. She made her way to her door down the dark and deserted hallway, thinking about nothing in particular. So it was a surprise to say the least when the light in her apartment turned on before her hand had even reached the light switch.

“Jesus,” she said, her heart still racing, when she saw Five sitting in her apartment.

“You should have locks on your windows,” Five said as if this were a perfectly normal situation.

“I live on the second floor,” Vanya said tossing her keys aside.

“Rapists can climb,” Five responded.

“You are so weird,” Vanya muttered and closed the door.

She sat down on the couch across from Five. To be honest, it was still surreal to see her brother sitting in front of her, looking exactly the same as he had when he’d vanished seventeen years ago. As a child Vanya had spent years hoping and believing that one day he’d come back and everything would go back to the way it had been. As she’d grown up though Vanya had given her fantasy and stopped waiting for Five to come home. But she would still occasionally have dreams where he would show up and act like nothing had ever happened.

Vanya looked closer at her brother, “Is that blood?” she asked, noticing the red stains around his collar and sleeve.

“It’s nothing,” Five replied. And wasn’t that just like him. Even as a child, Five had been reluctant to admit pain or weakness, preferring to be play the protector role and never the one in need of protection. But Vanya had always seen through Five’s stoic facade. It pained Vanya to see that however old Five was now that he’d clearly never felt at ease enough to open up his vulnerabilities to others.

“Why are you here?” she asked, knowing that Five wouldn’t respond well to be pressed on the subject of his injury.

Five sighed. “I’ve decided you’re the only one I can trust.”

“Why me?”

“Because you’re ordinary,” and Vanya flinched a little. That’s all she was, wasn’t she? Even Five, her favorite brother growing up, didn’t see her as anything but ordinary. Five seemed to realize that he’d said something wrong and he amended his statement. “Because you’ll listen,” he said simply.
“What about Klaus?” Vanya asked remembering both his and Five’s assertion that the end of the world was nigh.

“Klaus… has his own issues. I don’t think he’s going to be that much help to be honest,” Five said, with a tired sigh. “I said too much when I first got back. I think it scared him for some reason. When I thought that I might actually get some new information to go on, I got excited, but I think I may have come on too strong. That or he’s just being unhelpful and obtuse as a joke, which I wouldn’t put past Klaus,” he muttered.

Vanya saw that Five was nervous. He needed someone to talk to and get whatever he was dealing with off his chest. “Okay. I’ll help. Wait here.” And she got up to get the first aid kit.

As she was dressing Five’s wound (she didn’t even want to know how he’d gotten such a deep gash on his arm), Five looked at her intently. “When I jumped forward and got stuck in the future, do you know what I found?” he asked.

“No.” Vanya said, even though she suspected an answer wasn’t necessary.

“Nothing,” Five said, his voice toneless and empty. “Absolutely nothing. As far as I could tell, I was the last person alive. I never figured out what killed the human race, but I did find something else. The date it happens. The world ends in eight days, and I have no idea how to stop it.”

“I’ll put on a pot of coffee,” Vanya said, suspecting this would be a long night.

As she was preparing and serving the coffee, Five regaled her with various horror stories about life in the apocalypse. She learned about how Five had scrounged for food in the ruins of civilization, how debilitating the dust storms could be and how he’d figured out how to avoid them, and, most disturbingly to her, how Five had learned to self-treat the various injuries and health problems that arose in a world with no antibiotics or doctors.

“How long were you there?” Vanya asked Five, after he had drunk his second cup of coffee.

“Forty-five years, give or take.” And wasn’t that depressing, Five hadn’t even bothered to keep track of the years he had spent in that hellhole.

“So… you’re saying you’re fifty-eight?” Vanya said, trying to wrap her head around the fact that Five was older than her, even if he looked exactly as he had at thirteen.

“No, my consciousness is fifty-eight. My body is apparently thirteen again,” Five said as if that didn’t raise way more questions than it answered.

“How does that even work?”

“Delores kept saying the equations were off,” he said with a soft chuckle, “bet she’s laughing now.”

“Delores?” Hadn’t Five said he was the last person left alive?

“You got anything stronger?” Five asked, holding up his coffee cup.

As Vanya poured some whiskey into a glass for Five, part of her wondered whether she should be giving alcohol to her brother at all, given that he did have the body of a thirteen year old (regardless of how old he was mentally). But she didn’t think Five would react too well to being told he couldn’t drink. Shrugging mentally, Vanya handed the glass to him. After all, if Five was right, they only had a week left anyway.
Five accepted the glass and took a swallow. “You think I’m crazy,” he said, a disbelieving smile on his face.

“No, it’s just…” Vanya stammered, trying to find the words, “it’s a lot to take in.”

“Exactly what don’t you understand?” he said in a patronizing tone.

“Why didn’t you just time travel back?” Vanya asked the question that had been puzzling her the most throughout Five’s whole tale.

“Gee, wish I’d thought of that,” Five said sarcastically. “Time travel is a crapshoot. I went into the ice and never acorn-ed. You think I didn’t try everything to get back to my family?” There was an anger in his voice, and Vanya knew for certain that, whatever else his faults might be, Five was committed to protecting his family. He would never voluntarily abandon them.

It was certainly possible that Five had suffered some sort of mental break with reality. After all, Dad had always said that time travel could mess with your mind. But even if Five had lost his mind, that didn’t explain Klaus’ weird behavior today (which was saying something since Klaus was always weird). Both of them could have had their minds snapped in some sort of time travel mishap, but both of them had been talking about an apocalypse which meant… well, it seemed like, somehow, some way, the end of the world really was coming.

“Okay, yeah, I’ll help. I mean I don’t really know what I can do, being ordinary and all, but I’ll do what I can.”

Five seemed to deflate in relief. “You actually believe me?” he asked, sounding hopeful for the first time since he’d returned.

“You say the apocalypse is coming, and I’ll believe you. You wouldn’t make up something like this,” Vanya said as soothingly as she could. “But you know what, it’s getting late. I have lessons early, and I need to sleep, and I’m sure you do too. Here,” she said pulling a blanket onto the couch, “we’ll talk in the morning and figure out what we’re going to do. Okay? I promise.”

Five nodded. “Alright, we’ll get started tomorrow morning,” he said.

“Good night, Five” Vanya said, hoping (and not really believing) that he’d actually take her advice and get some rest.

“Night,” Five replied.

Vanya closed the door to her bedroom and drooped against it. It had been a long, and trying day for her. Her mind was abuzz with way too many thoughts, she needed to quiet it all down. She went to her bedside desk drawer and fished out her pills. If ever she needed to avoid panicking, it was now. Vanya dropped one of the pills into her hand. She placed it into her mouth and swallowed.

Chapter End Notes

Surprise! We can have PoVs from characters who are not recent arrivals in the timeline!

Why? because I'm writing this, so I get to make the rules. Also, writing Klaus is hard for me (I just can't seem to properly get into his head) and he wasn't doing too much today anyway, so we get to see some of the ripples that are being formed in this timeline.
March 24, Timeline 2.05

Chapter Summary

In which Five tries once again to stop the apocalypse.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the little delay in updating, I was out of town and didn't have a lot of time to write. Once again, I would like to say thank you to everyone who has given feedback, whether it's kudos or leaving a comment. They really help me stay motivated to keep writing this behemoth.

The lines of dialogue you recognize are from the show and are not mine.

“What’s the date? The exact date?” Five asked once again pulling out the ingredients for his sandwich.

“The twenty-fourth,” Vanya replied as she had before.

“Of what?” Five prompted.

“March.”

“Good,” Five said. He had arrived at the same time as he had before, which meant… well, he didn’t know what it meant, but he’d figure it out.

“So, are we going to talk about what happened?” Luther asked. Five ignored him, preferring to concentrate on making his sandwich and deciding on his proper course of action.

Luther stood up. “It’s been seventeen years,” he said moving into Five’s path.

