### Among the Humans

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at [http://archiveofourown.org/works/2353160](http://archiveofourown.org/works/2353160).

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<td>Published: 2014-09-24 Updated: 2016-08-22 Chapters: 10/? Words: 95166</td>
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Summary

Now living on Earth and no longer dead, the Alpha trolls settle down and enter the same college, Beforus University, to start all over on life. No Sgrub game equals no doomed timelines. Things should be simple, right?

As if. College isn't the cakewalk as they were expecting, and trolls are new to the human world, which means exposure to the good and bad that Earth has to offer. If college and society can't prove that it can overwhelm them, then the changes in their group relationships will.

Notes

So I know I posted something totally different than this chapter, but trust me, the previous chapter will be back in with time. And there will be more added, so just bear with me for the time being.

I'll be using brackets whenever Damara speaks Japanese, Kurloz's chucklevoodoos will be bolded and italicized, his and Meulin's sign language will be bolded, and thoughts in general are italicized.

To see more artwork, plug in the link!
http://sparksparta.tumblr.com/search/Among+the+Humans

Edit: Changed the title for personal reasons.
Meenah: Move In

Chapter Notes

This is my first Homestuck fanfiction, so I apologize if it's OOC in some scenes, but either way, I hope you enjoy! Tell me what you think in the reviews! If I somehow make the characters OOC, PLEASE tell me. I want to be as accurate as possible.

This is a College AU that was inspired by a friend on tumblr. It has a bunch of Les8ifins headcanons, but I will be including the other troll pairings if people like this enough. And it won't be full of just romance chapters, there will be more of the Alpha troll shenanigans. I'll make more if people want me to, so let me know.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Two flying beings passed over one of the many Beforus University parking lots. Their beige and fuchsia color palettes were a huge difference compared to the blue sky and green trees and bushes. Meenah Peixes and Feferi Peixes landed on the ground, finally giving their wings a rest from the cumbersome flight. Fighting against the wind was a pain in the ass.

Feferi looked at Meenah as the older seadweller switched back to her casual outfit; a black baseball t-
shirt with a fuchsia collar and sleeves, a thin black choker necklace with two black faux fish pendants hanging off the collar, her gold bracelets with fuchsia gems, a gold belt, medium gray jeans, and fuchsia Converse sneakers. Feferi smiled as her earfins fluttered slightly, "Meenah, this place is huge!"

Even though it was late in the morning, college kids and trolls were already buzzing around the streets of the fraternity houses. Beforus University had recently opened to humans and trolls alike, and it was run by none other than Hussie himself. Typical. Hussie himself stated that it was mandatory for all trolls over the age of eight sweeps to attend the new semester at Beforus University, much to Meenah's displeasure. Beforus was such a lame planet, why the hell would someone actually name a school after it? But then again, this was Hussie they were dealing with. That man was cunning and deceiving in all ways possible.

Meenah watched Feferi switch out of her god tier clothes before lifting a box into her arms. The older Peixes troll smirked and ruffled her dancestor's hair, "Yeah, whale, you're gonna be goin' here once ya graduate, shrimp!"

"I know, I'm excited! Glub glub!" Feferi's high pitched giggling hurt Meenah's earfins slightly, but she couldn't help but grin. Her dancestor was the cutest thing. Even though she sometimes feels that twinge to murder her in cold blood, the sheer fact that Feferi used fish puns was more than enough to send Meenah jumping in glee. It was safe to say that the both of them had gotten close. Almost as close as Kanaya and Porrim. The ex-heiress opened up her fetch modus and dropped all her items on the ground. Several boxes poured out of the purse, and Meenah picked up a few boxes in her arms while Feferi grabbed the rest effortlessly.

"C'mon, guppy. Let's get to the fraternity hive."

They walked through the gates and down the road, passing by students who were hanging out and enjoying the last few weeks of the warm weather. The Washington weather was unusually warm for the beginning of September. The leaves on the trees were beginning to change colors and there was a light gust of wind here and there.

Feferi was glancing around the campus, noticing a bridge overlap a moat where a few seadwellers swam around in and out of underwater hives and tunnels. "Yeah, I wanted a hive like that," Meenah muttered, rolling her eyes at the sight. "But then I thought abot the winters here and swimmin' round in freezin' waters ain't fun. And then climbin' outta that shit too is probubbly efin worse."

"It sounds nice, but I think dorming with your old team is a good choice too," Feferi piped up excitedly, earning an eyeroll from her dancestor. "Yea whale, yer team didn't fuckin' suck at Sgrub, did they? Matter of fact, they didn't suck at anyfin like my team did."

"Whale, we all had our ups and downs, but I wouldn't call us invincible at the game." The younger Peixes troll tugged at her collar awkwardly. "Or sticking together as a team, at least."

Meenah was about to respond, but a "Hey, Paycheck!" caught her attention. The one and only Latula Pyrope skateboarded down the concrete paths, grinning that 'tot4lly r4d' grin that sometimes got on Meenah's nerves. But that didn't stop her from giving Pyrope a high-five.

And it stung like hell.

"Ow!" Meenah nearly dropped her shit due to the pain. Latula's eyes widened behind her shades. "Oh, sorry! I think I hit too hard."

"Ya think!?" Her shark-like snarl gleamed in the sunlight while her earfins were out in full flourish.
Feferi quickly gave Meenah a shoosh pap on the shoulder, smiling softly. "Meenah, clam down. We don't want you to get suspended on the first day, right?"

"Depends. Will I still be here when I come back or can I transfer to a school less shitty?"

"Oh, come on, Paycheck, don't be like that! How long has it been since we've seen ya besides in the dream bubbles?" Latula gave Meenah a wink. It was now that Meenah had gotten a good look at Latula's new outfit. Latula replaced her usual bodysuit for a teal and cyan speckled hoodie with her zodiac symbol in red above her left breast and her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, black longboarding gloves that replaced her usual red gloves, cropped dark blue jeans were over black bicycle shorts that stopped in the middle of her thighs, and she had red high-top Converse sneakers. Yet, she still settled for her red shades and white skateboard. Latula turned her attention to Feferi, finally noticing the smaller seadweller. The younger Peixes troll gave her a smile and wave, "you must be Terezi's dancestor."

"Damn right, girl! I can tell you and my rad lil' sis are friends by just looking at ya!" The older Pyrope troll lifted her shades above her eyes, revealing her teal irises. Feferi had a sort of wistful look in her eye, making Latula grin. "Man, Paycheck, you weren't kidding about your dancestor being adorable! She's glubbing like crazy!"

Almost instantly, Feferi hid behind Meenah; her cheeks turning a deep shade of fuchsia as she giggled nervously. Meenah smirked and gave her dancestor a pap on the head between her horns. A pretty pale gesture if one didn't know better, but it was clear to everyone else that they have gotten quite closer ever since English's defeat.

The Beforus Pisces troll looked back at Latula, "shoal, Pyrope, tell me everymoby else is at the hive."

"Yeah, Tuna and Mary-games just got there, so we were all waiting on you! Tuna's rad little dancestor is setting up our TV and Game Grub station with unlimited channels, and Damara's little dancestor's with him!" Latula scratched her head. "What I can't figure out is how he can set up a TV while being half-blind?"

"Wait, Sollux and Aradia here?" Feferi instantly forgot about being embarrassed once her friends came up. Her eyes gleamed with excitement. "Can I sea them?"

"Oh cod," Meenah rolled her eyes. Was her descendant boy crazy or boy crazy? Latula, however, gave a laugh and nodded. "Yeah, sure! He should be almost done with whatever he's doing."

"Glub! C'mon, Meenah, let's go!"

Damn, for a girl who spends most of her time underwater, she could haul ass.

"Oi, Fef, don't run off without us! Ya dunno the place!"

Latula merely laughed and got on her skateboard, putting the box that Feferi abandoned in the front. "I got her, Paycheck! Meet us there." And Latula rode off before Meenah could say anything, leaving her to walk along the rest of the way. The ex-heiress snarled. On the bright side, she could at least get a little peace now.

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Meenah stepped onto the front porch, not bothering to knock because they all were expecting her. The fraternity house was bigger than she expected it to be, but it wasn't as huge as her sick moon hive. The house was built in a Victorian era Shingle style; the roof was a light gray with pale dark
blue colored walls and dark gray window shingles. The first floor had a huge dining room and modern kitchen to the left, a large living room to the right, a hallway leading to the den, a door to the basement past the living room, and a rather large bathroom beside the staircase. The basement had all the laundry appliances, the water heater, the AC and heating system, and the breaker box. The second floor was for the bedrooms, and Meenah knew that there would be at least two people to each room since six was the maximum number of bedrooms. Between each room was a bathroom, so there wouldn't be any hogging or fights over it unless it was with your roommate.

The Pisces troll stepped inside, immediately catching sight of Porrim Maryam. Porrim was wearing a jade green scarf around her neck, three black scrunchies on her left wrist, a brown short-sleeved t-shirt, black leggings, and light beige knee-high heeled boots with a buckle strap on the top of the shoes with brown soles. The Virgo troll turned her head towards the door, her piercings gleaming in the light. "Hey, there you are!" Porrim approached Meenah, clamping a hand onto her shoulder as a greeting. "We thought you wouldn't have gotten here on time."

"Like I'd miss this kick ass party, Maryam!" Meenah said with a cynical grin. She was so looking forward to trashing other fraternity houses tonight! It was a tradition that most colleges had in the beginning of the year, and even though Beforus was as lame as shit, the humans were going to seriously spice this place up. "Ya excited as I am?"

"I should hope so. Plenty of people to start off conversations with." Porrim flashed Meenah a grin, and she knew all too well what Porrim meant with 'conversations'. This girl never gave her quadrants a rest, did she?

"Porrim, it would be wise to tag your actions before you attempt to reach out to people."

Instantly, the two girls groaned and turned towards the dining room. Kankri Vantas was there with Rufioh Nitram; the poor brown blood's horns was already getting caught in the doorways. Horuss Zahhak was there too, taking measurements to help expand the walls to ease his matesprit's troubles.

"Talking about potential flushed or caliginous flings in front of others could be triggering, as well as putting your hand on them without their consent. I am, for one, constantly triggered by that, so I recommend you tag your triggers from now on."

"Kankri, if you're so triggered by being touched, why stay in a fraternity house with eleven other trolls?" Porrim asked, somewhat rhetorically. Kankri didn't seem to pick it up because he folded his arms over his chest and stood up straight, as if to say he was the dominant one in this conversation. Meenah took notice of Kankri's change in fashion as well. He wore a pale dark brown sweater with a red diamond pattern across the chest, a white collared shirt and red tie under the sweater, khaki pants, and tan shoes.

"I merely chose this form of housing because I understood that the dorms in this university were much, much smaller. Small to the point where claustrophobia could develop and I could risk triggering my roommate and have he or she possibly trigger me by bumping into me. But then again, I don't think it should be socially acceptable for males and females to be dorming within the same room, as that could possibly trigger..."

Oh boy, there he went. If Meenah could cork her ears, she would have. And then she would super glue the guy's mouth shut while she was at it. Porrim tilted her head towards the living room, rolling her jade green eyes. "We gave him the biggest bedroom in the house."

"Ugh, what?! Why does Vantas get the good shit?!"

"It's actually an advantage to us." A sly grin appeared on the Virgo troll's face. "Horuss installed
soundproof barriers on our walls and doors, so if he goes on a tangent and we run to our rooms, the only thing we'll hear is pure silence."

"Oh, fuck yes!" The Pisces troll snickered at the thought of Kankri talking for hours without knowing that they would be in blissful silence. "Zahhak is so fuckin' weird, but he get's useful."

"No disagreement here."

CRASH!

"GGHJGGJTFG FUCK THOLLUX CAN'T YOU FIX THITH?"

"God damn it, Mituna, I'm fucking trying! What else do you want me to do?!"

"YER THTUPID ATH THIT LUTHUTH HAHAHAHA!

"Fuck you, Mituna."

Meenah looked inside the living room, spotting Mituna Captor and Latula watching Sollux Captor work on the giant flat screen TV. Aradia Megido was close to Sollux, watching him to make sure he didn't grab anything harmful. Meenah looked at Mituna, seeing his outfit of a yellow pullover hoodie with black stripes on the sleeves, black jeans with gray cuffs, and black sneakers with yellow laces and yellow soles.

Kankri seemed to have heard Sollux's swearing, because his expression looked more troubled than before, "Please check your -"

"Fuck your triggers and fuck your social justice bullshit!" Sollux snarled as he hooked up the cable wiring to the TV. Aradia smiled and pat Sollux on the head. "Easy, Sollux. Don't get yourself worked up."

"Easy for you to say, AA." Despite his half-blind state, Sollux easily wired the cables together and soon, the giant plasma screen showed a replay of an Olympic snowboarder doing some grinds down the rails. Latula and Mituna cheered, relieved that the TV was working now. They sat together in the middle of the giant sectional couch, arms wrapped around each other as they glued their eyes to the screen.

Aradia clapped her hands as Sollux stood up straight, cracking his neck. "Nicely done!"

"Yeah, yeah, don't write home about it."

"Hi, Sollux! Hi, Aradia!" Feferi cried, rushing to them both with an eager smile. Aradia's face brightened up when she saw Feferi and she instantly spread her arms to hug the highblood. "Feferi!! It's been a long time since I last saw you!!"

"I know!" Feferi wrapped her arms around Aradia, being careful not to squeeze too tightly. "How are you?"

"I've been great! Just helping Sollux get around!"

Feferi looked at Sollux and giggled, and the Alternian Gemini troll gave her half a smile. "It's good to see you again, FF."

"You too, Sollux!"

Porrim smiled at the three Alternian trolls. "Now how come you and Damara don't along like that?"
She asked Meenah, smirking lightly. Meenah snarled, her earfins flaring out. "'Cause Megido's a glubbin' -"

"Meenah, please, no foul language in front of our dancestors," Kankri chimed in from the kitchen, and that earned him a middle finger from both Meenah and Sollux. Kankri was about to open his mouth again, but Sollux held up a hand to stop him. "Please stop talking. You can literally make the dead double-die because you're so fucking boring and stale. You're staler than Karkat's taste in movies."

Instantly, both Aradia and Feferi started giggling and Mituna's laughter echoed from the living room. "YOU TELL HIM, THOLLUX!"

"Oh, you got some sick fires!" Rufioh called from the dining room, finally free from his prison. Horuss dusted his hands off, grinning ear-to-ear. "I indeed agree! Those were some pretty STRONG and... "sick fires" from the lowblood Alternian descendant."

Meenah rolled her eyes at the two. Even after death, they were still too close for comfort. Rufioh was wearing a white t-shirt, a Fiduspawn orb hung around his neck as a necklace, a gray camouflage overshirt jacket with two pockets on his chest and the sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, a black belt with a gold buckle with his white shirt tucked in, dark blue jeans, and bronze Converse sneakers. Horuss was wearing his usual mask, a light blue and white flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows, a tucked in black v-neck t-shirt, leather brown suspenders, a dark gray belt with a gold buckle and the blue Sagittarius symbol on it, tan khakis, and knee-high black Converse boots.

"Heehee! Pretty glubbing sick fires! Glub!" Feferi chimed in, giggling at Kankri's expression. The Beforus Cancer troll glared at Sollux, who flipped him off again before he could get another word out. Sollux glanced at Aradia, "I need some air, AA."

"Sure thing!" Aradia grabbed his arm and began to lead him outside just before looking at Feferi. "Are you coming, Feferi?"

"Yup!" The bubbly fish princess skipped after Sollux and Aradia, waving to her dancestor before walking beside her friends. Meenah shook her head, grinning. She turned back to Porrim as she lifted a box onto her shoulder. "Shoal, I'm pretty much the only one unpacked?"

"You and Aranea," Porrim said, climbing up the stairs. The stairs and top floor were carpeted, which was pretty nice when winter rolled around. The Virgo troll was pointing to the farthest door on the right. "She's unpacking her stuff already."

"Just like Serket," Meenah muttered, clicking her tongue. "Alwaves ahead of everymoby."

"I agree." Porrim watched Meenah swagger over to the door, asking if she needed help. The other troll simply told her to bring the other several boxes up, and gave off a silent sigh in relief when Porrim vanished back down the stairs. Ever since Aranea went off and did her own thing to stop English, the two had lost contact for a while and their friendship nearly drifted apart. It really sucked. Avoiding someone in dream bubbles wasn't easy, but Aranea didn't even show up after the timeline had ended. It seriously sucked not listening to Aranea's crappy stories. Or listening to her friend in general.

Even though she would almost never show it, Meenah did feel a little nervous about seeing Aranea even after all this time. They had a previous conversation after coming back to life and before coming to Earth, but it didn't last long enough to clear the air between them. Would she be mad or angry? Or upset? Upset about cod knows what? It didn't matter. Even after all that's happened, Aranea was still her friend and she wanted to address her feelings about the issue. Now.
The door swung open without much of a fight despite the carpeting. The room was a big enough size to fit two people perfectly inside. The beds were on both the left and right sides of the wall with pullout drawers on the front and sides of the bedframe. There was a large bookshelf placed behind the bed and up against the wall, right behind the bedframes. A few feet away from the beds were two desks with organizers, desk drawers, and a wooden chair, and beside each bed was a wooden nightstand for each person. A large, square window with dark red curtains was in the middle of the wall between the beds, showing off the view of the campus quad and buildings.

Aranea Serket was on the right side of the room, organizing the books she took from home on the bookshelf above her bedframe. She was in a blue sweater with a large cracked spider web-like pattern on the front bottom, a fuchsia scarf around her neck, a dark gray leather skirt, black calf-high socks, and red ankle-high boots. The bed was already made and it had spider themed pillows, sheets, and blankets. Surprise, surprise. Inside the desk organizer was a thick dictionary, an encyclopedia, and an almanac. On the desk itself was a lamp, a husktop, a cup of pens and pencils, and the drawers were already filled with notebooks and textbooks. Beside the foot of her bed was a wastebasket covered with two big plastic bags, and a 2016 calendar hung on her bedside wall. Meenah grinned, setting her box down before leaning against the door frame with her arms crossed.