Well for me, it’s been about five minutes, Five thought. “It’s been a lot longer than that,” he said and jumped behind Luther to get the marshmallows. For the moment, Five felt that it was best to let the conversation play out as it had last time at least until he could get a better handle on things and decide how he was going to approach this new timeline.

“I haven’t missed that,” Luther muttered.

“Where’d you go?” called Diego.

“The future. It’s shit by the way,” Five said jumping back to where the sandwich was being prepared.

“Called it!” Klaus said.

Five sighed and went to grab the peanut butter. “I should’ve listened to the old man. You know,
jumping through space is one thing, jumping through time is a toss of the dice.” You should have known something like this would happen, Five reprimanded himself, You knew that you didn’t understand jumping through time and yet you went ahead and did it anyway.

“Nice dress,” Five said to Klaus, trying to keep the conversation moving and not give away his internal distress.

“Oh, well, danke,” Klaus said twirling the tassel of the dress.

“Wait, how did you get back?” Vanya asked.

“In the end, I had to project my consciousness forward into a quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time.” Five didn’t really expect any of them to get it, it required a solid background in quantum field theory and temporal physics to even begin to grasp the intricacies involved in his ability to time travel.

“That makes no sense,” Diego said.

“Well, it would if you were smarter,” Five said dismissively. Honestly, it’s not like they could expect him to explain something so complicated as time travel to them. Even if he tried for years, Five doubted that they’d ever properly understand it. Hell, Five had been trying to figure it out for decades, and he still barely understood it (not that he’d ever tell them that).

“How long were you there?” Luther asked holding Diego back from jumping at Five.

“Forty-five years. Give or take.”

“So what are you saying? That you’re fifty-eight?” Luther said sitting down again, looking stunned.

“No, my consciousness is fifty-eight. Apparently, my body is now thirteen again,” Five finished his sandwich and took a bite. That hit the spot. Time travel took a lot out of him, and growing up, Five had learned that a peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich was the quickest way to get back the calories he burned jumping through space. It was one of the many things that Five had missed living in the apocalypse.

“Wait, how does that even work?” Vanya asked sounding puzzled.

“Delores kept saying the equations were off,” Five took another bite and chewed slowly. “Bet she’s laughing now.”

“Delores?” Vanya asked.

Five thought of the last time he’d seen Delores. He’d let her go back home to where he’d found her. Back when he’d foolishly thought that the apocalypse was averted. In his mind’s eye, Five could still see Delores smiling fondly at him when he’d left her with her friends. They had always been an unusual couple, but they had been together through so much, through the occasional thick and more often thin of their lives. Delores had always been there for him when he needed her most, she’d been a shoulder to cry on, a sounding board for his crazy ideas, and most importantly, a friend in a world empty of all other life.

He considered going back to the department store to get her again, but rejected the idea. They had parted amicably, both agreeing that it was for the best, that Five needed to put aside his fixation on stopping the apocalypse and live life with his family. (What fools they had both been.) To go back to her now would be admitting his failure. Five knew that Delores would welcome him back, but they’d both know that what it meant. Besides, Five didn’t have the heart to take Delores away from
her home so soon after she’d returned. No, he’d have to do this alone.

Five needed a distraction. He wasn’t up to talking about Delores with the others right now. His gaze settled on the newspaper lying on the table. *City Says Goodbye to Reginald Hargreeves* the headline read. Perfect. “Guess I missed the funeral,” Five said.

“How’d you know about that?” Luther asked defensively.

“What part of the future do you not understand?” Five said sarcastically. “Heart failure, huh?” Or *suicide*, he thought, not that it made much of a difference. The old bastard was dead either way and they had to mend what he’d broken and avert the apocalypse.

“Yeah,” Diego said at the same time that Luther said “No.”

“Hmm,” he clicked his tongue. “Nice to see nothing’s changed.”

“That’s it? That’s all you have to say?” Allison called as he walked away.

“What else is there to say? The circle of life.”

“What about Ben? You said something about him remembering something? What was that about?” she asked.

Five stopped in his tracks. He had said something like that hadn’t he? Damn, he didn’t have time to get into that right now. And he suspected that talking about how their dead brother was still around as a ghost wasn’t going to help the credibility of his story. He turned around and put on his best smile. “Slip of the tongue. My bad. Don’t worry about it.” And he jumped away before they could ask any more questions.

* * *

In his room, Five opened his closet to see rows of Umbrella Academy uniforms staring back at him. It was slightly ridiculous that after all these years, he still had to wear his old uniform, but Five shrugged and bore it anyway. Clothes had never been a particularly high priority for him; growing up in the apocalypse with no other human company kind of diminished the importance of dressing to impress. After several decades living in the wasteland, Five had become accustomed to wearing whatever set of clothes was in moderately good repair and reasonably clean. The uniforms would do.

Changing out of his baggy suit, Five noticed something heavy in his pocket. Reaching a hand inside, his fingers found a smooth, familiar object. Pulling it out, Five stared once again at the glass eye that had and would belong to Harold Jenkins. Chuckling softly, Five placed it on the dresser and carried on.

As he got into his old uniform, Five tried to form a plan for dealing with the apocalypse this time. His last attempt had been a complete catastrophe; everything he had done had either been meaningless or else had actively hindered their efforts. And what had it all led to?

Once again, Five had abandoned his family to die in the apocalypse. He wondered what they had thought, seeing him vanish. Had they hated him in those final seconds before the flames had engulfed them? Or worse, had they accepted it as just another in a long series of disappointments and disappearances?

Well, regardless, Five could no longer save those versions of his family. But he would do his damn well best to save these versions of them. This time he had some foreknowledge of what would cause the apocalypse and could come up with an actual plan to save them. He had failed his family twice
now. He would not fail a third time.

So. A plan. Five started scribbling furiously on the walls sketching out the things that had gone wrong in the first attempt. First of all, the eye and MeriTech had been a dead end, and besides, he had eventually figured out who the eye had belonged to without MeriTech (even if that hadn’t done him any good). He could ignore that aspect of his quest this time.

Second, the Temps Commission. Five knew that eventually Hazel and Cha-Cha would be coming after him. He needed to find a way to neutralize that threat to him and his family. There was also the Handler and her machinations. Five had no idea what her plans were, or why the Commission was so committed to preserving the apocalypse. It seemed ridiculous to insist on the preservation of a timeline in which everyone died, especially for a reason as vapid as *Que sera, sera*. Five remembered the Handler’s cryptic comment when she’d first recruited him: *Not the end of everything, just the end of... something.* Well, regardless of all that, Five had to watch out for any tricks she might pull on him. He was still embarrassed about how easily he had fallen for her distraction last time. He resolved to be more vigilant about letting the Commission slip trackers onto him. Which reminded him, he probably still had a tracker in his arm at the moment. Five checked his right arm. Yep, smooth, unblemished skin. He’d have to deal with that and the Commission mooks who’d be coming after him.

Next, Vanya and Harold Jenkins. Before his ill-fated attempt to jump them all back to the past, Five had told Luther that Vanya was going to be the cause of the apocalypse in every timeline unless they took her with them. He hadn’t been entirely lying when he’d said that -- it was true that Vanya would cause the apocalypse every time without proper help and support from her family -- but it wasn’t strictly necessary to take that version of Vanya back with them. Technically, any version of Vanya was capable of starting the apocalypse and was likewise capable of being helped down from that ledge. No, Five had insisted they take Vanya with them because he had already lost all his family members once and he couldn’t bear to lose anyone again. Harold Jenkins was simply a fuse that set the bomb that was Vanya off. Even if they got rid of him, there was no guarantee that that would prevent the apocalypse. So as much as Five wanted to kill that asshole, it would have to wait. The priority was Vanya and keeping her stable and happy so that she wouldn’t destroy the world.

Finally, Five needed to figure out what had happened back in the theatre. He had been trying to transport all seven of his family members, but only he had come back. Five didn’t know why it hadn’t worked, but he wanted to rectify his mistake in case everything fell apart again and they needed to try again. Unfortunately, the equations were being unusually difficult when Five tried to work them out. Every approach he tried seemed to fall short, missing some important piece that Five couldn’t find. Well, that was a last resort anyway. Hopefully, he wouldn’t need it.

Standing back from his work, Five smiled. Hidden within the mess of scribbles, there was the beginnings of a plan to save the world.

* * *

Pogo greeted Five before Reginald’s memorial ceremony began. “Master Five, it is good to see you again,” the old chimp said leaning on his cane. “It has been… too long.”

“Good to see you too, Pogo,” Five replied with a small smile. He had never loved Pogo the way his siblings had growing up. To Five, Pogo’s kindliness and benevolence had all been a facade. From an early age, Five had learned that Pogo would only make excuses for their father, never stand up to him. He had just been an extension of their hated father, albeit a slightly nicer version. Still, Five had been starved of company in the apocalypse and even Pogo would have been a welcome presence in that wasteland.
“I would say that I hope that your journey has been a pleasant one, but I fear such a hope would be misplaced,” Pogo continued. “So I will instead hope that it has been instructive for you.”

“Yeah, you could say that,” Five said with a sardonic smile.

Pogo looked at Five intently. It appeared like he wanted to say something else, but he seemed to decide against it, he just gave Five a sad little smile and headed out to the courtyard.

The ceremony itself was just as pointless and miserable as it had been last time. Diego and Luther once more got into a stupid fight over nothing more than their bruised egos and damaged pride.

“Sorry about your statue, Ben,” Five said turning away from the fight and going back inside. Behind him, Luther and Diego danced and dodged in a useless display. Five heard the crash of the metal statue falling to the ground as Luther toppled it with a powerful blow.

“We don’t have time for this,” Five muttered casting a disgusted look back at his siblings’ antics.

* * *

Later that evening, Five was crouched in the shadows on a rooftop. A streetlight below him illuminated a small electronic device with a flashing green light. His eyes scanned the alleyway, waiting for any sign of movement. His arm still twinged with pain, but he ignored it.

Finally, a van pulled into the alley and six heavily armed men stepped out, looking around. One of them pulled a scanner out of his pocket and spun it around slowly until his gaze settled on the small gadget under the spotlight a few feet away.

“Damn, he’s ditched the tracker,” the Commission goon said to his companions. “He could be anywhere by now.”

“How do we find him now?” Another one asked.

“Maybe you should try looking up,” Five said casually. A hail of bullets flew through the air, but Five jumped away before they could reach him. He landed behind the leader who spun around to face him.

“Now, let’s not be hasty,” the man said, “we can talk about this like reasonable folks.”

“Don’t feel like talking,” Five said and he jumped behind the guy and snapped his neck. The sudden movement made the guys finger slip and his gun went off. From the cries of pain from several other men it seemed like the bullets had struck them.

Five jumped away again leaving the others to stare around wildly. He reappeared to stab the kitchen knife that he’d used to slice the tracker out of his arm into the jugular of another mook. He jumped away to let the guy bleed out. Another goon went down to a knife in the eye, leaving only two left. He shouted for their attention and ran between them. The idiots fired their guns and Five jumped away allowing the men to shoot each other.

He cast a critical gaze over the alley. One man was still crawling slowly away. Five bent down and snapped his neck. There. All dead.

The mooks had been laughably easy to deal with, just a few jumps and they went down. Amateurs. The Commission really needed to step up their game if they hoped to get him.
He had considered just abandoning the tracker and leaving the Commission goons a wild goose chase to try to find him, but ultimately Five had decided against it. He didn’t know what would happen if the men were left alive, and he wasn’t keen on them showing up again when he was least expecting it.

Five surveyed the scene he’d left in his wake: six dead bodies strewn across the alley in various states of disarray. It would certainly be an interesting job for the police to figure out what had happened here, Five thought as he jumped away.

* * *

Five headed to Vanya’s place after dealing with the Commission. It took several jumps to get close, and by the time he’d gotten to her building, he’d burned through all his reserves and could no longer bend space enough to jump through it. That was fine though, he knew from experience that Vanya’s apartment didn’t have locks on the windows, so he climbed up the side of the building and shimmied through her window.

Vanya wasn’t home at the moment, so Five made himself comfortable on one of her chairs and waited for her to return. Finally, Five heard the sound of Vanya’s key in the door and he turned the lamp next to him on just as she was walking in.

“Jesus,” Vanya said, putting a hand to her heart, when she saw Five sitting there.

“You should have locks on your windows,” Five remarked.

“I live on the second floor,” Vanya said tossing her keys aside.

“Rapists can climb,” Five responded.

“You are so weird,” she muttered and closed the door.

Vanya sat down on the couch across from Five. To be honest, it was still surreal for Five to see any of his siblings in the flesh. For so many years, Vanya had only been a memory of a shy little girl with bangs and an author’s photograph on the back of a book. To have her in front of him, able to speak back was… well, it was odd to say the least. Even having been back with his siblings for a week, in many ways they were still strangers to him. Sometimes when he glanced at them, he still saw their dead and ash-covered faces as they had been when he had first arrived in the apocalypse.

Vanya leaned in closer to him, “Is that blood?” she asked.

Five glanced down. There was a reddish stain around his collar and sleeve. Huh, he must have gotten some of the blood from his attackers on him when he dealt with them. No great matter. “It’s nothing,” Five replied.

“Why are you here?” Vanya asked.

Five sighed. Here we go again, he thought. Hopefully, this time the conversation would turn out better than last time (both for his sake and the world’s). “I’ve decided you’re the only one I can trust,” he said by way of opening.

“Why me?”

“Because you’ll listen,” At least I hope so, Five thought. “Because you’re important. Even if you don’t have powers, you’re crucial to stopping the apocalypse that’s coming. I don’t know exactly how yet, but I know that you need to be involved.”
Five saw that Vanya was processing the load of information that he’d just dumped on her. “Okay, wait here,” she said finally and got up.

She returned holding some rubbing alcohol and bandages. Five rolled up his sleeve to reveal the wound where he’d removed the tracker from his arm and the makeshift bandage he’d fastened around it.

As Vanya set about dressing his wound, Five studied her carefully. “When I jumped forward and got stuck in the future, do you know what I found?” he asked.

“No.” Vanya said quietly.

“Nothing,” Five said, remembering that horrible day. “Absolutely nothing. As far as I could tell, I was the last person alive.” In Five’s mind’s eye, he could still see the ruined and empty streets, small fires still burning here and there that had greeted him when he had arrived in the future. “I didn’t figure out what killed the human race, but I did find something else. The date it happens.” Five would never forget that newspaper and the date emblazoned across the top: March 31, 2019. “The world ends in eight days, and I need to figure out how to stop it.” he said simply.

“I’ll put on a pot of coffee,” Vanya said, a position which Five thoroughly supported. God, he needed some caffeine.

“I read your book, by the way,” Five said as he sipped the hot coffee in the mug that Vanya had given him. “Found it in a library that was still standing. I thought it was pretty good, all things considered.” Five didn’t mention that her book had been one of the few things that had kept him motivated to go on living in that desolate wasteland. Reading about his siblings and their lives after his disappearance had made him keep working to get back to them after all those years and to try and save them. Vanya’s book had also been one of the few things that Five had taken with him from the apocalypse when the Handler had finally come with her offer, and Five had kept it with him up until the moment he’d gone through time to arrive at the present. “Yeah, definitely ballsy, giving up the family secrets. Sure that went over well,” he said.

“They hate me,” Vanya said softly.

“Well, there are worse things that can happen.” Five said thinking of his lonely life. At least Vanya had family alive to hate her.

“You mean like what happened to Ben?” she asked.

“Was it bad?” Five responded. That was one of the aspects of the family that Vanya had written about in much detail, preferring to focus on the aftermath of that failed mission rather than what had happened on it.

Vanya nodded, but didn’t offer any more comment. It must have been pretty gruesome, if he had to guess, considering Ben’s powers. Five considered telling Vanya about Ben’s continued existence, but figured he’d dropped enough on her plate for the night. He could break that bombshell at a later date.