"Organized as ebber, huh Serket?"

The cerulean troll let out a soft gasp, turning her head to face the being in the doorway. "Meenah!" Instantly, her face brightened up. She dropped the books from her hands and walked towards her friend. Her eyes had a weird emotion in them; an odd mix of happiness, uncertainty, and guilt. The Pisces troll gave her a smile, hoping that this wouldn't become too awkward. She hated being in these kinds of positions. It always felt weird and wrong. But hey, she had been through worse. Here she was, facing her friend who she thought had gone off the deep end.

Fuck, that was a good pun.

"Meenah-"

"Listen, Aranea, if you're wonderin' if I'm mad aboat ya goin' off and screwin' around in the session, I just wanted ta let ya know that I ain't mad aboat that. Even though what ya did was fuckin' impulsive and insane, I was hoping' that it worked out for ya. It was actually pretty damn brave of ya."

She knew that saying all that sounded crazy, but fuck all that, it was the truth. Aranea's intentions were pretty ambitious for someone like her, and Meenah had to give her some props. Aranea was smiling at her, though her eyes still held uneasiness. She was still a bit nervous. "I'm glad that you're not angry, Meenah. I admit, I kind of expected you to be furious at me."

"Whale, I was at first, but yanno, I know how it feels bein' in that position. Beshore I ran away from the Empress and all that..." Meenah shrugged her shoulders, her hands digging into her pockets. Aranea grinned and nodded, understanding completely what Meenah meant.

"I guess avoiding me wasn't at all cracked up to be, huh?"

A crooked smirk appeared on Meenah's face. "As annoyin' as your stories are, Aranea, you're my best frond no matter what. I just wanted ta let ya know that I reely missed ya, and even though what ya did was fuckin' crazy, and though I kinda took it pershoalnally at first, I just wanted ta say sorry... And that I'm glad that we're alive and I get ta see ya and be with ya again..."

A wide smile appeared on the Serket troll's face, her eyes finally losing the heavy negative emotions, "I'm glad that you feel that way, Meenah. And I'm sorry too. You know that I wouldn't do any of
"S'okay. You reely fucked shit up in that session." A shark-like grin spread across Meenah's face. If one didn't notice the shit that went down in the Beta session, they were seriously fucking oblivious. Or stupid.

"Well, fucking shit up was only one part of my plan." Aranea giggled softly, knowing full well that even her best intentions came back to slap her in the face. "I'm just glad that you're not furious at me, Meenah."

Aranea smiled, and Meenah could see the deep relief in her eyes. It was obvious that she was grateful to see that at least one person understood her motives and actions.

"But regardless of everyfin that happened, Serks, I'm glad that yer back, and I'm sorry I didn't undersand why ya ran off like that in the first place... Yer dancestor ain't the best company."

"I understand. She really can make a change."

"Fer others and hershelf."

Aranea blinked, looking up at Meenah. "What do you mean?"

"..." Meenah rubbed the back of her head, looking uncomfortable. "I kinda... Started a matespritship with her when ya left..."

Aranea's eyes went wide. So wide, that Meenah was able to see the pupils in Aranea's vision eightfold. There was more than just shock in those eyes. It was a mix of shock, bewilderment, and guilt. Meenah sighed internally. She had a feeling this would come up, but she had previously hoped it could have been avoided.

"And it was reely nice at first. But after a whale... She just..." Meenah trailed off, recalling the memories almost all too clearly. She groaned, dropping her head into her hands. "Fuck!! Shit's still hard to talk aboat!"

"Meenah." Aranea placed a hand on Meenah's shoulder, squeezing it lightly. "It's alright. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to."

"Nah, Serks... Ya already heard it, might as whale tell ya." The Pisces troll sighed, lifting her head back up. She looked upset, and Aranea suspected that. Meenah may rarely ever show it, but she cared deeply for her friends and loved ones. "So, what did Vriska do...?"

"She just... became so damn needy and mellowed WAY the fuck out! She changed. She became so... reliant on me! She'd say somefin, then I'd say my opinion aboat it, and then she'd instantly change her mind!" Meenah rolled her eyes from just thinking about it. "I didn't think aboat it much beshore, but now that I'm talkin' aboat it, now I sea it just got so fuckin' annoyin'!! What the shell kind of matesprit agrees with everyfin you do?!"

"You'd be surprised, Meenah."

"Whale, I got uncomfortable. I saw her change, and I didn't like it at all. I didn't like bein' in the quadrant anymore. I didn't like her anymore. It was... So weird... Didn't think someone could get that dependent on me."

Meenah sighed, still feeling slightly uncomfortable, but with Aranea's hand on her shoulder and constant gaze, she started to feel better. She hadn't been able to talk about it with anyone else besides
"But the weirdest thing was that there was a different Vriska, one that was alive and shit, and she gave her ghost a big smackdown. Said some pretty mean shit."

"It must have been John's work," Aranea said, looking away and already in deep thought. "He went back in time and took the ring from the old timeline before I could snatch it."

"Whale, blue buoy got shit done, that's fer shore."

"Shut up."

Meenah snickered and Aranea even cracked a small smile. The atmosphere slowly began to feel at ease as the tension died down. Aranea put her other hand on Meenah's shoulder. "So, what about the alive Vriska? She's the one from the new timeline John made."

"Yea, exactly. So, she gave my ex a good smackdown. Normally, otter Vriska wouldn't let that shit get to her, but the only thing I saw from her were tears. She became so dam vulnerable, I couldn't believe it was the same troll that you and I sailed with."

Aranea seemed shocked. "She changed that much?" She asked, earning a nod from Meenah. The Pisces troll sighed again. "Shoal... I broke up with her. Next thing I knew, I was roundin' up an army with the new Vriska, rode on swabby Pooplord's bull horns, and then, the bubble where we left her burst from skull guy."

Both trolls went silent. It pained their hearts a little to think that English destroyed the place that they resided in after death; but that was life. Now they had a new chance to make things right; to start anew. Meenah sighed and ran a hand through her hair. "And then... I dunno, I don't remember much otter than the ghost army, fightin' English, and comin' back ta life... Went by waaay too fuckin' fast, yanno?"

"Of course." Aranea smiled and let go of Meenah's shoulders as the other stood upright. "Though I'm glad you found some sort of happiness while I was absent, Meenah."

"Yeah, whale, as cool as yer dancestor was, she ain't you, Aranea." A smile appeared on Meenah's face. "Your stories suck slit, but ya know what? I'd take them over somefin pike a shitty relationship any day."

The two trolls smiled at each other. While they avoided each other in the dream bubbles after the events in the doomed timeline, they just picked right back up with time. They couldn't really remember the last time they had some sort of heartfelt conversation. It was weird, but a nice weird. It actually felt like it was meant to be. They were destined friends. There was no denying it. They've been friends for eons, and to end it over stupid little disagreement was a fool's choice. And neither Meenah Peixes or Aranea Serket were fools. That was just a blatant fact.

Meenah extended her arms out, itching for a hug. "So... we cool? We fronds?"

"Best fronds," Aranea said, grinning and nodding as she wrapped her arms around Meenah. The two girls squeezed each other tightly, afraid that if they let go, the other would fade away. But that was stupid since they were alive and all. It didn't matter anymore. They were together again, and nothing was going to separate them from now on.

Being in the hug was nice. They couldn't even remember the last time they hugged, or when a hug felt this inviting. The two of them were too proud to admit their faults, but in times like these, where life was offering new chances and opportunities, this was the time to start anew. And now, both trolls
knew it, and nothing was going to tear them apart ever again.

Just then, the two heard their door open, and a blur of green and black tackled Meenah to the floor. "MEENAH!!!"

"Holy fuck!!" Meenah cried as she was suddenly pinned to the floor. The troll responsible for this was an easy guess. Meulin Leijon. The Leo troll was smiling widely down at Meenah, showing off her two cat-like canine teeth. She had a black pencil dress on with a light green blazer over it. The blazer's collar had small folds and the collar itself stretched down to the middle of her chest, showing a portion of the dress she wore, and it had two pastel light green hearts on the outer and inner portions of her sleeve cuffs, and a light pastel green silhouette of a cat on the bottom left of the blazer. She wore brown, knee-high fringe suede boots with light brown soles. Her blue tail was twisted up, another indication that she was overjoyed to see Meenah again.

"MEENAH, IT'S BEEN SO LONG! I FEEL LIKE I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN FUREFUR!"

"Yeah, whale, I'm here and it'd be reely fuckin' great if ya'd get offa me, Leijon," Meenah sighed as she stopped rubbing her head. She wasn't sure how, but Meulin was a lot stronger than she remembered. She figured Meulin was taking lessons from her own dancestor. Meulin giggled and finally sat up, allowing Meenah to see who else had decided to see her again. The seadweller was suddenly filled with a feeling of déjà vu as she stared up at Kurloz Makara, Damara Megido, and Cronus Ampora. She smirked lightly, remembering meeting up with them in the dream bubbles after antagonizing the human players.

Kurloz waved at her, smiling brightly despite himself, and Damara raised a brow at her curtly. Meenah wasn't sure what happened to either of them during their fight with Lord English, because they weren't present when she took control of Tavros' ghost army back in the dream bubbles. She now realized her feeling of suspicion of Kurloz didn't completely go away just yet. And Damara had always been on her bad side ever since she got killed by her in their session. Despite this, she sent them a shark-like grin to return the favor.

Kurloz was dressed in a black t-shirt, a purple pullover hoodie with two rib bone patterns on the front, a spine and three ribs on the back, and one large bone on the sides of his sleeves. He had black jeans that were completely ripped on the knees, and purple high-top Converse sneakers with the Rage aspect symbol on both sides.

Damara was dressed in a short cream kimono that exposed her cleavage with a black secondary color on the collar and sleeve collars, and there were red and black leaf patterns on the bottom of her sleeves and the sides of her torso. She had a burgundy scarf around her neck, a black waist cincher belt, two thin black bracelets on her right wrist, black suspender lingerie under black biking shorts, and white thigh-high heeled boots with burgundy cloth on the top and burgundy soles. She rolled her eyes, crossing her arms, "[and here I thought you would avoid coming here. It was a nice thought for a while.]"

"Good ta see you too, Megido," Meenah snarled back, her earfins stretching out threateningly. Damara smirked back smugly. Meulin finally got off of Meenah, and Aranea helped the seadweller to her feet. "Are you alright?"

"Yea, I'm fine, Serket. No sweat."

"SORRY ABOUT THAT," Meulin said, smiling bashfully. "KURLOZ TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE FINALLY HERE, AND I COULDN'T CONTROL MYSELF."

"Yeah, it's been a wvhile, Meenah." Cronus gave her a cheesy grin and Meenah almost had to choke
back a gag. Even after all this time, he was still a massive dick and reeked of douche. Cronus' outfit wasn't very different from his old one from the dream bubbles. The only difference was that his old white shirt was replaced with another white shirt, but this was one a v-neck and had the Supreme brand name in big, bold letters on it instead of his Aquarius symbol. That, and he wore his leather jacket much more often now.

Meenah huffed at Cronus, shaking her head slightly. "I almost didn't expect ya ta change yer outfit. Turns out, ya did. Sorta."

"Oh, this?" He pulled out his shirt to examine the black, bold text across his chest. "Yeah, Eridan told me about this brand, and since I'm pretty wealthy I thought I'd give it a shot."

Damara, Meulin, and Aranea sent Cronus dark glares. Even though trolls were required to attend this college, it didn't take away the fact that they still had to pay the human government system money in order to attend. And with the high prices, they found themselves borrowing money through the student loan system. The sheer fact that Cronus was rubbing in his wealthy status directly in their faces about this was clearly enough to annoy the shit out of them. At least Meenah seemed to be a little more modest about it considering her attire.

Cronus suddenly noticed the dark glares in his direction, and Kurloz held up a hand with three fingers in the air. One finger curled down, and the violet seadweller was suddenly overwhelmed with dread. Kurloz was dead silent, but the dark look in the Capricorn troll's eyes was enough to nearly make Cronus wet his pants.

Thinking quick, Cronus cleared his throat and pretended to look at a watch that clearly wasn't on his wrist, "oh, damn! Vwould ya look at the time! I gotta get my tracks done for my first class tomorrow!" He turned to Meenah and gave her a wink with finger guns, "see ya later, Peixes!" And then he rushed out the door in a blur.

Once the remaining few heard a door slam, Meulin erupted into a fit of giggles while Kurloz sent the other girls a thumbs up with a smile. Damara smiled lightly at Kurloz, and Meenah gave him a playful slap on the shoulder. "Nice job, Makara! Glad ta know ya didn't lose yer spooky charm!"

"Indeed," Aranea said, unable to suppress her grin. "That was enjoyable. Thank you, Kurloz."

Kurloz nodded proudly at the two before turning to Meulin and signing something. The Leo troll nodded and took his arm into hers, "WELL, WE BETTER GIVE YOU SOME SPACE, MEENAH! WE'RE PLANNING ON GOING OUT TO EAT TONIGHT, SO YOU BETTER HURRY AND UNPACK!"

"Wait, what?!"

Meulin and Kurloz walked out without another word, and Damara followed them out. Meenah turned to Aranea, flabbergasted. Aranea shrugged, looking just as surprised as Meenah was. "I suppose they're going to try to convince Porrim and Kankri to eat out tonight."

"Whale, shit!! If I knew we were gonna do that, I woulda came here earlier!!"

Aranea watched as Meenah tore open one of the boxes, and she glanced over at the rest that were settled in the middle of the room. "Need some help sorting out your things?"

"Oh, please, Serket! Ya should know I don't organize shit like you do!"

"Well, you should! It's proven that if you organize everything, you'll have a better chance at finding what you're looking for!"
"Oh cod, don't go Vantas on me! I'll krill ya!"

"Not if I krill you first!"

"Krill! You said krill!"

Yep. Not even eternity or a lengthy fight and disagreement could change their friendship.

Chapter End Notes

Added some stuff, changed the title, fixed a few errors, cut some stuff out, etc. Basic shit, you know.

P.S.: For those who don't think Aranea still exists after the events of [S] Game Over, look at these two links:

http://sparksparta.tumblr.com/post/141924188600/holy-fucking

Then we can fight. Not kidding. I'll fight you on this. Fight me.
Kankri's alarm buzzed off, provoking a soft groan from him. It was never easy waking up at assigned hours, but the Cancer troll deliberately set his alarm an hour earlier than the others to get used to the cycle. And he wasn't going to go through with it alone, no matter how badly everyone complained.

Shuffling out of his bed, he peered over at the other side where Cronus was using a pillow to soften the harsh buzzing of the alarm. The Aquarius troll groaned as it did little to deafen out the sound, but he didn't give up because he pulled his blanket up over the pillow above his head to create a makeshift cocoon. Kankri shook his head disapprovingly.

Despite his vow of celibacy, Kankri had decided that he would let up on his vow slightly and open up to the platonic quadrants rather than romantic ones. And since he and Cronus had stricken up an unlikely friendship, Kankri decided to take it a step forward and asked Cronus if he was willing to be his moirail. It was safe to say Cronus was more than willing to give it a try, and they've been platonic soulmates ever since. But even now, after being moirails with Cronus for quite a while, Kankri felt that his lack of motivation to 'check himself before he wrecked himself' was sickening.

"Cronus, come." Kankri stood beside Cronus' bed, tugging at one of the many blankets. "It's a new day and a new life so let's start bright and early."

"Chief, listen," Cronus sat up to look at Kankri, his hair sticking out in all directions and dark circles already forming under his eyes. It was clear he wasn't used to this lifestyle just yet. "I knowv that you're excited for this college stuff. I am too, but for God's sake, could you at least go back to bed and vwake me wen there's actual light outside?"

To prove his point, the highblood opened up the curtains to the window, revealing nothing but the tiniest break of sunlight over the horizon. The clouds were barely a different color so he estimated it was around four or five AM. But Kankri merely crossed his arms over his chest, dismissing his friend’s question as if it were the stupid question asked that sweep. Or year, in Earth terms.

"Now, Cronus, we both now that waking up early helps our minds adjust to working throughout the day and being able to get more work done. If we all wake up at these hours, then getting to our eight
o'clock classes won't be as difficult as our peers make it out to be, and it allows us to be the first in line to get food at the cafeteria if we ever need to do so, and..."

Cronus facepalmed softly. 'God damn it, Kankri.' It wasn't even six in the morning and he was already talking off his earfins. He prayed for a miracle. A good one, not the angel of double death Kurloz always used to preach about. That stuff has - and still does - scare him shitless despite Kurloz's stitched up mouth.

A few loud bangs against the wall stopped Kankri short. He looked at Cronus, who held up both hands above his head. "Not me." A few more bangs. It was coming from Cronus' side of the wall.

"Vantas, you betta shut yer cod damn trap! It's fuckin' four thirty AM!"

"Honestly, Kanny!" Porrim's voice came from the room on Kankri's side. "It's too early to even be blinking! Go back to bed!"

"Porrim, I would greatly appreciate it if you did not use that ridiculous nickname for me!" Kankri folded his arms across his chest again, looking slightly annoyed. He opened his door, as if he were trying to address his target face-to-face despite her closed door. "I am not a wriggler, and you are not my lusus nor my human mother, so do not coddle me and treat like that on this fresh new planet like Beforus."

"Rolling my eyes here, Kanny."

"And Meenah, it would be very wise to tag your words with the appropriate labels to avoid triggering someone. Although you didn't use any racial slurs, I should advise you to-"

"Oh my fuckin' God, Vantas, nomoby gives a flying flippin' shit aboat your useless trigger words! If anyfin, yer triggering me from being up and talkin' so early!"

"I agree with Meenah on this one!" Aranea sounded pretty pissed off despite being an early bird herself. "It's too early to even be opening your eyes, Kankri! Go back to bed!"

"Ha! In yer face, Vantas!"

"HYFTFDUT ITH HE THTARTING THHIT THHIT ALREADY?"