She asked about his life, so Five told her some of what he’d been through. “I survived on scraps. Canned food, cockroaches, anything I could find,” he let out a mirthless laugh. “You know that rumor that Twinkies have an endless shelf-life? Well, it’s total bullshit.”

“I can’t even imagine.” Vanya said sympathetically.
“You do whatever it takes to survive, or you die. So we adapted. Whatever the world threw at us, we found a way to overcome it.” Five heard the bitter edge in his voice, and why not? He’d had to grow up hard and fast in that environment, and the impression it had left was still with him and probably would be forever.

“We?”

Five still didn’t want to talk about Delores. At least not while this sober. “You got anything stronger?”

Five took the glass of whiskey Vanya offered him and took a swig. “You still think I’m crazy,” he said, seeing her skeptical face.

“No, it’s just…” Vanya was stammering, “it’s a lot to take in.”

“Exactly what don’t you understand?” he said, feeling irritated. He knew this wasn’t the best way to go about convincing her that what he said was true, but her disbelief was getting on his nerves. Was the concept of the apocalypse really so unbelievable that she’d doubt an actual time traveler?

“Why didn’t you just time travel back?” Vanya asked.

Five scoffed. “Gee, wish I’d thought of that,” he said sarcastically. “Time travel is a crapshoot. I went into the ice and never acorn-ed. You think I didn’t try everything to get back to my family?”

“If you grew old there, you know, in the apocalypse, how come you still look like a kid?”

“I told you already,” Five sighed walking over to the counter and pouring himself another drink. “I must have got the equations wrong.”

“I mean… Dad always used to say that… time travel could mess up your mind. Well, maybe that’s what’s happening?” Vanya said hesitantly.

Five felt the anger and annoyance rise in him. He had spent four and a half decades in that wasteland, and she had the nerve to claim that he’d merely gone crazy and imagined it all. She was too young, too naive to understand the gravity of this. But Five needed to try and make her understand. The fate of the world literally rested on it.

“Look, this isn’t my first time doing this,” Five said trying to keep his temper under control. “I’ve tried once already to stop the apocalypse and failed. I’ve seen the moon explode and rain death upon the planet.” He walked slowly over to her. “So when I say that I need your help to stop the apocalypse from coming, I’d strongly suggest you take me at my word.

Vanya looked rather taken aback. “Five… Five, I’m sorry it’s just… I haven’t seen you in a long time, and I don’t want to lose you again. That’s all,” she stammered. “And you know what, it’s getting late, and… I have lessons early, and I need to sleep, and I’m sure you do too. Here,” she said setting up a blanket on the couch, “we’ll talk in the morning again. Okay? I promise.”

Five accepted this half-apology and moved over to the couch.

“Night, Five” Vanya said and moved to get ready for bed herself.

“Night,” Five muttered as he watched her slip into her bedroom. Well, he thought as he sat down on Vanya’s couch, it was a start. Tomorrow he’d work on the rest of it.
March 24, Timeline 2.06

Chapter Summary

In which Ben tries to save the world and is ignored.

Chapter Notes

Hello, all. Sorry for the delay, I was visiting with family and didn't have a lot of time to write. I'll try to post more frequent updates in the future, but no promises.

Kudos and comments continue to make my day and the Umbrella Academy continues to not be owned by me.

Ben watched as Five once again prepared a sandwich for himself while the others bombarded him with questions. Once again he was forced to watch passively while Five delivered non-answers and generally annoyed the hell out of his siblings.

It was incredibly frustrating to have to be a mere observer when he had actual information and experience which could help the others. But no, Ben had to be a ghost and only be able to yell uselessly at people when they were making mistakes. At least he had Klaus who could actually hear him and talk back. Ben couldn’t imagine what his existence would have been like if he hadn’t had a brother who could talk to ghosts, it would probably drive him insane. Maybe, Ben reflected, that was why all the ghosts were always screaming at Klaus. Ben would never admit it to Klaus, but sometimes he was grateful that Klaus was high -- Ben didn’t enjoy the company of other ghosts any more than Klaus did.

Five was going on about how “he had to project his consciousness forward into a quantum state version of himself that exists across every possible instance of time.” A statement which made no sense to anyone with the possible exception of Five himself.

“Hey, Klaus,” Ben said, and Klaus turned to face what appeared to everyone else to be empty space. “Could you maybe ask Five what he knows about the apocalypse?” Maybe with Klaus as a spokesperson, Ben could nudge the family closer to figuring out how to save the world.

“Oh come on, I can’t just-- I mean--” Klaus spluttered. But Ben just fixed him with a glare.

“I won’t shut up about it until you ask him,” Ben said as threateningly as he could.

The others were looking at Klaus strangely. They were of course used to his occasional outbursts to no one, but this was unusual even for him. Klaus rarely interrupted a conversation like this. Ben and Klaus’ brief staring contest was broken off when Klaus finally gave in. “Alright, fine,” he snapped, “Five, do you know anything about an apocalypse?” he asked turning to Five. “Happy now?” Klaus muttered quietly for Ben’s benefit.

Five, for his part, looked taken aback by this sudden turn in the conversation. “How do you know
about that?” He asked, eyes narrow.

“Oh you know,” Klaus said breezily, “I hear stuff.” He threw a wink to Ben.

“That’s not an answer. How did you know?” Five said through gritted teeth.

Klaus now seemed to be enjoying himself now that he had something with which he could rile up his brother. “Now, now, I asked you first. What’s with this apocalypse?” he said. Klaus leaned forward from his perch on the kitchen table to smile at Five, his hands folded below his chin eagerly.

Five frowned at his brother. “Did you…? No. What’s going on here?”

“You look so cute when you furrow your brow up like that,” Klaus said, clearly relishing the havoc he was causing. Ben just rolled his eyes.

“Klaus, is there a way to shut up that part of your brain that always screams out to be the center of attention?” Luther snapped, clearly fed up with Klaus’ antics.

“What? I’m just trying to reconnect with my long-lost brother whom I haven’t seen in seventeen years,” Klaus said innocently, but the note of hurt in his voice was betrayed by a mischievous gleam in his eyes.

“This isn’t the time, Klaus,” Luther said warningly.

“Oh come on, I asked him a question. He knows something and he’s not telling us. I think this is the perfect time,” Klaus said with a slight whine.

“Not now, Klaus,” Luther growled.

“No, I want to know what Five’s hiding,” Diego said glaring at Luther. "You're always running all over everyone, being the oh-so-important Number One."

Klaus let out a chuckle and held up a high five for Diego. Diego ignored him.

"Diego, don't do this here," Allison said wearily.

"Oh, surprise, surprise," Diego said bitterly. "One and Three are teaming up."

"Look guys, maybe --" Vanya started nervously.

"You stay out of this, it doesn't concern you." Diego snapped and Vanya shut up, seeming to curl into herself. She didn’t say anything else but Ben saw the betrayal and hurt in her eyes.

"Really, Diego?” Allison asked indignantly.

"After what she pulled?” Diego said harshly.

Ben could only watch helplessly as the family meeting descended into chaos. All around him, his siblings were arguing about petty nonsense, their bickering voices overlapping with one another.

“Nice to see nothing’s changed,” Five said sarcastically and jumped away before anyone could stop him.

“Nice going, Klaus,” Luther said accusingly.

“What! Come on!?” Klaus sounded genuinely shocked and surprised. “You’re blaming me? What
about Five clearly hiding stuff?” Klaus pointed to the spot that Five had recently vacated.

“Really inspiring leadership there,” Diego said caustically and walked out of the kitchen.

Allison sighed in exasperation and followed Diego out.

Ben ground his teeth in frustration. (Or what counted as teeth for a ghost). As much as he cared for his family, they could be a real pain in the ass sometimes. Was it too much to ask that they be able to have a conversation that didn't immediately descend into hostility and mutual recriminations? Apparently it was. He sighed and went to go clear his head. He was certainly going to need it if he was going to be dealing with this family.

* * *

After calming down a bit, Ben sought out Klaus. It wasn’t hard to find him, Ben always seemed to have a sense of where his brother was. He didn’t understand exactly how it worked; all he knew was that the further he went from Klaus the more distant and fuzzy the world felt. Ben had never tried to test the limit, but he suspected that if he wandered far enough away he would just disappear entirely. As a result, Ben had spent a lot of time since his death hanging around Klaus and had gotten to know the person his brother had become very well, for better or worse.

He found Klaus draped over the couch staring at the ceiling with a beatific grin spread over his face. He glanced up when he saw Ben. “You know, every time I close my eyes I see a diarrhetic hippo about to shit on my face,” he said by way of greeting.

Ben rolled his eyes. While his brother could be annoying sometimes (well, almost all the time, really), Klaus was still his brother and you couldn’t be forced together for years with someone and not grow to care and appreciate them.

“Look I’m sorry about what I said before, back in the courtyard,” Ben apologized. “You’re not useless. I know that, and it was out of line for me to say that.”

“Well, everyone else thinks I’m a worthless junkie. It’s not all that surprising that you think the same,” Klaus said still staring at the ceiling.

“I don’t think you’re worthless,” Ben said sitting down on the couch across from Klaus. Well, it wasn’t so much sitting as it was making a sitting motion over the couch. The cushions retained their shape and didn’t give under his weight. Ben was used to it; it had been years since he’d properly sat on anything.

“You said it yourself, I’m useless in a fight. They always used me as a lookout, and I wasn’t even good at that. I’m of no use to anyone,” Klaus said somberly.

“But Ben knew that however much Klaus pretended otherwise, that statement wasn’t true. Klaus did care about things. He cared for Ben, for one, even if it was in his own Klaus way.
There was certainly a marked difference between this Klaus and the one that Ben had met in the last few days before the apocalypse. Ben hadn’t joined Klaus for his trip back in time to Vietnam, but he had seen the effects that it had on him. That Klaus was far more reserved and withdrawn than this one. Ben didn’t know what exactly had happened to him, but he had gotten the gist of it from what Klaus had told him. And from seeing Klaus dealing with the trauma.

That Klaus was also much more driven. Ben couldn’t really imagine Klaus as he was now going through withdrawal just to see someone again or being willing to spend hours trying to make Ben solid without even once resorting to chemical highs. True, he had done it for selfish reasons, but it had been nice to see Klaus obsessed with something other than a way to numb his own pain. And now Ben was back with this wreck who would rather let the world burn than to do anything that would force him to admit that he actually cared.

“So you came from the future too?” Klaus asked, looking at him lazily.

“Sort of,” Ben said, “Not the same future as Five, but yes. All of this happened a week ago for me.”

“And that apocalypse you wanted me to ask Five about?” Klaus prodded.

“Yeah, I watched the moon explode and rain meteors down on Earth. I think everyone died, but I was sent back right before the impact. According to Five, it’s the apocalypse.”

“The apocalypse? Really? Don’t you think that’s maybe overselling things?” Klaus asked.

“Well, I’m pretty sure all humans were wiped out, so yeah, sounds pretty apocalyptic to me,” Ben answered.

“Come on, your just having me on here, right, Benny boy?” Klaus said trying to laugh. “You can’t really be saying that we’re all just going to… poof?” He opened his fist suddenly to illustrate his point.

“Would I lie to you about this?” Ben asked him calmly.

Klaus stared at him for a minute and finally groaned. “Fine, sure, whatever. What kind of apocalypse are we talking about here?”

“Five was short on details, but I gathered he was forced to survive in the ruins of civilization with no one else around for company,” Ben said.

“Wow, and I thought my life was sucky,” Klaus commented idly. Ben made a noise of agreement. “And now he’s trying to stop it,” Klaus said, like it wasn’t even a question, he was just stating a fact.

Ben nodded. “Yeah, but this Five doesn’t know how it happens.”

“And you’re going to try and help him,” Klaus said knowingly. Klaus was often much more perceptive than his general appearance and attitude suggested. Sometimes, Ben wished that his brother wasn’t quite so perceptive. This was one of those times. Considering how well the last attempt to communicate with his family had gone, Ben had kind of been hoping that Klaus wouldn’t have to get involved in his attempt to stop the apocalypse. But that had always been a naive hope. No, Ben would have to find some way of getting the others to listen to Klaus and take him seriously in order to have any shot at preventing the end of the world.

“Well, I’m the only one who remembers what happened last time,” Ben said, “And I have no way of letting them know.”
“Hmm. Good luck with that,” Klaus said and he stretched out on the couch and closed his eyes.

Ben sighed. He knew how hard this was going to be for Klaus -- he’d seen it first-hand last time -- but it was going to be necessary to save the world. “I need your help, Klaus,” he said quietly.

Klaus cracked an eye open. “Oh? What do you need from me?”

“I need you to get sober, Klaus. I’m sorry.”

* * *

The ceremony for Reginald Hargreeves was just as depressing and miserable as it had been last time. All but Diego and Luther were huddled under umbrellas, but Ben himself was perfectly dry. As the rain came down steadily, it passed straight through Ben’s body on its way to the ground, which made him feel incredibly weird, but not wet.

Ben glanced up at the memorial statue. It had always irritated him to see it there, brooding over the courtyard. It barely even looked like him, and it only served to make Ben seem more removed and distant from everyone else. Ben supposed that for everyone else apart from Klaus, he really was dead and gone. But for Ben, the statue was a symbol of his unwilling absence from the family.

What was worse, Reginald had probably put it up merely as a show of sympathy and not out of any true sense of loss or mourning. Ben doubted if the man was even capable of such a human emotion as grief. Well at least the only good thing to come from this whole sorry affair would be getting rid of that eyesore.

“Whenever you’re ready, dear boy,” Pogo said, when everyone was gathered. Luther tipped the urn and Reginald’s ashes fell to the ground in a sad heap.

“Probably would have been better with some wind,” Ben said before Luther could.

“Probably would have been better with some wind,” Luther echoed. Ben winked at Klaus who let out a small chuckle.

“Does anyone wish to speak?” Pogo asked.

“Yeah, I would,” Ben said, but of course no one reacted to him. “Good riddance to him, we’re all better off without him.” Klaus tried to muffle his laughter.

Pogo eventually cleared his throat, “Very well,” he said, “In all regards, Sir Reginald Hargreeves made me what I am today. For that alone I shall be forever in his debt. He was my master… and my friend, and I shall miss him very much. He leaves behind a complicated legacy--”

Ben just rolled his eyes when Diego snapped once again. He entertained both himself and Klaus by predicting Diego’s rant a second or so before he could say it. He got a couple of the words wrong here and there, but on the whole it was a good enough impression that Klaus was in stitches trying to hold in his laughter. Allison glanced at Klaus briefly, but for the most part, the rest of the family just treated the whole thing as Klaus being his usual weird and inexplicable self, shrugging and paying attention to the real action between Luther and Diego. Sure, it was maybe a bit immature for Ben to be having fun at Diego’s (unknowing) expense, but when you were a ghost who could only talk to one person in the world, you got your fun in where and when you could.

Eventually, the fistfight between Luther and Diego broke out just as Ben had known it would. There was little point in even getting mad at his brothers for their display, seeing as how Ben had no way of stopping it. Besides, he was secretly on Klaus’ side in egging the two of them on -- it was
entertaining watching them go at it.

“I never really liked that statue anyway,” Ben said moments before Luther’s fist connected with it. The metal statue toppled and broke, sending the head bouncing away.

“And there goes Ben’s statue,” Allison said tiredly. She turned away to go back to the house.

“May that darkness find peace in the light,” Ben said sarcastically, looking at the broken statue. It didn’t make much sense in this context, but then again neither did the inscription on the pedestal of the statue. It wasn’t as if They were going to be any less murderous and bloodthirsty now that he was dead. They weren’t really part of him -- that was the whole point. Whatever.