"Unfortunately, yes, Mituna, he is."

"Oh my God FHFHCKHFVG!"

"Shoosh, babe, it's okay."

"I'm thorry."

"No problem. And Kankri, get a grip! Some of us rad girls need our beauty sleep!"

"[And I need to look extra sexual today!]"

"Yeah, man, c'mon. Some of us are tryin' to sleep here."

"I agree with Rufioh. It is far too early to be even be discussing and tagging such lewd profanities."

"SOME OF US HAVE NINE O'CLOCK CLASSES, OKAY?" Somehow, Meulin was seemingly louder than she already was. "PURLOZ IS NOT A MORNING RISER LIKE YOU ARE, KANKRI."
Cronus looked at Kankri from his bed, a sheepish grin on his face. "I guess you're outnumbered here, chief."

Kankri opened his mouth to go on a ten minute rant, but Meenah got her voice out first. "Wait a minute... Maryam, I thought ya said we couldn't hear Vantas talk because Zahhak installed some soundproof shit in our walls?"

It got dead silent after that. Almost all at once, the remaining five doors opened up and the rest of the trolls peeked out from their rooms. Even Kurloz was looking out to see what went wrong. All eyes were set on Horuss, who began to sweat profusely. "Uh... Let me take a look." The blue blood examined the door that belonged to himself and Rufioh. He dusted the grains in his fingers, squinted, than paled. Rufioh's eyes went wide. "Yo, Horuss... you alright?"

"Oh my..." The hightroll cleared his throat, setting his goggles back down over his eyes. Meenah crossed her arms over her chest, tapping her foot impatiently. "Whale, what is it, Zahhak?"

"I, uh..." Horuss cleared his throat, but it did little in comparison to his sweating feature. Darama crossed her arms, her eyebrows furrowing to sharpen her dark features. "[Tell me he fucked up the most important thing.]"

"Hey, easy, doll," Rufioh said with an uneasy smile as he placed a hand on Damara's shoulder. "Let's hear what he has to say first."

Horuss sent a light smile towards Rufioh, lifting his mask off his face to release some sweat in his sweat valves. "It seems I have misplaced the correct use of my abilities. I merely applied a new form of paint... rather than a soundproof spray..."

His words were met with silence. Save for Meenah facepalming. Mituna gave a loud groan and Latula sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose. Horuss pulled his hair into a messy ponytail, a cracked smile on his face. "Erm... I suppose I mixed up the solutions while we were settling in... Purely by accident, I assure you all..."

"Zahhak, I'm gonna say this once and only once," Meenah looked at Horuss and gave him a dark glare. "Fix. This. Shit. Got it?!"

"Y-yes, your horseness! I mean, hayness! I mean... Oh, fiddlesticks!" The Sagittarius troll covered his mouth with his hands, somehow sweating even more profusely than before, making a few trolls recoil in disgust. "Please pardon my lewd language..."

"Now, Horuss, I'm glad that you are, or were, aware of your words when you spoke to Meenah." Kankri crossed his arms and everyone tensed up, feeling a lecture come right around the corner. "While she is royalty and quite blunt and ride with her words and completely disregards the trigger system, I'm assuming that you all are triggered by Horuss' choice of words despite his awareness. But I digress from that because I find it severely triggering that you would all use a form of substance to silence my lectures...lessons, when we all know how that won't be effective-"

"Not here for it!"

All at once, the other trolls slipped back into their rooms and slammed the doors shut, save for Cronus. A few clicks were heard, and Cronus covered his earfins with set of headphones, immediately rolling over on his bed to resume his sleep. "Sorry, chief, but it's too early to be standing up right nowv..."

Kankri let out a huff, rolling his candy red eyes. "Honestly, Cronus, if you all would just try to-" The
sound of snoring cut him off, and the Cancer troll stared at his moirail in disbelief. Did he seriously just fall asleep in five seconds? Cronus’ chest rose a fell as he clutched a pillow close, snoring slightly with every breath he took. Yup. There was no way to wake him up now.

A small snort came out from Kankri's nostrils as he walked towards the steps, arms still crossed over his chest. "Fine. Suit yourselves. But don't cry to me when you're running late to your classes and—"

"SHUT UP, KANKRI!"

What a great way to start the morning, right?

**Alpha Trolls (Except Kankri): Rush to Class**

On second thought, don't.

It was the first day of school, who the hell wouldn't be late to their first classes? They have a couple hours to kill, so there was no need to rush. Unless that person/troll were Kankri.

The Cancer troll had left the house not too long ago to fetch himself a cup of coffee despite having a coffee machine in the kitchen. But then again, nobody was complaining that he was gone after their little fiasco at four AM.

Cronus was in the bathroom he and Kankri shared and splashed some ice water on his face. It stung like hell, but it alerted his senses as he ran a hand through his messy hair, still trying to process how the hell humans could even be walking and talking at these God awful hours. He was starting to think becoming human wasn't all cracked up to be. *Maybe I'll just be a troll who dresses like a human instead of going all out on it,* he thought after he grabbed a small towel and dried off his face. He stared at his reflection, then shook his head. *Nah! I hate feeling like I'm in the wrong body all the time!*

The Aquarius troll then headed downstairs, the smell of fresh coffee hitting his nose. The rest of the group were sitting at either the table in the dining room or the couch, trying to completely wake up. It was close to seven thirty AM. An improvement, but not by much. The trolls felt like the walking dead. If Dave or Dirk were there, that would have been the most golden ironic opportunity ever, but now that the trolls were alive, it didn't make much sense either way, but let's face it, they'd still use it. The point was: everyone felt like hell.

One of the things the Alpha group would miss in the dream bubbles was the fact that life wasn't really life. There were no responsibilities or worries in the dream bubbles, and they could have slept the entire time being dead if they wanted to. But now that they were back on Earth and their creator demanded that they should try and make use of themselves on this planet that could also be run by Hussie himself, life was pretty much shit at the moment.

Porrim was making coffee in the kitchen while Rufioh was pulling out the mugs from the cabinet with the cream and sugar. The jade troll grabbed her feminist-labeled mug and quickly poured herself a cup, walking into the living room where everyone was trying to keep themselves from dozing off. She spotted Cronus wandering in and gave him a toothy grin. "Morning, Cronus."

"Hey, Porrim..." He muttered lazily before collapsing onto a recliner chair. He gave a heavy sigh, earning a snicker from Latula. "I guess having Kankles as a roommate ain't as rad as ya thought, huh?"

"Don't get me wrong, I'm as pale as I can be for the guy, but sometimes I feel like I gotta drug his drinks so he won't wake up so damn early..."
"[I could help you with that.]" Darama grumbled from the kitchen. The sound of a steaming tea kettle rang through the kitchen, almost drowning out a soft laugh that followed her words. "Doll, I think we all could agree to help Cronus out with that."

"Yea, Amphora, can't ya do anythin to shut the guy up?" Meenah snorted, crossing her arms over her chest. Aranea was behind her, brushing and braiding her hair. "We almost had the glubbin' security guards and shit come to our door 'cause we were so damn loud and pissed off."

Cronus groaned, rubbing his aching eyes. "Trust me, Meenah, I'm trying. He's a great friend and all, but he's Goddamn stubborn. I havwe to wvord my sentences right or else he might get triggered."

"How you manage to be moirails with him, I'll never know," Porrim muttered as she lifted her mug to her lips. Meulin giggled, "WELL, I CERTAINLY DIDN'T PURRDICT IT TO HAPPEN, BUT MEW AND HIM ARE ONE OF MY PALE OTPS!"

"Err... Thanks, Meulin..."

Porrim rolled her eyes. Meulin and her ships were also another thing she'll never be able to understand. Suddenly, a thought popped into her head before turning to Kurloz, "Kurloz, did you tell Meulin about what happened?"

Kurloz nodded and signed his answer to Meulin. She watched him through a yawn, then looked at Porrim when he finished. "HE SAID THAT HE HEARD US ALL SCREAMING, AND WOKE ME UP TO HELP SHUT KANKRI UP."

Porrim nodded after taking in a long sip of her coffee. She couldn't believe he did that. Deciding to change the subject, she glanced around the room after finishing her sip of coffee. "So, what's everyone's morning schedule for today?"

"I have thcienthe today," Mituna mumbled as he rubbed his eyes from behind his hair. "I bet it'll be thitty 'cause it'th at nine."

"I got science wvith Captor, and for once, I agree vwith him," Cronus mumbled. Even with the effects of the ice water, he still couldn't open his eyes completely. Kurloz turned to Meulin after she finished yawning, signing something to her. Meulin nodded, turning back to Porrim. "KURLOZ SAYS HE HAS ENGLISH TODAY AT NINE THIRTY, AND SO DO I."

"As do I," Aranea said as she finished tying up Meenah's braids. "I just hope that Kankri isn't there after the stunt he pulled today."

"Lucky fer you, Serk, he don't." Meenah snorted, trying her best to keep her eyes open. "I got him in my marine biology class today."

Latula pulled a face as she leaned against Mituna's shoulder. "Ugh, that's rough, Paycheck. I have him in my history class at noon."

"At least you don't have to deal with him for your first class," Porrim muttered, taking in another sip of her coffee. "He and I have the same social service class."

"You two and your social services," Aranea said with a smile. "Will you debate with the teacher about feminism?"

Porrim chuckled lightly. "Perhaps. If they're a feminist or supports the movement, but God only knows if Kanny will actually let the professor talk." The jade troll swirled the contents of her morning wake-up juice in her mug, and she seemed to notice Latula's envious gaze. "Don't worry,"
she said with a smile. "There's plenty for everyone."

"I got 'em, Porrim." Rufioh then came in with a tray full of empty mugs, cream and sugar, and a steaming pot of the freshly brewed coffee. He set the tray down and Latula, Cronus, and Meenah grabbed their mugs and helped themselves.

"I have woodshop at ten this morning. It'll help me work up quite a sweat and some time to think about how to sound proof our rooms now that Kankri knows about it all." Horuss was wiping his forehead with a towel, and it was already dripping. Mituna gagged, sticking out his tongue in disgust and Aranea pulled a face.

"[Nobody wants to see that, horse man.]" Damara muttered as she sat beside Rufioh, opting for green tea instead of coffee. "[Throw that away before it stinks up the whole hive.]

Horuss stared at her in confusion, but Rufioh waved his hand quickly, smiling sheepishly. "Hey, man, can ya toss the towel in the washing machine? I don't think anyone wants to smell sweat this early..."

"Oh!" Horuss gave his matesprit an embarrassed smile. "My apologies, Rufioh..."

"No worries," Rufioh muttered, a weak grin on his face. Even though Horuss was polite, it didn't take a genius to know that he unsettled everyone with his hobbies. Especially his sweat and obsession with horses. But in the end, he was glad that Horuss wasn't offended or pondered on why everyone was disgusted with his sweat. The Sagittarius troll got up to put the towel away, but not before giving Rufioh a quick peck on the forehead. Rufioh could practically hear Damara's brain sizzle with rage as she seethed with envy. Even after an eternity, Damara's jealous personality still shone through her cold exterior.

The subject needed to change. Now. Thinking quickly, Latula cleared her throat and turned to Rufioh. "So, Ruf, what do you and Damz have today?"

"[Acting,]" Damara answered, finishing off her tea. The rest of the crew looked at Rufioh, obviously waiting for him to translate. The brown blood chuckled, running a hand through his messy mohawk. "We both got acting class today."

"JGFGJKH WHAT?" Mituna spluttered, nearly spazzing off the couch if Latula didn't hold onto him and Kurloz to shoosh pap him. "Why do you guyth have the fun claththeth?"

"We're both going for acting majors," Rufioh said with laugh. "Gotta get a start on it somehow, right?"

"And besides," Latula nuzzled against Mituna's head, "you and I are going to be pro skaters! That'll be fun when we get these dumb required classes out of the way, right?"

"...Yeah, I guethth tho!" A crooked smile appeared on Mituna's face, showing off his twin set of fangs before rubbing his forehead against Latula's. Meenah's fuchsia eyes rolled as she watched the lovey-dovey scene. "Ugh, get a room," she muttered under her breath and earning a light swat on the arm from Aranea. She sent her best friend a glare before rolling her eyes again. Today was going to be a long one.

**Alpha trolls: Arrive to your classes.**

But you all aren't going to do that just yet, are you? Of course not. The campus was simply too big to not walk around on.
The majority of students were humans, but there were some trolls here and there. The campus was
made up of eight buildings, a small quad, and a few fields not too far off behind the Grand Huss
building. The four biggest buildings being the most important for all majors, and they were the Grand
Huss building, the What Pumpkin building, the Topatoco building, and the Paradox Space building.

The Grand Huss building was three stories high with the dean and faculty offices on the top floor,
the student government on the second floor, and the We Love Fine school store, the cafeteria, and
the nurse's office on the first floor. Behind the building was a slightly smaller building used for
indoor recreation, and beyond that outside on the left was a large football field, and on the right were
a soccer field and tennis court, and each had stainless steel benches on both sides of their respective
fields. Beside the indoor recreation building was the parking lots and front gates.

The What Pumpkin building was on the right side of the Grand Huss building, and it was used for
the History and the English majors. The building itself was two stories high with the English classes
on the bottom, and the History classes on the top. Right beside it was the combination of the library
and auditoriums with a joint hallway connecting the two buildings together. The auditoriums were
below the library, and students had to walk down a short ramp from inside the library to get to its
main hallway. The main auditorium was big enough for all the students and faculty to fit inside
comfortably, then had a set of hallways leading to the two different theater classrooms; those were
used for the social service majors and the acting majors. The library had two floors, and the first floor
had a small portion dedicated to two large conference rooms on the left hand side, while the rest was
filled with computers and high bookshelves, and the second floor had classrooms circling around the
library.

Beside the Grand Huss on the left was the Paradox Space building. It was three stories high, but its
size was a little smaller compared to the Grand Huss building. The building was for mainly the
Science majors, and the building itself had a simple red bricked design, and a wide, stainless steel
cylinder was sticking out on the rooftop. The planetarium was always the eye catcher for visitors,
and the Astronomy and Astrology majors were almost always in there, using it and reaping the
benefits.

Beside the Paradox Space building were two one story box-like buildings, almost hidden behind the
trees if it weren't for the large dirt path leading towards them. One was the woodshop building for the
Engineering majors, and behind it was a large lake that turned into a river, which was used for the
water wheel to help power up building despite being technologically advanced. It's neighboring
structure was a slightly larger building for the Art and the Music majors. A small, gray, soundproof
studio stood out on the right side where the Music majors practiced their work, while the Art majors
had the rest of the building to use.

Across the Grand Huss building was the Topatoco building. It was a rather large, three story
technology complex for all the Computer majors, the Mathematics majors, and the Psychology
majors. While the Computer majors usually met on the third floor, some classes were completely
scattered around the building for some God only known reason. Regardless, the Mathematics majors
usually met on the bottom floor, and the Psychology majors met on the second, where the students
got an eyeful of the vibrant colors of nature. Hussie strategically organized that, and many of the
students and faculty weren't sure if he did that to actually improve their grades, or screw with their
heads. To many, the latter seemed to be more valid.

The dormitories and fraternity houses were only a quick five minute walk away past the Paradox
Space building, divided by a fork in the road. On the left were the dorms. The dorms were broken
into four buildings before the fraternity house; Pawn, Bishop, Queen, and King. Pawn is the male
freshman and sophomore dorm, Bishop is the female freshman and sophomore dorm, Queen is the
female junior and senior dorms, and King is the male junior and senior dorms. Each building has a
lounge, a laundry room, and 24/7 security guard check-in. The rooms ranged from single to double, and each room had their own bathroom, kitchen, and controlled air conditioning and heating.

On the right of the fork in the road were the fraternity houses. The houses are lined up on both sides of the street, almost resembling a small neighborhood. Each house had either two or three stories, and there were up to six bedrooms and equal amount of bathrooms to follow. No matter the floor count, all the frat houses have small front yard, a living room, a kitchen, a den, and a basement. Like the dorms, the frat houses have controlled heating and AC, a laundry room, and a dining room.

Regardless of major, all buildings had state-of-the-art computers, modern furniture, and quality food in the cafeteria. Even so, the closest town was just a ten minute bus ride or drive away since some students were commuters. The campus had five sport teams, three based on their respective outdoor fields, and the other two were a basketball team and a swim team. The campus was surrounded by regular trees and evergreens, and a set of concrete paths that lead to any of the eight buildings and one stretched past the campus towards the dorms, frat houses, and parking. Steel rails were placed between concrete steps on a few buildings, and assorted bushes and small plants were placed around the walls of the buildings. In the quad of the campus was a digital directory, and beside it was a large maple tree that had a plaque on the trunk that read: Welcome to Beforus University! A college where humans and trolls can work together in harmony and achieve something that humans nor trolls could ever think of pulling off alone. Your success is the most important thing to us. But remember, even after you graduate, you're here forever.

It was a quarter to nine and the campus was now beginning to buzz to life. The college was recently opened, so there wasn't a huge amount of students, but there was enough to make it feel like any other college. Students were wandering to and fro; some joining their friends while others left to head to class. It was a cool day with a slight breeze here and there, so many were wearing long sleeved shirts or hoodies to keep themselves warm. The trolls stopped in the quad, looking for their assigned buildings according to the map.

Horuss quickly found the building for his class. He quickly kissed Rufioh before bidding the others farewell. Damara glared at Horuss' disappearing form, but Rufioh muttered something in Eastern Beforan into her ear. She gave a snort, but calmed down altogether.

Porrin then pointed to the amphitheater and walked off, waving to the rest of the group with Rufioh and Damara in tow. Kurloz smiled and signed something to Meulin, who eagerly nodded and pointed to the Grand Huss building. She turned to the others with a wide smile on her face. "KURLOZ AND I ARE GOING TO GET SOME HOT CHOCOLATE! SEE YOU GUYS LATER!"

Kurloz gave Mituna a pap on the head before leaving, and his moirail waved as they walked off. Cronus then appeared behind Mituna and placed a hand on his shoulder, pointing to the Paradox Space building. "There's our class, Captor. Let's go before we're late."