Once more Diego threw a knife at Luther and fight ended abruptly. Diego and Vanya shared some more heated words, Vanya headed in, and Diego collected Mom. The courtyard was deserted apart from Klaus and Ben.

Ben sat down on the stone bench beside Klaus. The rain still came down as steadily as ever, and Klaus seemed to shiver in the cold. “Best funeral ever,” Klaus said with a sardonic grin. “I bet Daddy dearest over there is loving this -- the team at its best.”

“Yeah,” Ben snorted. “Well, to be fair, it’s not as if we ever really worked together as a team. Or a family, for that matter.”

They sat in silence like that for a while. Ben wanted to give his brother a hug -- Klaus looked so cold and miserable sitting there -- but he knew it was useless. His arm would just pass straight through Klaus’ body and just remind the both of them that Ben was dead and not truly here. “I’m sorry for putting all this on you,” he said finally.

Klaus merely shrugged. “It’s not your fault, really,” he mumbled, still staring blankly ahead into the driving rain. The little pink umbrella he was holding not doing much to keep the rain from soaking him.

“Look, maybe you don’t have to get sober. We can come up with some other way of convincing the others to listen.”

“No,” Klaus said tiredly. “They won’t listen to me. You know they won’t. I’m the one they never take seriously or think has anything useful to say. You saw how well it went back there when I mentioned the apocalypse. They need to be shown proof. They need to see you in order to believe me.”

“Yeah, you’re probably right,” Ben said with a sigh. He remembered how the others had treated Klaus last time. Even when he was sober, Klaus had still been disregarded and seen as a delusional fool. To be fair, Klaus hadn’t ever given them much of a reason to trust him in the past, so it was no wonder that they didn’t believe him now. Hell, even knowing that Klaus could speak to ghosts, none of them had ever believed him that Ben was still around until they had seen him for themselves.

“I really am sorry to put you in this position,” Ben said. “I know how hard it is for you, and I wouldn’t ask if it weren’t extremely important. You know that.” Klaus made a noise of assent and Ben continued. “But everyone’s lives are at stake here. And as much as you might want to deny it, you do care about your family, as much as they might get on your nerves.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Klaus muttered, “but why does it have to be me? I mean, if I have to give up drugs just to save the world -- doesn’t really seem worth it, does it?”

“Oh come on, Klaus, we both know that’s not true. You’re not really that nihilistic. Would you
really knowingly let everyone die just so you could get high a couple more times?”

“Dunno, maybe you don’t know me that well,” Klaus muttered.

Ben fixed him with a glare that plainly said, *Yes I do.*

Eventually, Klaus broke. “Fine. You’re right,” he said grudgingly. He gave Ben a weak smile. “Let’s get this show on the road. Operation Get Sober and Save the World is officially underway.”
Chapter Summary

In which Vanya relives some rather painful memories.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all once again for your fantastic support and feedback, your comments and kudos help give me motivation to write!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Vanya sat in the kitchen once more while Five made himself a peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich and refused to give a proper explanation. Her mind whirled trying to figure out what was going on. It seemed like somehow, she had been thrown back in time, but none of her siblings seemed to show any indication that something was wrong. Vanya would probably think that she’d imagined everything else that had happened to her, except that she could feel her powers coiled around her -- sleeping, but ready to be awoken.

What would happen to her if the others found out about her powers? Would Luther knock her out and lock her in that soundproof cell in the basement again? Were they really that threatened by her? Even just glancing at Luther made her feel a twinge of rage and fear.

And what would she do to them? Vanya’s memories were fuzzy -- almost as if it had all happened in a dream -- but she did remember tearing down the Academy and… eliminating Pogo. She remembered the concert and the ultimate power she had felt and the sense of freedom it had given her. But Vanya also remembered seeing her siblings there and what she’d done to them. In her mind’s eye she saw them turning gray and crumbling as her power sucked the life from them. Now, removed from the high of power and control, all she felt was a dull horror at the thought. Had she killed them?

Vanya didn’t want to kill them. Sure, she was angry at them for excluding and isolating her when she was young and for dismissing her and her problems as an adult, but she’d never wanted them dead. All she’d wanted -- all she’d ever wanted -- was for them to treat her as an equal and full member of the family. But apparently in order to get them to recognize her she needed to unleash terrible powers that made her family fear rather than respect her.

So what to do? Vanya didn’t know what the others knew. It seemed like she was the only one who had traveled back, but she didn’t know for sure. Maybe the others knew as well and would try to do something to her if she revealed herself. Maybe they were plotting to put her back in that cage in case she went power-crazy on them again. Vanya knew that was paranoia, but, well, after what had happened, hadn’t she earned the right to be a little paranoid?

Outside of her, the conversation was still going on. “Hold up, how did you get back?” Allison was asking.
“In the end I had to project my consciousness forward into a quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time.” Five said nonchalantly as if that statement were perfectly comprehensible.

“That makes no sense,” Diego muttered.

“Well it would if you were smarter,” Five said sarcastically.

Vanya figured that she would just sit quietly while this conversation played out. She still didn’t know what she was doing here and not upsetting anything while she tried to figure it out seemed like the wisest course of action.

Diego made as if to get at Five, but Luther held him back. “How long were you there?” he asked Five calmly.

“Forty-five years. Give or take,” Five responded casually.

“So what are you saying? That you’re fifty-eight?” Luther asked incredulously.

“No, my consciousness is fifty-eight,” Five said with a hint of annoyance. “Apparently my body is thirteen again.”

“How is that even possible?” Allison asked.

“Delores kept saying the equations were off,” Five took a bite of his sandwich and chewed slowly. “Bet she’s laughing now,” he said as if to himself.

The conversation continued on the way Vanya remembered, giving her a serious sense of deja vu. Once more, Five removed himself from the conversation and left the rest of them to stare at each other in awkward silence. Eventually everyone dispersed leaving Vanya alone in the kitchen.

She sighed and got up. What was she even doing here anyway? Was she just going to let everything play out the way it had before? Did she want that? For Leonard to come by and take her to be used for who knew what purposes? For her family to lock her up again? For her to unleash her powers on them all again?

No, Vanya didn’t want that. But what could she do? Every time she thought about taking action, all she saw was her bow slicing Allison’s throat, or Pogo impaled on the wall, or her siblings bodies writhing as she slowly sucked the life from them…

Vanya shuddered and tried to shake herself out of her thoughts. How could she do anything if everything she did inevitably ended in hurting those she cared about? Why did she have to have such terrible powers that were only useful for hurting and not helping?

She sighed and got up. Whatever she was going to do, she couldn’t just sit here, waiting for something to happen. She had powers and she had foreknowledge of what was going to happen. She should use it. Somehow.

* * *

Vanya found Five in the parlor staring at the portrait that Dad had put up to commemorate him. Vanya had never been a fan of it herself, it had made it seem like Five was truly gone and never coming back. Vanya remembered when it had first been hung. She had immediately perceived it for what it was: a warning from their father to not disobey him again. Look what happened to your brother, it had said, Do not repeat his mistake. From the day he had disappeared, Five had ceased to
be a real entity to Reginald, but merely a teaching tool to the others to not be arrogant and think that they knew better than their father.

But even years after Five had disappeared, Vanya had held out hope that one day her favorite brother would return to them. She had gone so far as to leave out sandwiches and keeping the light on for him. She’d always believed that Five was alive and well somewhere out there and was trying to figure out how to get back, Five would never abandon his family and Vanya had refused to think that he might be dead. Vanya supposed that in the end, she’d been correct to believe in Five, even if it had taken him far longer to get back than she’d hoped.

“Nice to know Dad didn’t forget about me,” Five said, nodding vaguely at the portrait. “I read your book, by the way,” he said, turning around to face her. “Found it in a library that was still standing. I thought it was pretty good, all things considered.” He was wandering around the room, looking at everything as if fascinated by it. Vanya supposed that he was seeing it again for the first time in years. “Yeah, definitely ballsy, giving up the family secrets. Sure that went over well,” he looked at her curiously.