"O-okay!" Mituna broke free of his grasp and turned to Latula to kiss her good-bye. He gave a slightly sloppy kiss on the lips, but it obvious that neither one of them minded. "Thee you later, Tulip!"

"Bye, babe!" Latula pecked his cheek, grinning. "Let's go boarding after class, okay?"

"Yeah, let'th!" Mituna gave her one last kiss before running towards his designated building, not even bothering to listen to Cronus' cries for him to wait. Meenah rolled her eyes while Latula snickered. The Libra troll put her skateboard down to head to the Paradox Space building. She turned to Meenah, "kick Cronus for me if he makes fun of Mituna."
"No need ta tell me twice, Pyrope."

The two girls smirked for a second and Latula kicked off and leaving Meenah and Aranea alone. The two remaining trolls faced each other, smiling.

"So, ya ready to start off this new life of ours?"

"I'm as ready as I'll be."

Meenah smirked, crossing her arms. "See ya later, Serks?"

"Until then, Meenah." There was a glint in Aranea's eyes as she spoke, and Meenah instantly knew that the two of them would be able to handle just about anything that this new form of life threw at them. During their session, Meenah killed off their group to keep living as ghosts in the game, and after an eternity of waiting, and Aranea attempted to stop an unbeatable opponent to save billions of other players in the game, and succeeded. And although they heard rumors of college being hell for humans, they literally went through hell and back.

They both sent each other small smiles, then they parted ways. Their new life at Beforus University had officially begun. They didn't know what it would have in store for them, but one thing's for sure: it'll be nothing compared to Sgrub.
It was a quarter past noon when Meenah walked through the doors of the What Pumpkin building, on her way to her second class. She had Global History right before her Marine Biology class, and she was hoping that it won't as painful. She was sure that Kankri will arrive to the class the earliest (no surprise there), and she was also sure that when he catches sight of her, he'll openly invited her to sit next to him despite the event that happened earlier that morning. But, it'll painfully obvious he want her to sit next to him to lecture her, and Meenah was totally fucking sure that she'll actually try to listen to the professor going over the course outline. Fucking hell, she just joined that class to look at fish!

The seadweller let out a heavy sigh as she walked through the building. It was a bit small, but it didn't take long for her to find the classroom. The halls were pretty linear and dull, after all. They were a plain white color with several framed pieces of artwork from various home decor stores. The classroom doors were a dull shade of brown with one bulletproof window slapped right in the middle. It was pretty boring; perfect for some dull asshole to study in.
Meenah opened the door to her class and began stepping inside. The desks were these long black tables with black plastic school chairs lined up in a U shape, facing the blackboard that spread across the opposite wall with a whiteboard smack dab in the middle. A small podium was on the left side beside the blackboard, and a projector hung in the middle of the ceiling facing the whiteboard. A soft growl escaped her throat. Boring and dull, like usual.

But then she saw Aranea.

The Scorpio troll was sitting in one of the chairs in the middle table, clearly focused on a book that she had just rented from the library. Meenah smirked, shaking her head. The fuchsia troll swaggered over to Aranea, hovering over her to see if she would sense someone staring at her.

...Fuck that. She was too impatient.

"Hey, Serket!"

Aranea gasped, lurching upwards and turning around, eyes wide. She looked like she was about to pounce at Meenah; which was partially due to her instincts. Getting your neck snapped wasn't a fun thing. It was not a recommended activity. But once Aranea got a look at who spoke out her name, the terror and caution immediately drained from her eyes.

"Meenah! You scared me!"

"Yeah, obubbliously." A light cackle came from the seadweller as she took the seat right next to her best friend, much to Aranea's enjoyment. It was a pleasant surprise for the both of them. Meenah would have thought that she'd have to endure this boring class alone, and would probably drop it by the middle of the semester. But now that she had the class with Aranea, the two could swap notes, be partners for projects, and totally not cheat at all on tests. "Didn't expect ta sea ya in here, Serket! I thought ya already had a class in this borin' building?"

"I did, but it was English with Kurloz and Meulin," Aranea informed as she bookmarked her page. Meenah laughed loudly, "Makara in English!?"

"Yes." She closed her book, making Meenah grin because fuck yeah, she was getting attention. "But Meulin translated everything he said. Or signed, actually."

"What'd he do?" Meenah pressed, her shoulders shaking from trying to hold in her laughter. "Sign "honk" after every sentence?"

Aranea snickered, but quickly pressed a hand to her lips, trying to stiffen a laugh. Meenah smirked, leaning back in her chair while Aranea tried to recover from laughing. "No," she said finally, fanning herself. "But he did to Meulin!"

"Honk!"

More snickers.

"Honk honk!"

The two girls smirked at each other for a few seconds, and then burst out laughing. Students that walked into the classroom couldn't help but stare at the two laughing trolls. They were laughing way harder than they should have been, but they couldn't help it. They weren't fond of Kurloz; he was pretty much comic relief to them.

"Oh cod!" Meenah rubbed her eyes, wiping away any tears that formed in the corners. "That
religion's a glubbing joke!"

"It's so stupid!" Aranea agreed between fits of laughter, trying to breathe normally again. "How about you? Did you think Kankri will run his mouth your next class?"

"Oh my fuckin' COD, don't efin say his name!" Meenah facepalmed, slouching back in her seat. Any urge to keep laughing had instantly shut down. "I plan on tunain' Kankri out from bitchin' about earlier this mornin'. I plan on actually LISFININ' to the glubbin' professor, Serket!"

"Well, that's what you're supposed to do, Meenah," Aranea said, grinning. "But I'm assuming it's not going to be all bad since you are going to be around fish?"

"Nah, probs not. But, I heard from otter majors pike that they said we're gon' go on a whole shitload of trips to the aquariums!" The excitement in Meenah's eyes was evident. They were practically shining. "And we can bring a frond if we wanna."

Aranea blinked, but then a slow grin spread across her face. "You mean-?!"

"Shell yeah, Serket! Free trips to the aquarium!"

"Whoa! Sounds pretty bangarang!"

The girls blinked and looked over their shoulders, spotting Rufioh with his usual easygoing grin. They didn't even see him (or hear him) come in. The Taurus troll took a seat beside Meenah, propping his legs up onto the desk. "Been a bit, huh, girls?"

Aranea smiled wider and Meenah raised a cocky eyebrow. "You seem more chilled out that usual, Nitram."

"Yeah, the first class was actually pretty cool." Rufioh's large bull ears fluttered a little as he spoke. He really was excited. "Damz wasn't as much of a troublemaker as I thought she'd be."

"Wow, that's a glubbin' first," Meenah muttered with an eyeroll. Even though Damara and Meenah were considered teammates before and allies now, the two still got on each other's nerves on a weekly basis. But still, they haven't gouged each other's eyes out, so it was safe to say they let bygones be bygones. Somewhat. "Damn witch."

"Hey, Peixes, lighten up," Rufioh said with a nervous laugh. "She ain't bein' as bad as she usually has been..." A light bead of brown sweat rolled down the side of his head. It was clear he was still anxious around her. But who wouldn't? Damara's specialty was making people uncomfortable.

"Good afternoon, students!"

The group turned to the door, and the professor walked in. A short, round man with a mop of greasy brown hair that reminded the trolls of Cronus almost too much. The students all sat up as the professor walked up to the board and Rufioh put his feet down. Meenah gave a light snort and crossed her arms, slouching back in her chair. Aranea glanced over at Meenah to scold her, but she saw that she was paying attention despite her posture.

"Welcome to Global History 101!"

**Kurloz and Meulin: Enjoy the weather!**

Another cool breeze rushed past the campus, sending fallen leaves off from one side to another. Meulin gave a soft squeal as a quick shiver ran through her body.
"IT'S CHILLY TODAY!"

Kurloz nodded, a smile on his face. "IT'S A NICE CHANGE COMPARED TO THE DREAM BUBBLES." And he meant it. Even though their time in the dream bubbles was limitless, it got boring quickly despite the many memories that ran through them. It was also nice to not hide his dark, capricious secrets too. He breathed out deeply through his nose, looking a little remorseful.

Meulin squeezed his arm gently, smiling softly up at him. "DON'T WORRY, KURLOZ. WHAT HAPPENED IN THE GAME WAS UNCONTROLLABLE, BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE NONBELIEVERS GOT TO SEE THAT THE TALES OF THE MIRTHFUL MESSIAHS WERE TRUE!"

"PREACH, MY LITTLE KITTYBITCH." Kurloz gave her a dark grin, running a hand through her hair. "THE UNFAITHFUL ONES WERE DESTROYED BY DOUBLE DEATH, AND WE WOULD HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS IN KILLING THEM ALL IF WE WEREN'T STOPPED BY THE DEMIGOD HUMANS."

"OH, THE HUMANS!" The olive troll let out a squeal, jumping in place. "I HAVE SO MANY NEW SHIPS NOW THANKS TO ALL MY NEW CLASSES!"

Kurloz smiled, playfully rolling his purple eyes. Meulin and her ships was always a quirk that he admired about her. Something suddenly buzzed in his ear and the Capricorn troll flinched and swatted at it. A small flash of yellow buzzed across his line of sight. Kurloz temporarily thought it was Mituna, but his spazzy moirail was nowhere to be found. Rather, another flash of yellow zipped by and Kurloz made sure to follow it this time.

It was a bee. The bug landed on a discarded iced tea can, moving its feelers around to scavenge any leftover fluids. But upon closer inspection, Kurloz could see that the insect didn't have fur and it wasn't round. The yellow bug had a much narrower shape and appeared smooth and glossy compared to a bee. Plus, its buzz sounded much more intimidating.

Yellow jacket wasps. Fuck.

Kurloz put a hand on Meulin's shoulder and tilted his head towards a set of tables and chairs, away from the wasps. Even though Kurloz didn't know too much about Earth insects, what he did know was that wasps of all kinds were evil little fuckers and they scared the shit out of the humans. And if he was being honest, they were making him jumpy too. Unlike bees, wasps could sting more than once, and they hurt like a bitch. The last thing he wanted was for either him or Meulin to get stung, so when Kurloz pointed to the little yellow bastards, she instantly nodded her head.

"KURLOZ! MEULIN!"

The pair jumped at the sudden shout. Mituna was running up to his moirail, waving his hand high up in the air. Cronus was there too, taking his time with his hands stuffed inside his pockets. Kurloz's demeanor eased up, just like it always did whenever Mituna was around. The lowblood skidded to a stop, almost losing his balance before Kurloz's quick hands held him in place.

"Vwowv, vway to go and almost crack your skull open a second time, Captor."

"GO THUCK YOUR BULGE HTDYAALSHKSS!"

Kurloz gave Mituna a quick pap on the cheek before turning to Cronus and flipping him off. The seadweller held his hands up, signaling for peace. The last thing that he, or anyone else for that
matter, wanted was to fuck around with a juggalo. Mituna gave Kurloz a pap on the head, telling him not to waste his time.

"Tho, how wath clathth for you guyth?"

Kurloz grinned and gave Mituna and double thumbs up, nodding his head vigorously. Meulin giggled and mimed Kurloz's thumbs up. "IT WAS GREAT! IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME FUR THE TEACHER TO KNOW WHAT KURLOZ WAS SAYING, BUT IT WAS FUN!"

"HE DIDN'T MAKE FUN OF HIM, DID HE?"

Kurloz shook his head, waving a hand in front of his face. The professors at the university were pretty chill motherfuckers according to the purple highblood. Everything was all good, and Mituna gave his moirail a toothy grin.

Then, a flash of yellow zoomed past his face.

"Whoa!"

Kurloz and Meulin felt their eyes widen. They forgot how close they were to the wasps. Mituna's eyes followed the little yellow blur, as if he were hypnotized. Frantically, Kurloz shook his head at Mituna and tugged at his arm. The Gemini troll blinked behind his hair, obviously confused.

"What' th the matter, Kurloz? It' th juth a bee!"

Kurloz shook his head again, trying to tell Mituna to stay away from those things. They were pure, unadulterated evil. Evil to the point where Kurloz wouldn't want to associate with them. But Mituna didn't understand why the Capricorn troll was being so cautious all of a sudden. It wasn't really like him unless there was danger around. But since when were bees dangerous?

To show his moirail that he was being silly, Mituna held out his finger towards one of the wasps. The bug seemed to have noticed the gray finger approaching him, because it immediately stopped what it was doing to examine what was going on. In fact, it actually crawled up his finger and moved its feelers around.

Mituna smiled, feeling Kurloz's grip on his arm loosen. The highblood seemed surprised that it wasn't freaking out. Wasps were normally territorial and aggressive. The mustard blood gave Kurloz a soft pap on the cheek, grinning toothily.

"Thee? It' th fine."

"Vwowv. For once, you didn't fuck shit up."

"AHYDGHGDL PITHTH OFF, ATHTH HAT!!!"

Bad move. The wasp had sensed Mituna's aggravation, and when the troll began to quiver from anger, it instantly dug its stinger into the palm his hand. The lowblood let out a howl of pain, shaking his hand as the wasp flew away. "THE BATHTARD THTUNG ME!" He as he swatted his hands around, trying to either kill the wasp or bat it away. It didn't matter to Mituna at the moment.

But the wasp wasn't done yet. It could sense Mituna's anger and his flailing hands, but when it actually got hit by one of the troll's hands, now it was mad. The wasp flew around Mituna's head, its buzzing now higher pitched to indicate that it was going to sting again. And it did. The insect managed to get another sting in right next to the previous one.
"IT FUCKING THTUNG ME AGAIN!!" The Gemini troll cried, his arms flailing around in all directions. "FUCK, FUCK, FUCKING HELL IT HURT!!"

Another sting. And that was the last thing that wasp ever did because right after it did, Kurloz whacked it down to the ground at the right time, and squished it with the foot of his sneaker.

"FUCKINGKGHGDGSLG!!!" Mituna was still spazzing around, trying to kill the wasps that was already dead. And he wasn't looking where he was going. Meulin's hands flew to her mouth when Mituna let out a yell as he stumbled over the railing, landing on his back with a thump on the lush green lawn.

"MITUNA!!" Both Kurloz and Meulin jumped over the railing and rushed over to him. Kurloz kneeled down and put a hand on Mituna's head and Meulin put a hand on his cheek. "MITUNA?"

"FHGLDLJASGSHYGETY!!" Mituna flopped over on his stomach, his arms and legs flailing in all directions. A tantrum. Bystanders stopped to stare at the troll, but Meulin shook her head at them and gestured them to move on. They wouldn't want to be around Mituna when he was like this.

"FUCKING FUCK YOU FUCKING BULDGE DRIPPING THHIT PILE!! THHIT LICKING WET PILE OF NOOK THUCK ON MY WILLIETH FDIUSGFEWADFKK!!!"

Meulin glanced at Kurloz, her expression mixed with both guilt and concern for the lowblood on the ground. Kurloz simply shook his head and continued giving Mituna paps on the head and face. Slowly, but surely, his moirail calmed down and his tantrum began to subside.

Mituna stared up at Kurloz through his messy hair. His face was flushed and sweat was dripping down his face. "Kurloz... That really hurt..." Kurloz then realized that wasn't sweat rolling down Mituna's face. The highblood desperately papped his moirail's face to try to calm him down, but it was no use. The tears were already dripping down his face, even when Mituna sat up to bury his head in the crook of Kurloz's shoulder.

"That hurt! It really, really hurt..."

"Tuna?"

Mituna froze. Latula. He didn't even realize that her class had ended. How much did she see?

"What happened, guys?"

The Gemini troll whimpered and buried his face into Kurloz's shoulder even further, unable to look at his matesprit. Kurloz sympathetically looked at Latula, then turned to Meulin. He nodded at her, telling Meulin to let Latula know what happened.

The olive troll stood up, dusting her skirt off shamefully. "MITUNA MISTOOK A WASP FUR A BEE AND GOT STUNG A FEW TIMES... KURLOZ AND I WEREN'T QUICK ENOUGH..."

She couldn't look at Latula in the eye. The Libra troll lifted up her glasses, watching Mituna curl up into a ball against his moirail despite Kurloz's attempts to calm him down.

"Oh, man! Hahaha!!" Cronus hollered with laughter, unable to stand up. Meulin and Kurloz glared at him. The fact that he simply stood there and watched Mituna get hurt without doing anything infuriated them. Even after an eternity and even after fighting the Lord of Time, the only thing Cronus seemed to care about was himself and himself alone.

Cronus clutched his gut, writhing in pain because he couldn't stop laughing. "Holy shit, my gut! You're too much, Captor! You should file in for the campus' class clowvn!"
Mituna sniffed, squeezing Kurloz's shoulder with his uninjured hand. "Kurloz, make him thtop..."

More laughter. Latula's hand curled up into a fist. Oh, shit was going to get real. The seadweller toppled over onto the grass, wheezing and coughing. "Wvait until Meenah hears about this and howv you fucked up the most simple shit again! Howv the fuck do you mistake a wasp for a bee? Wvay to go, Captor!"

"AHEM."

Cronus froze.

Aranea, Meenah, and Rufioh were standing behind him, glaring darkly with their arms crossed over their chests.

Fuck.

"Uh, Meenah!" The violet troll stood upright, trying his best to look calm and collected despite the multiple glares, and not just from the three trolls facing him. "WVOVW. Uh... Wvere you standing there this vwhole time?"

A gloved fist struck against Cronus' cheek, and the wannabe greaser stumbled at least three feet from the impact, falling onto the lush lawn with a thud. Cronus groaned, seeing stars as the pain wracked around his cheek. Latula approached the seadweller as he lied on the ground, her hands on her hips. Once Cronus felt his head stop spinning, he sat up, cradling his now swollen cheek and staring up at Latula with wide eyes.

"Laugh like that in front of me because of my matesprit again and you're gonna need a new set of horns."

She pulled up her shades up to the top of her head before walking back to Mituna. The mustard blood was sitting on the grass, away from the yellow bastards as Kurloz rubbed his fluffy head. Latula kneeled down to him and smiled softly, "You okay, babe?"

"It hurt a lot, Tulip..." Mituna sniffled, his eyes refusing to break away from his irritated hand. His cheeks were flushed with a soft tint of yellow and tear trails made their way down his face. "Wathpth are jerkth... Juth like Cronuth!"

"Um, I'm right here ya knowv!"

"Good!" Meenah shouted before walking away with Rufioh and Aranea. Rufioh shook his head. "Douchebag."

Cronus snarled and flipped him off when he wasn't looking, still rubbing his aching face. God damn, he knew Latula could high-five hard but her punches were far worse! He felt as if he got hit by a car. He let out a soft groan, not noticing a shadow looming over his figure until it called out his name.

"Cronus?"

The seadweller looked up, spotting his moirail looking down at him. Kankri kneeled down to his moirail, his eyes fixated on the forming purple blotch on his cheek. "What in the world happened to you?"

"Ugh, Latula gavwe me a pretty hard one, Kankri."

"How triggering!" Kankri looked absolutely outraged, which surprised Cronus. He normally
wouldn't get mad at Latula since she was both their flush crushes. "Why did she do that?"

"Captain helmet over there mistook a wasp for a bee and got stung." The violet highblood stood up to allow Kankri to see his bruise in the light. "It was pretty hilarious so I couldn't help but laugh. It's safe to say I won't be feelin' this cheek for some time."

Kankri looked over to where Latula, Aranea, Meenah, and Rufioh were. Mituna was still sitting on the ground with Kurloz stroking his head and Meulin giving him little pats on the shoulder. And now Latula was kneeling down in front of him, taking Mituna's injured hand into her own.

"YFGGHJHGDF OW! FUCK!" Mituna cried, flinching as fresh translucent yellow tears rolling down his cheeks. "Don't thqueeze too hard, Tulip..."

"Sorry, Tuna," Latula muttered, loosening her grip. It killed her to see Mituna like this. His hand was evidently becoming more and more swollen by the minute. The wasps definitely did a number on him.

Aranea kneeled down to Mituna, smiling sympathetically. "I can heal your hand if you want, Mituna."

"FTDRFKGH NO!" Mituna sniffled, his shoulder shaking violently as he squirmed away from Aranea. "IT'LL HURT IT EVEN MORE!"

"It'll hurt just for second, but I promise the pain will go away if you let me heal you."

"NO, NO! IT'LL HURT! THTOP!"

The spider troll let out a soft sigh, glancing at Latula. She couldn't blame him for being scared of getting hurt again. It was no wonder the humans feared and hated wasps. Latula smiled at Aranea, shaking her head. "Thanks for the offer, Serket, but I think he's good for now."

"Just throwing it out there," Aranea said with a soft smile, standing upright again and backing down. Mituna's hand was really swollen now. It'll stay like that unless he got medical attention. Mituna sniffed and rubbed his nose with his uninjured hand, staring at Latula through his messy bangs.

A soft smile appeared on the Libra troll's face. "Want me to kiss it better?"

"..." A toothy smile slowly broke out on Mituna's face. "Only if you do it to my lipth too!"

"Haha! That's my rad Tuna! And after we'll fix up your hand, okay? You'll have a rad-looking bandaged hand!"

"HAHAHA, FUCK YETH!"

That cheered him up. The Gemini troll was nearly bouncing in place, his attention completely off his throbbing hand. Without a second's hesitation, Latula pressed her black lips to Mituna's hand, right on the spots where the wasp stung him. The lowblood gave a soft whimper at the slight sting of pain, but almost immediately started laughing when he wrapped his arms around Latula's neck and kissed her full on the lips. Latula giggled, wrapping her arms around Mituna's torso, smiling into the kiss.

"I love you, Tulip!"

"I love you too, Tuna!"

"Oh cod, get a glubbin' room!"
Kurloz opened up his skeleton sylladex and pulled out a roll of bandage wraps and peroxide. Mituna let his moirail and matesprit tend to injured hand, and within five minutes, his wasps stings were healed and his hand was wrapped up protectively. Mituna cackled and examined his newly-bandaged hand, "fuck yeth!! Thith ith tho awethome!!"

Latula grinned and have him a high-five on his uninjured hand. "You're dam right it looks awesome! It suits you perfectly, Tuna!" She leaned forward and kissed his cheek, and Mituna laughed and turned towards her, kissing her on the lips.

Meulin giggled, snuggling onto Kurloz's shoulder. For the first day, things weren't so bad. Kankri watched the skateboarders kiss, crossing his arms over his chest as he made his way back to the fraternity house with Cronus hot on his heels. "Come, Cronus. Let's get you an ice pack before your cheek swells up."

"I think it's a bit too late for that, chief... I ain't gonna look too good for the party tonight."

"What party?"

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, sorry about that Mituna fans...I had to make Cronus the douche we all know and love...
Latula: Defend Your Title

Chapter Notes

Meenah bringing a skateboard to get to classes on time because campus is so freaking huge, wiping out, and Aranea bandaging up her scrapes back in their dorm. Meenah keeps whining about them because "Serket, they hurt like shell you should kiss 'em better" but Aranea just rolls her eyes and puts on another band aid. -kanashimibeast (tumblr)

There are so. Many. Triggers.

Kankri stood in the middle of the street, eyes wide and frozen in place. The music was blasting from all the fraternity houses at maximum volume (#hearing privilege), a multitude of colored lights flashing rapidly (#epileptic seizure warning, #bUoYs, oJAs, CIPs, and Royal-Vs shaming), and college students of all grades were walking, running, and dancing in every direction with red cups filled to the brim with some kind of human sophomoric, swearing at the top of their lungs (#drinking privilege, #toxic language, #underage drinking). There was more than one college here; it was obvious with the amount of people and trolls around. But then again, Kankri didn't completely know
the entire size of the campus and how many students attended it. At least until now.

He will probably need to add a few more trigger warnings to his list (or rather educate these humans about their social injustices) after a night like this. The other trolls in his group were scattered around the area, lost in the masses as they wandered around the streets and lawns. It wasn't even nine o'clock at night and some of the houses and trees were toilet paper covered, and people were passed out on a few lawns, faces flushed and mumbling some slurs. Kankri couldn't tell whether it were racial slurs or just them spewing words out in a jumbled mess. Whatever the case was, this entire scenario was beyond triggering.

The Cancer troll wandered through the street, trying to dodge anyone running in his general direction or avoid touching anyone (or being touched). Out of the corner of his eye, a few jocks tackled each other on the grass, heavily immersed in their grudge match of football. A shiver ran down Kankri's spine. How can anyone stand that? To be thrown down by someone else while invading your personal space? Especially without permission? How can- Oh, Cronus!

Cronus was leaning against the wall of another frat house, chatting up a blonde human girl in the Alternia High School cheerleader uniform. And she wore that skirt way too high up. Was she taking advice from Damara? The seadweller pointed to the bruise on his cheek, grinning his usual cocky smirk. He was probably telling her how he got into a fist fight with someone and they ended up in the hospital for messing with him. The girl wasn't buying it, however. She simply smirked at his blatant lie and walked away despite Cronus' protests. Kankri shook his head. He was going to have to talk to him about that.

"Please tell me you didn't touch her," Kankri asked as he approached his moirail. His arms were crossed, as if he were the one offended. Cronus sighed and shook his head. "Believe me, Kankri, I wouldn't touch her if she didn't ask me to."

"Glad to see you're following my advice then. And taking triggers seriously. Though I would like to point out that she probably is a lot younger than you."

"If I didn't, you'd be on my case," Cronus said with a wry smile. "And funny story is: she came up to me! So, I decided to chat it up!"

"Is that so?"

"You know it, chief!" Cronus gave his moirail a bright grin. But it disappeared instantaneously when he saw the same cheerleader chat it up with a DJ not too far away. 'Damn humans.' Cronus thought bitterly. 'Don't they know how much of an honor it would be to go out with someone like myself?'

"You seem troubled."

"I am troubled. I was going on about how I got this bruise on my face, but she completely brushed me off like it didn't matter!" Cronus whined as his pulled his trademark sad face. "I told her I got into a fight earlier today, but she didn't believe me! She said if there was a fight, it'd be what everyone's talking about!"

"I see," Kankri muttered, rubbing his chin with his finger. "While that isn't completely true, since you did get into a fight, but it was more of why Latula punched you for laughing at her... matesprit."

Cronus raised his eyebrows at Kankri's pause. It seems that even after being dead for so long, he still hasn't gotten over Latula. Even after today's event, where he seemed more annoyed at her than Cronus could possibly remember. Kankri must be taking their moirallegiance seriously. That made a
"smile crawl up the seadweller's face.

"But still, I find it triggering that she blew you off like that. Especially for you when you want to
become human."

"Wvell, I'm kind of taking it slowv. I like the culture behind humans, and I wvant to absorb it all
slowvly. Get my drift?"

"Indeed. Their culture is nice, yet flawed, along with their social justices, but it seems to be... going
in the right direction with a little help from my perspective."

"Vwhat?" A grin spread across Cronus' face. "Kankri, I knowv wvhy you're majoring in Social
Serwvices, but do you really expect evweryone to try and change things wvith our culture?"

"Precisely. With the combination of our peaceful society, while still having faults, it's a rather nice
culture when you regard human history, which is littered with many conquering and slaying those
who they deemed weaker."

"Kinda like howv our dancestor's vworld used to be before playing that game."

"Exactly. I love to indulge in a lecture- I mean, lesson, at this very moment, but I have seemed to
have misplaced my whistle."

"Huh." Cronus stuffed a hand into his back pocket, shoving said whistle farther down. "Hope ya
find it soon, chief."

"WAAAHUGHHFAHG DOOF!"

Another faceplant was made by the university's very own Mituna Captor. The yellow troll groaned
in mild pain, rubbing his sore nose with his newly bandaged hand. Cronus couldn't help but grin as
he watched the skateboard roll away down the street, and a few intoxicated students began to hoot
and howl as they jumped onto it to try a new game.

"Man, Captor, you still falling downvn? Thought you'd try and stay home after vwhat happened
today."

"GO THUCK A BULGE."

Kankri shook his head, pulling out a trigger warning from his pocket. Bystanders only paid attention
for mere seconds before going to back to their business. Kankri wondered if the language Mituna
used either didn't affect them, or they simply didn't care. Because if it was the last one, then it set him
back a few lectures.

"Now, Mituna, how many times must I tell you that using that sort of language only unwinds the
progression of social justices?"

"Enough for me to conthider Cronuth a friend?"

"Oh nice!" The Aquarius troll cried, his brows furrowing in frustration. "Just vwhen I think I
havwen't been hurt enough today, you come along and crash downvn on my feelings like they don't
matter! Thanks a lot, pal!"

"Are you going to thtart crying again?"

"No, because I'm not a fucking baby vwhen I get stung by a little insect!"
"THAT THIT HURT, YOU NOOK WRANGLING GRUB FUCKER!" Mituna glared at Cronus through his messy bangs. "AND IT WATH YOUR FAULT THAT IT HAPPENED ANYWAY!"

"First you fall flat on your face and insult me by saying my feelings don't matter because Kankri talks too much, and then you say it was my fault that you got stung when you clearly didn't know the difference between bees and vwasps?! Some friend you are!"

"I feel like I should step in before something completely goes out of hand with you two," Kankri muttered as he literally stepped in between the two quarreling trolls with his hands up. "Mituna, must we go through these sort of things with childish insults? We both know-

"NOPE, NOPE, NOT LITHTENING!" Mituna quickly corked his ears with his fingers, running off before Kankri could even go off on his second sentence. "MY ANACONDA DON'T WANT NONE!"

Both Kankri and Cronus shook their heads as they watched the Gemini troll run off to God knows where. Even though he mellowed down a lot with the help of Kurloz, he would always find a way to scream at the top of his lungs and shame them through the use of lewd language.

Seriously. What kind of person do you have to be in order to not appreciate their contributions to society?

**Meenah: Watch Latula**

"Aww yeah!" Latula used her skateboard to grind against a rail, spun a quick 360, and landed cleanly back on the ramp while Mituna and some other skaters cheered her on. "Too easy, bro!"

The makeshift half-pipe was constructed by the Physical Education majors, and some skateboarders decided to take some discarded wood and pipes from the city junkyard to make something to help pass the time and rev up the students for future games and events. It was safe to say that this caught Mituna and Latula's eyes when they first arrived, and everyone instantly knew that Latula would dominate the skate park material.

Meenah was leaning against a lamppost, arms crossed and her cold gaze settled on Latula basking in the glory. 'Glubbin' show off.' Who'd Latula think she was anyway? Oh wait, she's "the raddest game girl ever". Duh. Just because Meenah used a skateboard to get to class on time (because of Aranea's constant bitching), Latula automatically took it as either an invitation to shred together, or rather, a threat to her 'game girl' personality. Guess which one won.

Damara was beside the seadweller, smirking coldly as she took in a long drag of her blunt. "[Are you going to step in?]

"Nah. Pryope can bask in that shit fer as long as she pikes. But everymoby knows that I'mma rule this school at the end of the sweep."

"[Year. Human years are different to Alternia and Beforus.]

"Whatebber. Goddamn humans."

The rustblood dropped her blunt to the ground and crushed it with her heel. She turned back to Meenah and blew a cloud of smoke in her face. "[I thought you liked being center of attention?]"

"Ya betta know that shit, beach," Meenah snarled, exhaling to counter at Damara's instigation. "I just don't wanna start somefin with her. If I glubbin' challenge her, the entire place will think we're rivals. She thinks she has ta show off just because I skateboarded to class today."
"[You know her. She'll take anything like that as a challenge over an invitation.]

"Damn right. Bein' rivals with her ain't worth it. 'Sides, what good is her when both you and I know damn well that we pretty much hate each otter?"

"[Fair enough. I would hate to have the annoying teal blood steal my rivalry with you, fish bitch.]

"Don't worry aboat that in the slightest, ya dirty Time witch."

The two girls snarled at each other deviously, sparks flying between their eyes as a quick rush of black coursed through their veins. Almost instantly, the two pulled away, scowling and grimacing. No way. As much as they hated each other, or least despised each other these days, they didn't hate each other in "that way".

Yet.

A loud mass of cheering caught their attention. Latula was showing off her kick flips, causing a few boys to holler and hoot at her while she glided down the ramp. Mituna cheered louder than all of them, clapping his hands with the biggest grin on his face.

"YEAH! YOU GO, TULIP!"

Latula laughed and flipped back upright onto her skateboard, heading towards Mituna as he rushed towards her. "You saw all that, right, babe?"

"HELL YEAH! IT WATH TOTALLY RADICAL!"

"Damn right it was!" The Libra troll put her hand behind Mituna's head and pulled him into a sloppy kiss. Bystanders both howled and moaned, obviously either really amazed or really disappointed because the two hottest skaters on campus were taken. By each other.

Both Meenah and Damara put their hands up, walking away.

"Nope."

"[Yeah, I'm done.]"

"Hey, where ya going, Paycheck?" Latula cried over Mituna's shoulder, clearly offended why the punk rock seadweller wouldn't stick around for her and Mituna's sloppy makeout session.

"Uh, back to the hive 'cause I don't like watchin' two tongues swirlin' 'round in a troll's fuckin' oral canal."

"SOMEBODY' TH JEALOUTH."

"Gross, bro!"

Mituna laughed at Meenah's expression, and it only increased in volume when she flipped him off with both hands. Latula grinned and wrapped her arm around her matesprit's shoulders. "Oh, c'mon, Paycheck! I know that ain't the real reason why you're so pissed off."

"Oh yea?" Meenah huffed, arms crossed with one eyebrow raised. "Did you actually see it through that big ass ego of yours?"

"Hey, Paycheck, don't be pointing fingers," the Libra troll said as she literally pointed a finger at the seadweller. "Like you're one to be talkin' about egos here."
"Fair 'nough, Pyrope."

"But yeah, I saw ya watchin' me." Latula pulled down her shades slightly, a grin spreading across her face. "Kinda gave me an idea with you usin' a board today."

"Nope. Not lisfin'. Forget aboat it." Meenah turned and began walking away as fast as she could, her braids swishing from side to side.

"Not even if it's a bet?"

Instantly, the Pisces troll stopped.

"Yeah! I'm willing to bet against ya!"

Meenah squinted an eye as she turned back towards Latula. She suddenly had the biggest urge to wipe that grin off the teal blood's face. "Bet, huh?"

"Yeah, sure! Since ya obviously think you can do better than me - which is impossible already - but I'm more than willin' to show you a thing or two about who's way more rad, so how about a friendly wager?"

"Reely now?" A shark-like smile crawled up Meenah's face. "And ya think ya can keep up to mah standards with prices, Pyrope?"

"If you can walk the walk, Peixes," Latula snarked back, getting up in Meenah's face, still grinning widely. Mituna's eyes went wide behind his wall of hair as students began to circle around them, thinking that a fight was going to go down. But the two trolls ignored them, leering into each other's eyes and maintaining their grins.

"Shoal," Meenah started, crossing her arms. "What's the catch?"

"Easy," Latula said, adjusting her red shades. "If you can prove yourself that you're a half decent skateboarder than I am, and manage to get more support from our peers by tomorrow night, then I'll be your personal slave for a whole week!"

The crowd hooted and howled. Latula Pyrope was calling Meenah Peixes out! The Pisces troll snarled; her earfins flaring out in irritation. "Half decent? Pyrope, do ya efin remember who yer talkin' to?"

"Damn right I do. So this should be no problem for ya, right?"

More hoots and howls. Oh, it was so on now. Meenah smirked. "Alright, Pyrope, I get yer number." She flicked Latula on the nose just to show her who was really dominate in this conversation. If one could call it that. "If I beat ya at skateboarding, then you'll do mah biddin' fer an entire week. What aboat you?"

"Me? How about...?" The Libra troll looked down, clearly trying to think of something that could possibly make Meenah flinch. Her weak spot was money, but ever since they won the game, Meenah's lavish fortune wasn't taken in with the goods of winning. It was a shame, really.