Vanya contemplated telling Five what she knew about the future and her powers. Five would understand her wouldn’t he? He had always been her favorite growing up, always there for her when she’d felt left out or excluded, ready with a joke or a present he’d gotten for her when outside the Academy. Perhaps that’s why his absence had hit her harder than any of her other siblings. When Five had left, the others had missed him, sure, but she had lost her only friend in the house.

But she didn’t really know him any more, did she? He’d been gone from her life for seventeen years -- seventeen years in which she’d grown up and changed to the point that she wasn’t the little girl that he’d remember. And it had been even longer for Five, forty-five years if he was to be believed. How much had he changed in that time? Was he still the brother she remembered? Would he still keep her secrets or would he turn her over to the rest of her family? How much could she trust him?

Instead Vanya turned the conversation to the other thing that her family resented her for. “They hate me for writing it,” she said in a low voice. “They wish that I’d kept my mouth shut and never spoken about what happened when we were children.” Unbidden, the memories of Diego’s harsh words, Allison’s pitying stares, and Luther’s arms squeezing the breath from her lungs pushed into her mind. Even through the faint haze from the drugs that clouded her mind, Vanya felt the anger and bitterness rise within her. “But you know what, I don’t care. At least now the world can see the Umbrella Academy for what it really was and what Dad did to us.” Vanya could hear the venom in her voice.

“Well I, for one, am glad you wrote it,” Five said, “ It reminded me of all of you. It helped me stay grounded and focused on what needed to be done and kept me sane in the -- well, let’s just say my life in the future wasn’t a breeze.”

“Really?” Vanya couldn’t help but be surprised. Somehow, in her mind she had assumed that everyone had either hated the book, or been indifferent to it. Despite what she had just said, she had started to believe that the writing the damn thing had been entirely pointless. To think that she had helped Five, even unknowingly… well, maybe something good had come from it, after all. “You liked it?” she asked, hating that she sounded so anxious and disbelieving, almost begging for his approval.

“Well, I admit that it might have been a little hyperbolic in places, and I wasn’t too fond of how you portrayed me as ‘prone to arrogance and outrage’, but yeah, I liked it.” Five flashed her a smile, but then it morphed into sadness. “Your book was how I learned about what happened after I left. It’s how I found out about Ben, actually,” he finished quietly.

“Oh,” was all Vanya could say.
“Was it bad? You never really went into much detail in the book,” he asked softly.

Vanya nodded. Sometimes she still had nightmares about it. She felt the coldness rise as the memories surfaced. *The screaming and crying, the mangled remains, the blood everywhere...*

Five approached and looked like he wanted to hug her, but he stopped and instead just hovered awkwardly near her. Vanya noticed distantly that even in his thirteen year-old body, he was still taller than her. “I’m sorry,” he said softly, “I’m sorry that he died and I wasn’t there. I should have been there, I should have been with you all. I should never have left and I’ve spent every moment of my life since then trying to get back and fix things.”

Vanya gave him a sad smile. “Yeah, I know, Five. I missed you.”

* * *

The memorial ceremony for Reginald took place just as Vanya remembered and just like she remembered, it was a miserable affair. The rain came down heavy and hard, soaking through the umbrella and jacket she was wearing. She shivered as they formed into a small circle.

“Did something happen?” Mom asked looking disoriented.

“Dad died, Remember?” Allison said worriedly.

“Oh. Yes, of course.” Mom replied, but Vanya could tell that she was still confused.

“Is Mom okay?” Allison asked quietly.

“Yeah, yeah, she’s fine,” Diego replied, looking to Grace, “She just needs to rest. You know, recharge.”

Vanya remembered the conversation that had happened a few days before the whole world got turned upside down. Luther and Allison had suggested that Mom’s programming was degrading and that maybe she should be turned off. Of course all that had been made moot when she’d been killed by the two psychos who’d attacked the house shortly thereafter. But looking at Grace, Vanya wondered. Was she really degrading? Was it better for her to be put down now? In a way, it was fitting, really. Mom was really just an extension of Dad -- his programming and beliefs -- just wrapped in a different body. With his death, her purpose and reason for existence was gone, so why shouldn’t she degrade? Maybe her death was inevitable.

“Whenever you’re ready, dear boy,” Pogo said, making his slow way into the gathered circle. Seeing him again made Vanya’s blood run cold. She couldn’t help remembering what it had felt like to throw him across the room and to watch his traitorous blood stain his immaculate suit. Now, no longer in the grip of her powers, the horror of what she’d done caught up with her. The thought of hurting Pogo no longer filled her with righteous fury, but only cold dread and fear. She was capable of great and terrible things. Her powers could very easily end up hurting someone she cared about and she had very little control over what they did.

But none of that meant that she was no longer furious at Pogo. The old chimp had been one of her only sources of comfort growing up, treating her as an equal member of the family even when no one else would, and all along he had been hiding this awful secret from her. All this time, Pogo had known about her powers and he’d been complicit in cutting her off from them, in cutting her out of being a full part of the family. He’d allowed her father to prescribe the life-sucking pills and had encouraged her to remember to take them to ‘help with her anxiety’. He had never truly been a friend, he’d always been a tool of Reginald and his twisted experiments.
Luther tipped the urn and the ashes fell to the ground in a sad heap. “Probably would have been better with some wind,” he said awkwardly.

“Does anyone wish to speak?” Pogo asked. No one said anything and the silence grew uncomfortable. Eventually, Pogo cleared his throat, “Very well,” he said and began to speak. “In all regards, Sir Reginald Hargreeves made me what I am today. For that alone I shall be forever in his debt. He was my master… and my friend, and I shall miss him very much.”

Vanya remembered last time wondering how any decent person who had known Reginald Hargreeves for as long as Pogo had could defend him or his actions. Now, she knew the truth. Pogo was complicit in Reginald’s crimes and this was his way of assuaging his guilt. It disgusted her.

“He leaves behind a complicated legacy--” Pogo continued, and Diego snapped, like Vanya had known he would. Not that she blamed him; she was getting pretty fed up with this nonsense herself.

“He was a monster,” Diego spat. “He was a bad person and a worse father. The world’s better off without him.”

“Diego!” Allison said sharply.

“My name is Number Two,” he replied. “You know why? Because our father couldn’t be bothered to give us actual names. He had Mom do it; that’s how little he cared for us.”

At the sound of her name, Mom perked up, “Does anyone want something to eat?” she asked hopefully.

“No, it’s okay, Mom,” Vanya said.

“Oh, okay,” she said sounding disappointed.

Diego continued on his rant and eventually succeeded in baiting Luther into a fight. Fists flew and the two brothers danced in a vicious melee.

“Stop it!” Vanya yelled, but she was ignored, just like always.

Just like last time, Luther’s fist slammed into Ben’s statue. It fell to the ground and broke into pieces. Allison walked out, disgusted.

And just like last time, Diego pulled out a knife. “Diego, no!” Vanya shouted, but it was too late, he’d already thrown it at Luther. It barely glanced him, but Luther clutched at his arm quickly and hurriedly staggered back inside.

“You never know when to stop, do you?” she said, walking over to Diego.

He seemed to be searching for a good enough retort to properly get under her skin. “Got enough material for your sequel yet?” he finally said cuttingly.

That did sting. The point of the book had never been to drag her siblings down, even if that’s what they seemed to think. “He was my father, too,” she said in a low voice, “and he messed me up just as much as he did to you.” And with that she strode off.

* * *

After the ceremony, Vanya stood in the entrance hallway waiting for a cab to take her back to her apartment. Honestly, Vanya just wanted to get away from this place and these people as fast as
possible. Too many memories, both of what had happened and what would happen. Once again, Vanya wished that she’d learned how to drive earlier in her life. But every time she had tried to gather up the courage to learn, a fear of causing an accident, or of humiliating herself by failing the driver’s test, or just being laughed at for wanting to learn at such a late stage of her life had stopped her. So instead, Vanya was condemned to have to get a taxi or bus to go anywhere in the city. Oh well, it worked well enough.