But then Latula got an idea.

Her head snapped back up. "Alright! If I win then you not only have to reblog at least four hundred and thirteen of my raddest tumblr posts, but ya gotta gimme dibs on the newest gold ya get whenever ya get some! And I know you'll get some at least by tomorrow!"
"Sunnuva fish!" Meenah cringed, already feeling like this bet wasn't worth it in the slightest. Latula raised a finger, "And! Ya gotta address me as 'the raddest game girl who ever walked this weird-ass planet', and my title is impenetrable by both humans and trolls!"

"You cannot be serious," Meenah deadpanned, remembering all too well that this conversation took place in the dream bubbles. Latula pissed her off there too. "Ya gotta get off yer high seahorse."

But the Libra troll wasn't joking this time. "Scared ya gonna lose? Too bad to the bone for ya?"

"Pyrope, ya betta shut yer cod damn trap beshore I shut it for ya!"

"Ooohhh!" The crowd was going wild. Mituna grabbed Latula from behind her shoulders, "you're not gonna take that kinda talk, are ya, Tulip?"

"Hells no, babe!" Latula said with a confident smirk. But Meenah could see the anxiety inside Latula's teal eyes. Her rad girl act was a fucking joke. No way she was going to take this shit lying down! Especially from a falsely overconfident teal blood like Latula Pyrope!

"You're glubbin' on, Pyrope!" Meenah shouted, smirking as she spit into the palm of her hand. "Spit shake on it!"

"Deal!" Latula spit into her own hand and grabbed Meenah's, sealing the deal. "Prepare to lose, Peixes!"

"I'll make you eat those words and mah bubbles tomorrow!"

The crowd of students cheered loudly. So it was on. Latula Pyrope vs. Meenah Peixes in a skateboarding competition.

**Meenah: Talk to Horuss**

"You challenged her to a WHAT?!"

After you absecond from Aranea.

"Serket, chill out. It's just a glubbin' competition."

"Yes, a competition, but a skateboarding competition, Meenah!"

Aranea paced around their room while Meenah flopped onto her bed, already messing up the sheets that Aranea put the time in to organize. The Scorpio troll stared at her friend with a dull look. Meenah rolled her eyes, sitting up. "Don't look at me pike that, Serks! That damn Pyrope has been tootin' her own horn for too damn long! I'm sick of her bullshit boastin'!"

"Oh, Meenah, like you're in any position to complain!"

Again, the Pisces troll rolled her eyes as she lifted herself up off the bed. "Would'ja clam down? It ain't like I'm slaughterin' her lusus or nofin." The seadweller strode past her best friend and headed towards the bedroom door. Half of her wanted to get away from Aranea's bitching while the other half wanted something to drink. But the Scorpio troll was hot on her heels. "Where are you going?"

"I'm gettin' a beer and I gotta talk to Zahhak."

"About what exactly?"

"Makin' me a hoverboard."
"A what?"

"It's kinda like a skateboard but it."

"Meenah, I understand what a hoverboard is! That was a rhetorical question!" Aranea groaned, facepalming. The Pisces troll grinned at Aranea's irritation, and she knew that her friend could feel the nonchalant emotions radiating off her skin. And that only irritated Aranea even further.

"But you're challenging her to a skateboarding contest, Meenah!" Aranea cried over Meenah's shoulder as they went downstairs to the kitchen. The whole house was quiet; the other trolls were still outside, enjoying what was left of the party. Meenah was only there because Aranea persuaded her to go to bed early due to classes. Yeah, right. "That's right up her alley! Do you even think before you jump into these kinds of things?"

"Shore I do!" Meenah said with a nonchalant shrug as she opened up the gigantic fridge. Her fuchsia eyes scanned the interior for a few seconds before pulling out a can of Budweiser beer. "And betides, why do you care about this shit anywaves? I thought you and her weren't reely fronds."

"We're acquaintances. Either way, she is a longtime ally and just as skilled at skateboarding as you are at collecting gold!"

"Heh, true dat!"

Aranea rolled her eyes, "all I'm saying is that this is stupid! You're putting yourself up against someone who skateboarded for God knows how long in the dream bubbles while you weren't even dead for five minutes before showing up and building an army!"

"Hey, Serks, did I ebber tell ya you worry too much?"

The Scorpio troll gave Meenah another dull look. The seadweller simply smirked in reply and walked past Aranea, playfully whipping her arm with one of her braids. "The way I sea it, Pyrope needs to get off her fuckin' skateboardin' high seahorse and I wanna be the one to fuck her up!"

"But don't you think you could have challenged her to a video game competition instead?" Aranea muttered as she watched Meenah take a long swing of the beer before swaggering to the door to head back outside. "That way, if you slip and hurt yourself, you won't get hurt."

"Serks, ya seariously worry too much. You obubbviously fergot who I am and what kinda troll I am, so I'll be fin."

And with that, the seadweller exited out of the fraternity house and into the pounding music outside. Aranea groaned and tugged at her hair, her patience reaching her limits quickly. Even though she and Meenah had made up and caught up on current events quickly, there were times where Meenah just acted out of sheer instinct. And as much as they grew in the game, things like this still happened. Did they suck that badly at growing up?

"Having trouble, Aranea?"

The Scorpio troll froze and turned around, spotting Porrim leaning against the countertop while she applied a fresh layer of black lipstick. How much did she hear?

"Please don't tell me you heard all of that."

"Don't worry, I just heard the last few sentences." Porrim capped her lipstick and walked over to Aranea, a smile on her face. "Even after you ran off and did your own thing, Meenah still holds the
title of acting brashly."

Aranea sighed, running a hand through her hair. "What am I going to do with her? Every time I try
to talk some sense into her, and even after she told me that she wasn't mad at me for running off in
the timeline, she still ignores me and refuses to take me seriously! And not just her either! Everyone
else too! Even after I show my strength and even after I try to show people how much I know, they
refuse to listen and-!"

Porrim reached out and gently papped Aranea on the cheek, stopping her in the middle of her
tangent. "Calm down, Aranea. I'm a little annoyed about this too."

"You are?" The Scorpio troll leaned into the paps, feeling her pulse die down and her blood return to
its normal temperature. Sometimes it was nice to have someone other than her best friend comfort
her. Porrim nodded, taking her hand off Aranea's face.

"Latula hasn't stopped bragging ever since we got here. Even before school started, she's already
claiming the title of the best skateboarder in school. The fact that Kankri is still head over heels for
her doesn't help my situation because I honestly can't stand that 'rad girl' act of hers."

Aranea nodded, rolling her eyes. "It's so transparent! I can't believe that more than half these people
even believe that she's as confident as she says she is."

"Exactly," Porrim muttered, crossing her arms. "So if Meenah does challenge Latula, she could
possibly knock some sense into her."

"But Latula's a much more experienced skateboarder than Meenah is! What if Meenah falls and
cracks her skull open or something?!"

"I doubt Meenah's that reckless." A smile made its way up to Porrim's face. "If anything, if they do
end up hurting themselves, Latula would get a pretty good blow to her ego and she should simmer
down a little bit, and Meenah would learn a little to not jump into things just because you're jealous
of not being in the spotlight."

Jade eyes pierced through cerulean ones. The Scorpio troll looked down at her feet, ashamed. One
could understand why people would get mad at her for what she did. Part of the reason she ran off
was because her own best friends disrespected her, but the major reason why she ran off was
because she was upset about not feeling important. It was one of the worst feelings in the world. But
in retrospect and unbeknownst to her, if she didn't meddle in the timeline, the outcome wouldn't have
been as fortunate when she did. Players learned new abilities about themselves and tapped deeper
into already powerful moves and relationships. Past timelines were adverted in the favor of the
heroes while the villain's power slowly deteriorated away. It was a bad decision that turned out to be
good in the end.

Porrim gave the Scorpio troll another soft pap on the cheek before running a hand down her hair.
"Don't worry about this too much. Things happen for a reason. Both parties will come to their senses
sooner or later."

"You think so?"

"I know so. It's a Space thing."

**Porrim: Watch the Outcome**

The next afternoon was a bright and sunny one. There were barely any clouds in the sky and the
sunlight gave the changing tree leaves a bright vibrancy. Word of the skating competition got out
quickly during the party, and the gossip only got worse as the day progressed. Just five minutes before the show, a big crowd had flocked over to the Grand Huss building to watch Latula and Meenah go head-to-head.

Latula stretched out her arms, basking in the warm sunlight as Meenah adjusted the wheels on her skateboard. Or rather, Mituna's skateboard. Even after talking to Horuss, the highblood consistently told Meenah that constructing it would take at least a week. Especially with his lack of parts and the mediocre Earth material to use. So, she did the next best thing: steal Mituna's.

Aranea, Porrim, and Mituna were in the crowd as well, eager and apprehensive to see what was going to happen. However, Mituna seemed a little more angered than excited because his skateboard was being used by a wader. That almost caused a fight.

The Libra troll turned to Meenah as the seadweller tested her balance on the skateboard. It moved smoothly against pavement and seemed to have good durability. A grin pulled up to Latula's face. As cool as Mituna's skateboard was, it wasn't a match for hers. "You ready to do this, Paycheck?"

"If you're ready ta get yer fuckin' ass kicked, Pyrope!"

"Oh yeah?" Latula shot back with a grin. Mituna jumped in his spot, flailing his hands around. "KICK HER ATHTH, TULIP!"

The Libra troll laughed and nodding, giving her matesprit a thumbs up. "Will do, Tuna!"

"And get my thskateboard back too!"

Meenah rolled her eyes, grabbing the said skateboard and standing up to get lined up against her opponent. A blonde-haired boy stepped in the middle of the path, arms crossed as he pulled a cigarette out of his mouth. "Alright, this is how it's gonna go down."

He pointed to the various rails, benches, concrete edges, vegetation, and street lights littered all across the campus. "The both of you will have fifteen minutes to pull off the sickest grinds, flips, kicks, whatever, and who wins will be decided by how loud the rest of us will cheer."

"Why don't use you use "rad", dude?" Latula asked, pulling down her red frames with a grin. "None of you seem to be catching the dealio!"

"Uh, news flash: the term "rad" and "radical" is a nineties word. Nobody says it anymore."

"Say whaaat? When did this shit happen? How can rad go outta style, yo?"

"When yer red shades went outta style, Pyrope," Meenah muttered with an eyeroll. Supporters of Meenah howled at Latula. The Libra troll gave the seadweller a snarl before turning back to the blonder skater in front of them. He stuck the cigarette back in his mouth and took a long drag before continuing.

"Only rule is: No foul play and don't damage anything too bad. We don't want the fucking dean or anyone high up banning skateboarding because of a fight or if something breaks. Other than that, go fucking crazy."

The crowd cheered and the boy pulled out his phone. He set the timer to fifteen minutes and the two trolls got on their skateboards. Aranea squeezed through the crowd and grabbed Meenah's shoulder. "Meenah, is all of this really necessary?"

"Hey Serks, I told'ja," the Pisces troll rolled her shoulder to get Aranea to let go. "I wanted ta do this.
I'm gonna glubbin' beat Pyrope at her own damn game!"

"Ha! Not even in your oversized dream bubble, Paycheck!"

Meenah snarled, just about ready to take off even before the dude yelled start. The skater boy raised a hand in the air, "Ready?"

Latula nodded. Meenah nodded. And his hand went down.

"Shred!"

And they did.

Latula immediately started off with a 360 flip towards a steel rail, grinding an FS 50-50 hard enough to produce sparks. Mituna and her supporters cheered at the sight, clearly impressed. To grind and produce sparks was a sign of an experienced skater. But the Alpha trolls didn't need to know that.

Meenah, however, disregarded the open grinding opportunity. But to counter Latula's support, she instantly did a hospital flip towards a concrete banister. She gained enough air to initiate a BS Darkslide, cleanly land it, and then skated towards a bench to hippy jump over it and easily sped past Latula. The Libra troll blinked, shocked enough to rip her shades off her face.

"How did-?"

"You ain't the only one who's got skatin' experience under her belt, Pyrope!"

Behind them, the crowd whooped. Aranea's eyes were wide, impressed at Meenah's skills. "I never knew Meenah could do that!" Beside her, Porrim gave her a knowing smile and shrugged. "But we all know that Meenah is full of possibilities and surprises."

Meenah smirked at Latula, who gave her a crooked grin as she slipped her shades back on her face. "Don't get too cocky yet, Paycheck! This competition has just started!"

"Bring it!"

The Libra troll smirked and rode off, heading towards the bench Meenah hippy jumped over and did a quick BS pivot over the seat, then held her position in a one foot invert. "Check it!"

The Pisces troll rolled her eyes, clearly not impressed. "Big deal, Pyrope. I can do that shit even betta." Not even waiting for an answer, Meenah gained some speed and balanced herself on a heelflip. Latula's eyes went slightly wide. For someone who wasn't too coordinated on land, Meenah had a really good sense of balance. The seadweller directed herself towards a round steel planter box, and then began to grind around it in a FS Hurricane.

"Psh! That's nothing!" Latula shot with a smirk as finally let herself stand upright after holding her position for almost too long. Pain shot up through her arm, but the gamer ignored it like a trooper. She was here to win, and she wasn't going to let Meenah beat her at her own game.

"Oh yea?" Meenah stopped herself from grinding by jumping in a combo 360 nollie boneless and cleanly landing. "How 'boat you stop talkin' the talk and start walkin' the walk?"

"Gladly!" She got on her board and raced towards the concrete stairs towards the What Pumpkin building. "Race ya there!" She cried, immediately grinding down the rails with Meenah hot on her heels.
Some skaters nodded in the crowd. They were expecting some half-assed skating, but they clearly underestimated the girls. Maybe the trolls weren't so boring - or weird - after all. Mituna jumped up and down, waving and flailing his arms as he watched Latula pull out some of her - and his own - personal favorite tricks.

"YEAH, TULIP! GO TULIP!"

Aranea, however, was still apprehensive. The tricks that Meenah and Latula were doing were intermediate skate tricks; almost professional skating. If things got too heated up, not only would there be damage to school property (which they would have to pay for and risk hearing Meenah rant for as long as Kankri), but someone could possibly get seriously injured. Her Sylph of Light powers could only heal things according to knowledge, luck, light, and sight. If either Meenah or Latula were to get seriously hurt, there wouldn't be much she could do.

Latula and Meenah kept their balance on the rails. They were putting so much pressure on the boards, the sparks almost began to look white. A clear indication that this was more than just a competition of a title. In a way, this was personal. Latula made an early jump off the rail with a BS 180 no comply, turning it into a manual as soon as she landed on the ground.

Meenah kept grinding until she reached the bottom, and then performed a smooth nats spin kickflip over a trash bin. Latula whistled, settling down her manual. "Man, Paycheck, I think I totally misjudged you! You really do know how to shred like a rad girl like me!"

"Ha! Damn right I do!" Meenah puffed out her chest, grinning toothily. "But we both know it ain't gon' make ya give up yer title so easily!"

"Fuck yeah! Like I'd ever give up my titles! What kinda game girl do ya take me for?"

The crowd was cheering loudly. It sounded like both sides were pretty equal in support. Instantly, both trolls knew that they had to top everything off with something almost nearly impossible. Something that could win the support of all the people in the crowd, but avoid getting caught by security altogether.

Then, they saw it.

A fountain was being installed by the Topatoco building, and the workers had gone off on their break. The perfect opportunity. After a few seconds of mutually staring at each other, Latula and Meenah raced towards the fountain as fast as they could. Aranea, Porrim, and Mituna all watched with the crowd as the two trolls ran towards the structure.

Porrim's heart skipped a beat. "They can't be serious."

Meenah set down her skateboard, using the speed she gained to get a boost towards the fountain. Latula smirked and copied the seadweller's action, intending to show the seadweller a thing or two that she and she alone was the raddest girl on campus.

"Ya better get ready to blog, Paycheck!"

"Yea shore! After ya serve me mah dinner on a silver platter!"

Meenah smirked and steered away from the concrete path. Latula raised a brow as she watched the Pisces troll roll away towards the grass. *Is she nuts?!*

But quiet the contrary. The seadweller saw a bench between a concrete staircase just above the fountain. She lifted herself into the air with a no comply, then started to grind against the wood with
Latula's eyes went wide. Her Mind powers kicked in at the right time and she saw what Meenah planned to do. 'So that's your game, Paycheck!' The Libra troll growled and used her foot to increase her speed. There was no way she was going to let Meenah win!

The crowd watched the trolls race towards the fountain, their gazes tense and refusing to break. Aranea gave Porrim a few nervous glances before returning her gaze to Meenah. She knew she was planning something, and that's what terrified her. The fact that they were planning to use something under construction was dangerous itself. The whole thing could be unstable and weak; resulting in some serious injuries if things didn't go in their favor. But Mituna didn't seem to mind.

"YEAH! GO TULIP, GO TULIP!"

Meenah did a switch hardflip over the stair case, getting a clear view of the what she planned to do. The planks that were used by the construction workers were still there, so it was the perfect use for a ramp to execute a perfect spine transfer/bank drop. And once the bank drop was done, she would cleanly land on the ground with another natas spin kickflip and 360 invert. A grin spread across her face. She knew Latula could sense what she planned to do. But the thing about being a Thief was that she was equipped with more agility and speed for quick getaways. She'll steal the spotlight and the glory.

But the Libra troll wasn't going to let the Life player win so easily. Her foot ached from using so much energy, but she didn't care. She had her own trick up her sleeve. While Meenah was going to use the planks as a ramp, Latula intended to use the building walls as her lift. Wallrides and wallplants were difficult to execute because it was the transferring of energy and momentum into two different objects, but after being dead for so long and having time to shred on the walls of Derse and Prospit, Latula was a master at those tricks and kickflips. Victory would be hers even if she had to break a few bones!

Meenah closed in on the ramp, bending down to get herself situated to jump. She could see Latula racing towards her in the corner of her eye, but she wasn't going to let her get the best of her. The seadweller jumped off the planks, spinning around in a 360 invert towards the fountain. But that was when Latula used the wall of the Topatoco building to jump in towards the fountain herself.

"Whoa!" The crowd cried in unison.

Latula's wall ride left skid marks. One she felt herself descend, the Libra troll quickly grabbed her board, lifted it up, and began pushing away from the wall and towards the fountain. A wall plant. Meenah's eyes went wide when she saw the other troll jump towards her.

"The shell?!"

"Gotcha now, Paycheck!"

But it was too late. Meenah was traveling too fast, and the Pisces troll's timing for the back drop was planned too late. The two were on a collision course, but neither of them noticed. The teal troll planted her feet back onto the skateboard, getting herself ready to execute her move. The seadweller snarled and used her strength to begin her bank drop, but the front of her board collided with Latula's. The momentum and speed caused both the skateboards to collapse under the pressure, sending both the trolls skyrocketing.

The two yelled out in shock, grabbing onto the nearest possible thing to prevent themselves from getting hurt. They only grabbed onto each other as they plummeted down. The two hit the top of
fountain hard; hard enough to create a few cracks. But the inertia still played a part. Only seconds of hitting the fountain, both Meenah and Latula were dropping towards the concrete stairs, and now tangled together, they rolled down the steps in a barrel roll pretzel-like fashion.

The crowd watched in horror as the two trolls rolled down the stairs, and the crowd were able to hear every swear that the two girls shouted out as they went down the hill. Mituna was the first one to recover from the shock and he took off like a bullet, screaming at the top of his lungs. "TULIP! TULIP!"

"Mituna!" Aranea rushed after him, and was followed by Porrim. Mituna reached the top of the staircase, panting hard as he watched Meenah and Latula finally come to a stop at the bottom of the stairs. They were both lying side by side, breathing hard and lying in pools of their unusual blood. Latula groaned and reached up to her head, making sure that she wasn't bleeding. But she could feel her blood rush out from her chest to her lower back.

Meenah sighed and started to sit up, but instantly regretted it when a stabbing pain shot throughout her spine. "Ack, fuck!" She had no other choice but to lie down beside Latula. Her nose was bleeding and she was sure she had a black eye. Everything else was a mystery because getting up was not an option. "Ow... Glubbin' wipeout."

"Ahaha... Rad."

"Meenah!"

"Tulip!"

The two injured trolls looked up, spotting Porrim, Aranea, and Mituna rush down toward them as fast as they could. Porrim and Mituna knelt beside Latula and Aranea cushioned Meenah's head in her lap. The Pisces troll winced, not used to the rush of pain. Being dead for so long took those little reminders away.

Porrim lifted Latula's glasses off her face and gently ran a finger under her nose. Latula blinked, spotting her blood stain Porrim's fingers. "Latula, I think your nose is broken."

"Man... And to think this nose has been through hell only once."

**Aranea: Scold your best frond**

"Ow! Fucking take it easy!"

Scold, as in, silently scold.

Aranea ignored Meenah's shout as she applied more peroxide to her wounds. Both she and Porrim were busy patching Latula and Meenah up after helping them limp back to the fraternity house. The other trolls weren't home yet, but they had a feeling that there was definitely going to be some explaining to do.

Meenah's black eye had swelled up by the time they got home, but the pain in her arms was far worse. Even though her highblood status was able to handle huge impacts and injuries, her sensitive skin was a different story. The silkiness of seadweller skin made it much softer than most, so she managed to obtain more injuries than Latula did.

Latula sat backwards in a chair, trying to fix her dented frames as Porrim wrapped some bandages around her back and torso. The cuts that she obtained from the accident were scattered all around her arms and legs, but her back suffered the worst because of the downwards barrel roll. Mituna was
standing up beside Latula, fidgeting with his hands and shuffling from foot to foot.

"Um... Tulip?"

"S'up, babe?"

"You didn't get hurt because of me, right?"

The Libra troll felt her eyes widen as she full blown stared at her matesprit. "What? Hells no, babe! That wipeout was totes my fault."

"But with me cheering and thtuff... I thought that..."

"Hey, Tuna, don't even think for a second that this was your fault." Latula grabbed the Gemini troll's hand and gave it a hearty squeeze. "I was the one who wanted to challenge Paycheck to this. You didn't do anything that would have gotten me hurt, so don't sweat it. I messed up, baby."

Mituna silently stared at Latula uneasily. But with her hand over his and her squeezing it gently, a smile spread across his face. "Alright! Your nothe lookth a little worthe for wear, though."

"Yeah, I know, Tuna," she muttered with a sheepish grin. Her nosebleed had stopped considerably with Porrim's help, but it was apparent that her nose was broken. "Gonna have to take it easy for a few weeks."

Meenah rolled her eyes at the sappy conversation. "Ugh, Pyrope, yer converseations with Captor over there makes me wanna puke!"

"Hey, Paycheck, don't be hatin'," Latula shot back with a laugh. Aranea sighed as she slapped a smaller band-aid on Meenah's cheek. "I told you that something like would happen, Meenah! I told you, but you didn't listen! Again!"

"Hey easy, Serket."

"That's exactly what she was doing," Aranea said as she pulled an ice pack from the freezer. Meenah rolled her good eye. "Serks nearly talked off my earfins aboat takin' this school shit seariously, so I decided to try and skateboard ta class. I knew you'd try ta pull me into a competition, but nofin of what just happened, Pyrope."

Latula suddenly felt all eyes settle on her. "Uh... Yeah, I...I probs shoulda figured about that..." She coughed into her hand, feeling a vibrant blush spread straight across her face. Mituna cackled and kissed her cheek. "Aww, Tulip! It wathen't a wathteh though! Your trickth were tho rad!"

"Indeed." Porrim said with a nod, smiling softly as she handed Latula her shirt back. "I admit, your time skating in the dream bubbles paid off. I'm sure that all of the skaters have a new respect for you both since you took risks."

"Aha, damn straight, Marygames!"
"They betta," Meenah muttered as she took the ice pack from Aranea's hand. "They ain't got shit if they dun know how ta skate like me."

Latula laughed softly, finally able to put on her shirt with ease. A sigh escaped her throat, obviously relived that she was able to move around and about without feeling a shot of pain. The teal troll turned to Meenah, holding out a hand. "Sorry I acted so rashly, Paycheck... Are we cool?"

Meenah stared at the hand for a few seconds, then took it in her own bandaged one. "Yea, we're coral. Just fuckin' clam down with the tricks from now on."

"Gonna have to. Got a broken nose to prove it!"

Porrim shook her head. "That nose of yours has been through more bruises and bite marks than any other."

Mituna laughed out loud while Latula grinned widely. It was true. But such a life of a game girl. The Gemini troll clasped a hand (gently) on his matesprit's shoulder. "Hey, wanna play thome gameth, Tulip?"

"Um, is that a question, babe? Hell yeah I do!"

And then they were off. Porrim and Aranea exchanged knowing smiles, shaking their heads. Meenah sighed and leaned back in her chair, crossing her arms over her chest. "Fuckin' back still hurts."

"Does it?" Aranea looked back at Porrim, and the Virgo troll nodded. "I'll go get some more peroxide."

"Wait, no!"

But the Space player was gone. Meenah growled, facepalming as softly as she could. Her black eye was severely sensitive but that didn't seem to matter when dealing with thick-headed friends. "That shit doesn't work. All it does is sting ya!"

"That's what it's supposed to do, Meenah," Aranea muttered, pointing to the ice pack in the seadweller's hand. "Put this on your eye."

"Serket, they hurt like shell, you should kiss 'em better."

Aranea simply rolled her eyes, took the ice pack out of Meenah's hand, and then pressed it against her eye without warning. Meenah hissed in pain, but the sudden shift in temperature suddenly felt really nice.

"Not as good as a kiss, but it'll do."
A few days had gone past ever since Latula and Meenah’s skating competition, and now the fall weather was in full swing in late September. All the trees had vibrant multicolored leaves on their branches, and whenever there was a chilly gust, they would break off their perches and go with the flow. A generous amount of leaves covered the pavement and lawns of the campus, and the staff were busy blowing them into large piles off into the streets. Students walked along the paths wearing hoodies and sweaters, and some clubs were busy setting up either Halloween or fall decorations on the buildings windows. It was still fairly early Saturday morning, so not many people were out. They would rather be inside, snuggled up in their beds sleeping until the early afternoon. But some early birds were out.

Rufioh and Damara were walking down the path to the Grand Huss building, feeling the cool chill of the wind blow through their hair. Being lowbloods, their body temperatures were much higher than the average human, so their use for heavier attire wasn't necessary until the winter months. Rufioh had his hands stuffed inside his jeans pockets while Damara crushed her blunt with her heel, begrudgingly abiding by the school's policy of no weed.

"[It's not as fun to smoke now. Not many people are out doing it anymore,]" she said, adjusting her
burgundy scarf around her neck. "[The security here is full of shit too.]

Rufioh grinned and ran a hand through his mohawk. "Hey, I'm sure everything will become more lively when spring rolls around again, doll. But I guess we can't do anything about it now. The weather here is pretty bangarang!"

"[The cold sucks.]

"It ain't that bad."

"[Just wait until the snow arrives. Your bulge will freeze off. I should know.]

"Damn, doll..." The Taurus troll cringed, his ears flopping down. "So harsh..."

"[You left me with a cold heart. You should expect this from me,]" Damara said, walking ahead without even giving him as much as a glance. Rufioh sighed and shook his head. No matter how hard he tried to be nice and move on from the past, Damara always seemed to bring him back. He didn't fuck up that bad, did he?

The question immediately died down in his head when he saw a small group of students walk outside. It was the Anime Club. A few members were carrying boxes that ranged from arms length to two people carrying one together. The bronze blood raised a brow, suddenly extremely curious about what was going on.

"Hey!" He cried, walking over to the club. A Caucasian guy wearing an Assassin's Creed hoodie, baggy black pants, and dark blue Converse sneakers looked up and saw Rufioh approaching him with Damara suddenly hot on his heels. The guy looked a little intimidated by how large Rufioh's wings and horns were, but the friendly smile dulled it down. "What's going on here?"

"Oh, this?" The student looked towards the other club members as they pulled out some bed sheet ghosts to hang up on the trees. "We're decorating for Halloween."

"Halloween?" Damara asked as she leaned over Rufioh's arm. "You celebrate that?"

The dude blinked and several club members turned towards the two trolls, wide-eyed. Rufioh mimed their expression while Damara's eyes still remained slightly steely. While they had a good indication of what Halloween was as it was celebrated on Beforus, it never really occurred to them that the humans would celebrate it too. Rufioh turned to the Aries troll, grinning crookedly. "I think you hit a nerve there, doll."

"Just curious," Damara said with a soft smile, surprising her ex-matesprit. The Assassin Creed fan raised a brow, "well, yeah. Of course we do. Don't you guys know what it is?"

"Yeah, we do," Rufioh scratched his cheek, a little embarrassed. "But we didn't think that it would be popular here. Beforus was different, so we kinda figured Halloween wasn't heard of on Earth."

"Beforus?"

"Our home planet," Damara said as she offered a blunt to one of the female club members. The girl gave her a nod in thanks and lit up both her blunt and Damara's. The Time player took a long drag before continuing. "Beforus was peaceful planet, but unlike Earth in ways. Halloween was celebrated on planet, but we never knew of Earth until after game ended."

"Game?"
"Sgrub."

That caught the attention of a few members. They stopped moving things around to look at the trolls. Rufioh shifted a little uncomfortably while a small smirk grew on Damara's face. The Taurus troll rubbed the back of his neck, still grinning quite nervously. "See, it was-"

"It was difficult game. It got us all killed," Damara muttered, rolling her eyes. She had a feeling Rufioh would go off on something unimportant. Something like having a metallic horse body for the entire game. "Spent three sweeps - six Earth years - stuck in it until reset. Then spent eternity in dream bubbles."

A few members raised their brows. "Dream bubbles?"

"The fuck are those?"

"Uh," Rufioh held his hands up, waving the questions away. "I-it's kind of a long story. Long story short though, it's a place where ghosts reside and they're made of memories. That's...That's pretty much it." He cleared his throat, tugging at his collar. "I think we kinda got off topic."

"Oh, yeah! Sorry about that, man!" The guy pulled down his hood, showing off his bushy black hair and coral skin. He was a bit short, but average weight, and had a friendly smile. "I'm Matt, by the way! President of the Anime Club."

Matt held out his hand and Rufioh took it without hesitation, his smile now much more relaxed. "Rufioh Nitram."

"Sick name, bro!"

"Thanks! I'm pretty fond of it too!"

Damara rolled her eyes, thinking that he was as stupid as ever. Matt snickered, now holding his hand out towards her. She stared at it for a few seconds before reluctantly shaking it. The Time player wouldn't admit it, but she was wary about meeting new people. Even if they didn't know her past, she felt careful enough not to let them in too close.

"Damara Megido."

"Cool!" Matt pulled his hand away and gestured to the other members as they pulled out the rest of the decorations. "You guys like anime?"

Kankri: Wake Up

The smell of hickory smoked bacon hit Kankri's nostrils as he sat up in bed, rubbing the sleep away from his eyes. The bright rays from the morning sun shone through the curtains, and the Cancer troll took a look at his clock. It read 10:05 AM. Kankri mentally scolded himself for sleeping in, but he figured it was his own fault. Cronus didn't force him to stay up into the ungodly hours of the morning studying for a test that he forgot was on Monday and not today.

Speaking of Cronus, the Aquarius troll had just walked inside their room, towel drying his hair. "Good morning, chief!"

"Good morning, Cronus." Kankri got out of bed and started to fix it up neatly, eyeing his moirail every so often. Cronus didn't have a shirt on, and he was starting to feel triggered by the lack of clothing. Kankri was about to say something, but then he saw Cronus reach into his drawer, pulling out a fresh shirt and instantly putting it on. Instantly, Kankri felt better.
"You're up late, chief. I expected you to get up at around sixish today."

"Well, I originally planned to, but I had made the mistake of thinking that I had a test this morning, and I spent the majority of my night studying." Kankri took his comb off his desk and brushed his hair as he began to turn on his husktop. "It turns out that my test is on Monday."

"Ah, man. That's rough."

"A little. I know that I am ahead of the game and that's what counts.‖ The Cancer troll put the brush down on the dresser before grabbing some clean clothes. The smell of the cooking bacon had intensified and it only made his growling stomach even worse. He turned towards the hallway as he watched Kurloz and Meulin head downstairs. The Cancer troll turned to his moirail.

"Who's cooking?"

"Porrim is,‖ Cronus said as he rubbed some hair gel in his hands. "She got up early and started making bacon. It's safe to say everyone's awake now."

"Oh?"

Cronus quickly applied to gel to his hair, and then began to admire his reflection in the mirror. Kankri huffed lightly through his nose, shaking his head. Death may take away a lot of things, but someone's personality wasn't one of them. "I'm going to get some grub. Want anything, chief?"

"No, thank you, Cronus,‖ Kankri said as he began to delete some unwanted messages from his email. "I'll be heading to the cafeteria shortly. We ran out of my personally favorite coffee brand and I would like to get some more."

"Alright. Suit yourself.‖ Cronus' footsteps faded as he walked out to the hallway and down the stairs. It only took one second for Kankri to know that Cronus has a plan to try and offer Porrim help with cooking, but he knew for a fact that it wouldn't work in the slightest. But he also knew that it didn't stop his moirail from trying.

**Horuss: Discover a new holiday.**

Porrim sipped her coffee at the table, relishing the calm aftermath after the buzz from the breakfast rush. Both she and Horuss were sitting on the table while the majority of the gang were scattered through the house, doing their own thing. Once in a while, a roar of laughter erupted from Mituna and Latula from watching the television, but other than that, it was quiet. Meenah was in her room while Aranea was in the den, reading. Meulin and Kurloz were still in the kitchen, planning ahead for a project for their science class, and Cronus was out somewhere. She didn't care where he was, as long as he stayed away from her, she was happy. He was beginning to become a major pain in the ass. How Kankri managed to be moirails with him was beyond her.

Horuss was sitting a few chairs away from Porrim, waiting for his strong brew of coffee to finish as he read the school newspaper. His indigo eyes read along the headliner, then went wide when he saw the listing of clubs that were participating in a campus-wide event. He slide the paper over to Porrim as she set her mug down on the table.

"Porrim, perhaps you have heard of this holiday before?"

The jade troll raised a brow before looking down at the headliner and the clubs listed. The majority of after school activities were all chipping in to host a Halloween-themed event at the end of October. That was next month. The activity was listed as 'to be announced'. "Halloween? I can't say I have, Horuss."
That genuinely surprised the Sagittarius troll. "But didn't you say that you were visited by the humans and how you learned about their holidays?"

"Only one, Horuss," Porrim smiled at the memory. She missed the dream bubbles slightly. She had grown accustomed to the constantly changing scenery and how young she looked despite the countless years sweeping by. "And even so, those holidays still have a while to come."

Horuss nodded, understanding where Porrim came from. While they lived on Earth for a while, there was still so much to learn. He didn't think Earth was that different to Beforus, but it was proving otherwise. Suddenly, his phone began to buzz and he saw that it was Rufioh. A smile appeared on his face as he opened up to see what his matesprit had to say.

arisenTaurus [AT] started trolling centaursTech [CT]

AT: hey, horuss, did you see the newspaper about this halloween thing?

CT: 8=D < Indeed I hoof! It 100% is like an exciting human holiday! Do you have an insight?

AT: yeah, damz and I met the anime club and they're planning to do this whole skit. ya wanna join since I know you like anime and stuff...?

CT: 8=D < Of horse! It sounds like something I would enjoy doing with Meulin as well.

CT: 8=D < I shall now let her know about this!

AT: horuss, no, wait!

centaursTech [CT] ceased trolling arisenTaurus [AT]

-Outside-

Damara was staring up at Rufioh with an expression that bled 'I told you so'.

The Taurus troll raised a hand behind his neck, smiling sheepishly. "Um... yeah, that didn't work too well, doll..."

-Inside-

arsenicCattail opened memo on board (^•ω•^) < NEW AND EXCITING HUMAN TRADITIONS.