Her hand fell into her pocket and her fingers closed around the pill bottle. Vanya pulled it out and stared at it. Here it was, the source of all her problems in her life. These pills were the reason that she’d been left out and dismissed as ‘ordinary’. These pills had dulled her world to the point that living had sometimes seemed an unendurable chore.

Thinking about it, it was actually quite remarkable that she’d stayed on them for her entire life. Her father had told her take them when she was a child, and like a fool she’d kept taking them even when she’d tried to cut out so much else of him and his influence from her life. How could she have been so blind to the way he’d controlled her very body?

Vanya considered staying on her meds. She supposed it would probably be safer for the others that way -- she couldn’t hurt them if she couldn’t use her powers. But the mere thought of living her life dulled by those pills made her want to scream. She couldn’t go back to how she had been, she just couldn’t. Even now, she could feel what the medication was doing to her. Everything felt distant, as if seen through a screen, as if she weren’t truly present. When she had finally gotten off her pills, it had felt like the world had opened up to her and revealed its beauty for the first time. It was as if she’d lived her entire life in black and white before and then experienced color for the first time. The wonder of the sounds, the joy of the world not experienced through a veil, the glory of her powers -- no, she couldn’t go back. Damn any of the consequences, she wouldn’t go back to living that half-life.

Behind her, Vanya heard the sound of a cane tapping on the floor. Turning around, Vanya saw Pogo approaching her. The sight of him made her freeze. What did he want with her? Did he know? Had she given herself away somehow?

“I apologize for the actions of some of your siblings,” Pogo said, and Vanya remembered that they’d had this conversation last time. “This is your home and always will be,” he looked at her with a mixture of affection and concern. “Should I get you a taxi?” he asked.

“I already called one, but thanks,” Vanya said, still shaking a little. Thankfully, the sound of a horn came from outside giving Vanya the opportunity to leave. “That’s me,” she said and turned to go, but Pogo’s voice called her back.

“I hope you know your father loved you very much,” he said, “In his own way.”

The familiar anger reared. Oh yes, it was certainly love which had made Reginald lock her up as a child in a soundproof cell in the basement when her powers became inconvenient and then to drug her to take them away. It was love that had made him take every opportunity to remind her that she was ordinary and to exclude her from the family as much as possible. And Pogo had been right there beside him with his love. She felt rage at the injustice of it all, and with it, her powers stirred. Not enough to do anything really, but still there all the same.

“Well that’s sort of the problem, isn’t it?” She said caustically.

Pogo frowned and he looked at her intently. She saw a flash of worry and maybe fear cross his face. Her powers crowed with victory and urged her to go further.
“I have to go now,” she said, rushing out of the house before she could do something that she might regret.

“Take care of yourself, Miss Vanya,” she heard him say from behind her.

* * *

Vanya returned to her apartment and immediately set about finding all of the pills from her various stashes and disposing of them. There was a vindictive pleasure in seeing the things that caused her so much suffering in her life being washed down the drain. It was a feeling of liberation; now she was finally free of the shackles that had been placed on her for so long.

She was just watching the last of the pills vanish down the sink when she heard a noise from her living room. Going to investigate, she found Five clambering through her window.

“What-- Why--?” Vanya stammered, at a loss for words as her brother dusted himself off and made himself at home on her favorite armchair.

“You really should have locks on your windows,” he said as if this were the most normal situation in the world.

“Why would I need locks? I live on the second floor,” Vanya said still trying to recover her wits.

“Rapists can climb,” Five responded nonchalantly. “You’d be surprised what kind of weirdos there are out there.”

“ Weirdos like you?” Vanya asked a bit mischievously. Five just rolled his eyes.

Vanya looked closer at her brother, “Are you bleeding?” she asked, noticing the red stains around his collar and sleeve.

“It’s nothing,” Five replied, brushing her concern aside. And wasn’t that just like him. He’d never been one to admit pain or injury, seeing it as a sign of weakness that would only hold him back.

“Why are you here?” she asked, knowing that Five wouldn’t respond well to be pressed on the subject of his injury.

Five sighed. “I’ve decided you’re the only one I can trust.”

“Why me?” Vanya asked. Privately, she wondered if he’d still trust her if he knew about her powers and what she’d done with them.

“Because you’re ordinary,” and Vanya flinched a little. Her whole life she had been defined by that one word, ordinary. Even Five didn’t see her as anything else. Well, she’d shown them all how ordinary she really was. Five seemed to realize that he’d said something wrong and he amended his statement. “Because you’ll listen,” he said simply, looking imploringly at her.

Vanya remembered how this conversation had gone last time. It had ended with her doubting Five’s sanity and him eventually cutting her out of his plans. Maybe, if she were a better sister, things would turn out better. Maybe. “Okay, wait here,” she said, standing up to get the first aid kit.

As she was cleaning and dressing his wound, Five looked at her intently. “When I jumped forward and got stuck in the future, do you know what I found?” he asked.

Vanya didn’t answer. She already knew what he’d jumped into.
“Nothing,” Five said, his voice toneless and empty. “Absolutely nothing. As far as I could tell, I was the last person alive. I never figured out what killed the human race, but I did find something else. The date it happens. The world ends in eight days, and I have no idea how to stop it.”

Suddenly the pieces fell into place for Vanya. It was amazing that she hadn’t put it together before this moment, but it was a rather shocking and unexpected realization. She had been responsible for the apocalypse that Five was trying to prevent. Her full powers had been unleashed during that concert and they must have been too much. She must have destroyed the world and killed her siblings, and… then what? Come back in time to do it all again? Why?

Maybe this was her punishment or something. Maybe she was dead too, and she had to relive her mistakes in some sort of cosmic retribution for all the suffering she had caused. Maybe this was what Hell actually was -- just a reenactment of all her worst actions, stuck on an endless loop forever.

Jesus, she had destroyed the entire world, if what Five said was to be believed. That was seven billion people, all dead because of her. All of human history, all the culture and progress, all gone. Because of her. Well, you always wanted to be more than just poor, insignificant little Vanya, a voice in her head wheedled, seems like you got your wish.

“Vanya! Vanya, are you okay?” Five’s hand was on her shoulder, and she realized she’d started hyperventilating.

“Yeah, yeah,” she said trying to get her breathing back under control. “It’s just… it’s a lot all at once. What were you saying?”

Five looked at her sympathetically. “I’m sorry, maybe I shouldn’t have told you. I’m sorry. You’re still too young. You shouldn’t have to worry about this.”

No, this couldn’t be happening. Five was cutting her out again. He was going to leave her alone and she’d screw it all up again, and the world would end again, and…

Five placed his hand on hers. “The apocalypse is coming, and I don’t blame you for freaking out about that. But… I need to stop it from happening, and I don’t think you’re going to be able to help, not if you get like this.” He smiled sadly at her. “I am sorry. I shouldn’t have put this on you. You’re just ordinary. You should just live your life without this hanging over your head.” He picked up his blazer and turned to the door as if to leave.

“Five… Five, please don’t leave,” Vanya said and she could hear the desperation in her voice. “I just… I haven’t seen you in a long time, and I don’t want to lose you again. That’s all,” she said shakily. “Here,” she said, setting up a blanket on the couch, “It’s late; just stay here tonight, alright? I don’t want you to go out there on your own again.”

Five looked at her for a moment and then finally nodded. “Alright, I’ll stay tonight,” he said and Vanya let out a sigh of relief. “We’ll talk more in the morning. Okay?”

“Okay, Vanya,” Five said and he sat down on the couch.

Not knowing what else to do, Vanya left him there and went to her bedroom. She collapsed onto her bed and gave a deep shuddering sigh -- almost a sob. It was all too much. The world was going to end, and it was all her fault. She was a bomb and she had no idea what she was doing.

Chapter End Notes
Well, that's the first day done! And it only took me *checks notes* over 30k words. At this rate, by the time it's done the story will be 250,000 words. I'm sure that's doable *laughs nervously*.

Thank you all so much for reading and enjoying!

End Notes

Feedback and comments are greatly appreciated!

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