AC: (^•ω•^) < HALLOWE33N? THIS SOUNDS FURRY EXCITING!

AC: (=^ω^=) < DRESSING UP AND S33ING EVERYBODY AS MY FAVORITE SHIPS SOUNDS LIKE SO MUCH FUN!!!!

terrorCalm [TC] joined memo.

TC: ^o)

AC: (=^ω^=) < PURRLOZ, WE SHOULD GO AS TROLL ALICE AND THE MAD HATTER!

TC: ^oD

AC: (=^•^=) < YAY!!!!
arisenTaurus [AT] joined memo.

centaursTech [CT] joined memo.

CT: 8=D < And me?

AC: (=^ω^=) < MEW CAN BE THE MARCH NEIGH-BEAST!

AT: whoa, doll, hang on...

AT: th1s th1ng 1s st1ll up 1n the a1r...

AC: (^•o•^) < IT IS? THEN LET'S CALL EVFURRYBODY ELSE IN HERE!

CT: 8=D < Yes, let's!

AT: wa1t, what?

apocalypseArousal [AA] joined memo.

AA: 私は彼女がこれを行うとあなたに言った。

AT: 1 d1dn't th1nk she was up yet...

twistedlyAbsent [TA] joined memo.

gnarlyCasperslide [GC] joined memo.

genderAndrogyny [GA] joined memo.

AA: 神は、 RUFIOHを蓄生。

GA: What's go+ing o+n?

TA: 4 5H17 570RM

GC: 4 sh1t storm of r4d1c4ln3ss!!!!

GA: No+t the answer that I was ho+ping fo+r.

GC: cmon, ruff, sp1ll th3 d33tz! wh4ts th1s n3w gn4rly sh1z go1n on?

AT: I was just talk1ng to horuss about halloween and 1 thought 1t would be cool to try 1t out...

AT: the human vers1on, 1 mean... s1nce we're l1v1ng on the planet and all...

GA: It so+unds interesting. What's it abo+ut?

arachnidsGrief [AG] joined memo.

AG: If I may, it's a8out the humans dressing up as characters from their favorite TV shows, comic 800ks, mangas, and other varied interests. The history 8ehind is all is very intriguing. I think we should try it out.

AC: (=^•^=) < EXACTLY!! MY PURFECT GAY LITTLE SHIPPING BABIES!!!
CC: omfg meumix are ya goin off the fuckin deep end or some shit?

TA: 5H35 FUKC1GN FL11P1NGG 0U7 0V3R 50M37H1NG 57H7UPP1D

CC: um yeah captor i can glubbin sea that

CC: and why are we all doin this memo shit? we literally are all five feet away from each otter

AT: as1de from damz and 1...

TA: P07470

TC: :o

AA: MEULINでそれを責める。

AC: (=;ェ=) < DAMARA... DAMARA, NO. I CAN'T HELP IT IF MY PURECIOUS SHIPPING BABIES ARE ACTING ALL CUTE AGAIN!

CT: 8=D < It behooves me that you fail to see the e%citement in the air, your Horseness!

CC: zahhak oh my cod i thought i toldja to not use that emote around me

CT: 8=D < My apologies! Does it still disturb you?

CC: yeah dont use it

AT: gotta s1de w1th meenah on th1s one, man...

AA: いいえ、それを使用し続ける。それはあなたの馬の思考と私のヌークが濡れなります。

AT: damara, don't encourage h1m.

codpieceAquarius [CA] joined memo.

CA: wvait, vwhats this about hallowveen?

GA: Rufio+h was just telling us abo+ut it. Apparently, he and Damara jo+ined the Anime club o+n campus.

GC: y34h, 4nd h3 w4s g1v1n us th3 d33tz on 3v3ryth1ng!!!! 1t soundz l1k3 fun!

AT: but, guys, 1 sa1d 1t was st1ll up 1n the a1r...

AT: the last th1ng we want Is a lecture from you know who...

TC: :of

GA: O+h my Go+d. Leave it to+ Kankri to+ spo+il the fun. What did he do+n o+w, Kurlo+z?

TC: :of

GA: Go+t it.

CC: makara we dont talk aboat that shit
CA: not to mention thats my moirail you asses are talking about.

AG: Then please do your part and keep your moirail out of our 8usiness. I thought we all came to an agreement to not get in each other's way unless we a8solutely asked for it.

GC: your3 on3 to t4lk, s3rk3t! 3sp3c14ly 4ft3r you m3ddl3d 1n th3 t1m3l1n3!

TA: 3H3H3H3H3H 5L4MM3D MU7H4FUCK4

CC: pyrope dont you be callin serket out on dat shit

CC: you know outta all of us that our serket wouldn't do somefin like that without a reason bein knight of mind and all

GA: My tho+ughts exactly.

GC: h3y 34sy, p4ych3ck, 1m just s4y1n!

GC: b3s1d3z, you w3r3nt support1v3 of h3r 4ct1onz 31th3r!

GC: my m1nd pow3rz dont l13! you tr13d to t4lk h3r out of 1t, but n13th3r of you l13th3r 4nd fucked up!

GC: 4nd th3n you got tog3th3r w1th h3r l1ttl3 d4nc3stor for 4 w1ll3 4nd cr13d our s3rk3t your3 3x-b3st fr13nd. th4tz fuck1ng h4rsh, p4ych3ck, 3v3n for you.

CC: fuck you!

CC: fuck you!!

CC: FUCK YOU!!!

CC: i had my reasons for feelin that way fer a whale and now i feel differently!

CC: it aint any of yer business pyrope so shove the fuck off!

CC: and what do you know abot true fuckin frondships?! ya nebber dealt with some fish leavin ya fer some stupid shit or losin interest in ya!

AG: Meenah, calm down. It's done and over with.

AG: Even though it was my fault to 8egin with, I hold nothing against you. I told you that I'm glad that you found happiness while I was gone. You deserve to 8e happy.

CC: yea whale serks i aint the best troll ta be sayin i was happy

CC: fer a whale i was but then shit got screwed over again

CC: i tried hidin it but i guess everyfin felt

CC: wrong

CC: at least without you there

CC: i glubbed up beshore and after ya left

AG: Meenah, it's okay, really. I should have talked a8out it with you, I admit. 8ut I was just so angry
and frustrated from not being taken seriously from everyone that I just wanted to prove to myself, and you, that I wasn't some boring nobody.

CC: ya aint a borin nobody serks and ya nebber reely were

CC: but yer stories could use an upgrade or some shit

AG: Oh, clam up.

CC: 38D

CC: 38D

CC: clam up

CC: 38D

AG: ::::)

GC: wow, th4t r34lly got off top1c.

AT: I'll say.

GA: Regardless, Cro+nus, please try yo+ur best at sho+o+shing Kankri fo+r us.

CA: trust me, babe, im trying. the trigger vwarnings may not apply to you, but they apply to me.

CA: at least he listens to me unlike you all!

CC: )(OLY CARP AMPORA NOMOBY FUCKIN CAR-ES!

TA: 4FHGFLHG5JK H35 FUCK1NG D35P3R473 70 G37 1N K4NKR17H5 P4N75

AA: その鮮やかな赤色の膨らみの上にグリップに紫の手を待っている。

AT: damz, holy sh*t...

TC: :) 4H4H4H4H4H4 Y353555

TA: <>

TC: :) <>

CA: i hate you all.

AG: This memo is getting off topic.

CT: 8=D < Yes, this conversation is e%ceedingly galloping in different directions.

AC: (=^ω^=) < I THINK IF WE DO HAPPEN TO PAWTICIPATE IN THIS HUMAN HOLIDAY, WE SHOULD ALL DRESS UP!

GA: Yes, we go+t that part, Meulin.

GC: h3y, m4ry-g4mez, 1 th1nk 1 h4v3 1n 3v3ryon3!
AT: please don't say costumes...
GC: n4h, no stumz, ruf1bro!
AT: thank god.
AA: それはハロウィーンの乱交はなら、その後で私を数える。
GC: how 4bout 4 h4llow33n d4nc3?
AG: A dance?
GC: h3llz y34h! >8]
GC: s1nce ruf1bro 1s 1n th3 an1m3 sh1z w1th d4mz, th3 club should org4n1z3 4 r4d p4rty so w3 c4n 4ll dr3ss up 4nd h4ve fun! 1t could h4v3 mus1c from th3 mus1c m4jorz, 4nd th3 club c4n org4n1z3 th3 d3cor wh1l3 w3 4ll p1tch 1n to h3lp spr34d th3 word!
GC: th4t w4y, w3 c4n tr3at th3s hum4n hol1d4y w1th oth3r hum4nz, 4nd knkl3z won't b3 n1pp1ng 4t our h33lz!
GA: I have to+ admit, that's a go+o+d idea, Latula.
AG: Agreed. It does seem to kill two 8irds with one stone. May8e more if we play our cards right.
TA: HFGFG7FMK Y0U K1LL3D 4 81RD????!!!!!!
AG: It's a figure of speech.
TA: 000H
GC: so, do w3 h4v3 4n id34?
GC: you ok4y runn1ng th1s by th3 an1m3 club, ruf?
AT: well, l guess th1s could work out...
AA: それは代わりにポルノパーティーをすることができますか？
CC: fuck its betta than lisfinen to vantas ramble aboat social justice shit
CT: 8=D < Positively enrapturing!
TC: :oD
TA: H3LL Y34H 8483
GA: I'm in.
AG: As am I.
AC: (=^•^=) < HALLOW33N PARTY!!!!!!
CA: ill do it, but only because its a dance.
CA: and im a music major so i can showv off some of my tracks.
AG: We can hardly wait, Cronus.

CA: was that sarcasm?

collectionGenerator [CG] joined memo.

CC: oh fuck

GC: While I am aware that y9u all are excited f9r this human festival, 6ut it has e9me t9 my attenti9n that this is a seri9us f9rm 9f cultural appr9priati9n.

GC: no k4nkr1, l1st3n, w3 just w4nt to h4v3 fun 4t th1s pl4c3.

GC: wh3r3 4r3 you 4nyw4y? >8?

TA: 45 1F H3 G1V53 4 H517

GC: Latula, y9u kn9w I d9n't make the rules here, and I'm at the cafeteria, thank y9u f9r asking.

GC: 6ut, every9ne, if I did make the rules, I w9uld have 6een a6le to st9p all of y9u fr9m even c9nsidering that taking part in this event isn’t 9ffensive to the culture that it c9mes fr9m.

CC: and im gone

companionConqueror [CC] ceased responding to memo.

arachnidsGrief [AG] ceased responding to memo.

centaursTech [CT] ceased responding to memo.

arisenTaurus [AT] ceased responding to memo.

apocalypseArousal [AA] ceased responding to memo.

arsenicCattail [AC] ceased responding to memo.

gnarlyCasperslide [GC] ceased responding to memo.

terrorCalm [TC] ceased responding to memo.

twistedlyAbsent [TA] ceased responding to memo.

genderAbdrogyny [GA] ceased responding to memo.

CA: i originally didnt vwant this to happen.

GC: I take that y9u are 9nly g9ing 6ecause it's a part 9f y9ur transiti9n?

CA: kinda sorta, kankri.

CA: you newver knowv. this could be a wwhole newv thing for us trolls.

GC: Cr9nus, I highly d9u6t that this will 6e 6eneficial 9f any s9rt t9 9ur kind and culture. It's highly 9ffensive that Rufi9h even c9nsidered this t9 6e a g99d idea.

CA: hey, he means wvell. and he has a point too.
CA: wwhy not try newv things being aliwve again? evweryones excited to start nevw things.

GC: I still feel that this is 9ffensive in the highest degree, and n9t t9 just us. D9n't y9u feel even the slightest 6it 9ffended c9nsidering y9ur feelings?

CA: nah. im trying the human thing at a slowv pace. just to cool it for a vwhile and see wvhere it all goes.

CA: if ya vwant my honest opinion, i think you should try it. it doesn't evwen havwe to be wvith the group.

GC: And h9w w9uld that 6e 6eneficial?

CA: because then you can rest easy since youre wvith me and i wvont trigger anyone. i kinda wvanna get off to a good start on this planet, kankri.

CA: this place seems really promising. i wvant to try and start anewv here, and i think itd be good for you too. wvho knovws? maybe wvell learn something newv and exciting.

CG: ...I supp9se y9u're right. I understand. I supp9se that I c9uld g9 al9ng with it f9r the time 6eing.

CA: dont vworry, kankri. evwrything should be alright now. i wvasn't a hope player for nothing.

CA: <>

codpieceAquarium [CA] ceased responding to memo.

GC: ...<>

coalitionGenerator [GC] ceased responding to memo.

...  

A week later, news about a Halloween dance hosted by the anime club was posted around the campus walls.
Hey, guys!! Long time no see! I'm back, and with a new chapter of Beforus University!
How about that Act 7 animation, huh?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"So, Rufioh's asking you to pick the dance theme?"
"Yeah. He said that since I thought of the idea, it would make sense if I decided to pick a theme."

It's been about two days since the Anime club announced the Halloween dance. Posters were hung up all around the school buildings, and people were beginning to talk about it as well. It was almost like a wildfire, and it didn't take long for Rufioh to tell Latula what was needed to make the dance
happen. The dance had to have a theme and date. The topic and date would then had to be approved through the faculty's office, and if it was approved, they would allow the Anime club to set up for a limited budget. Then, the Music majors had to be given enough time to create their works, and they also had to find a suitable DJ. It seemed like a lot for a regular student, but Latula took it with stride. She was the raddest gamer girl ever!!

Now, Latula was trying to brainstorm new ideas for the dance. Or at least ones that haven't been overused already. But it didn't take long for Mituna and Kankri to join in, and that let the other Alpha trolls tell Latula that if they thought of something, they would let her know. Kankri joining in surprised her, and when she asked him what made him change his mind, he simply said that he had gotten a "fresher perspective", and decided to retain from lecturing everyone. For the time being, at least.

Hey, they weren't complaining.

Latula had made a mental note to recommend Cronus as the main DJ. But now, both she and Porrim were now walking through the Grand Huss building, heading to the cafeteria to get something to eat before Porrim headed to her next class. They had to squeeze through a line of students that were lined up at the We Love Fine school store.

Latula couldn't help but wonder what was up. "What's with this line?" She asked, not particularly towards anyone in general. Her head kept flicking back and forth at the students lined up to the school store. "Something going on?"

"You don't know?"

Both trolls turned towards the source of the noise. It was the President of the Anime club; Matt. The dude was waiting in the line leading to the school store, a piece of paper in his hand. Latula and Porrim then noticed that other students were holding one or several pieces of paper in their hands as well. Matt looked at Latula, then blinked at her, seemingly surprised. "Oh, hey! You're Latula!!"

"Yeah, bro! That's me!!" Latula grinned at Matt, and Porrim playfully rolled her eyes. She already knew where this was going. Matt held out his hand, "so you're the girl who thought of the Halloween dance!"

"Dude, it's not like a Halloween dance has never been done before." Another member of the Anime club said to Matt. He was about average height, a bit chubby, and he had short blonde hair with a long front, green eyes, light beige skin, a Chicago Bulls varsity jacket, blue and white striped boat neck t-shirt, faded black jeans, and black and red high top Puma sneakers. "This school's just new, that's why we decided to not give anything else a thought."

"C'mon, Jack, like your paintballing idea would suit everyone on campus," Matt muttered as he rolled his eyes at his friend. "Not everyone knows what paintballing is. And the last thing we need is to get in a fight with your older bro and his snobby friends."

Latula and Porrim exchanged glances. They were both wondering what the two guys were talking about, but decided not to speak up since the two guys both realized they had gotten off topic. Matt shook his head before turning back to Latula, "anyway, about the dance: We need a theme before October fifteenth."

"That soon?" Latula blinked and gaping a bit. They may be in late September now, but the time around here flies by so fast, it was almost like Time shenanigans were present! "But I thought the dance would be set at the end of the month!"
"Yeah, it is." Matt pulled up his cellphone and pulled up the calendar app. "But we need at least a week in order to set up for the dance, and to let the Music majors get their things too."

"It's basically a whole process." Jack chimed in as he looked over his sheet of paper. "And since there's more than one club involved, then they all need enough time in order to get everything prepared and ready."

The Libra troll let out a soft sigh as she ran a hand through her hair. Porrim couldn't help but let out a light huff. So, Latula didn't have enough time as she thought with this dance theme. The jade blood was pretty curious about what she would think about now that she had a deadline. Latula then looked back at Matt, moving along with the line. "Does it matter what kind of theme it is?"

"It needs to be appropriate for all ages," Matt grumbled while rolling his eyes. Everyone was in college; there was no such thing as "age appropriate" anymore. And who the hell was Hussie to say anything? "And it can't be anything that offends anyone, whether they be humans or trolls."

Porrim raised an eyebrow at that. Now this would really be interesting. She wondered how Kankri would take to this new information. Latula rubbed her chin, the wheels in her head already turning. A guy behind Matt and Jack told them to move up, and they did, making sure to close the empty space between the line. Latula followed them as well. "Alright, I'll be sure to give you guys an idea before the fifteen then!" She gave them a big grin with her trademark radical hand symbol. Matt grinned at Latula, and Jack simply glanced at her. He looked like he was curious about her, or their species in general, but it was clear he was focused on what he was in line for.

Latula then turned to the other people in the line, and then looked at the school store. She then looked at a sign that read: Work study jobs available! Sign-ups inside. "Work study? What's that?"

"You don't know about that either?" Now Jack paid more attention to Latula. It was clear that he was surprised. "That's what this line is for. Everyone is trying to sign up to work on campus."

"Really?" Now that captured both Porrim's and Latula's attention. Jack nodded and handed them his resume, and Porrim took it from his grasp. The two trolls scanned the piece of paper, seeing his work history, achievements, skills, and references. Latula looked up from the resume, "what kind of jobs are available?"

"Not many, that's why there are a lot of people in line." Jack turned back to the line, seeing that he was getting close to the door. The line moved up a bit, and he and Matt followed. "Some of the students here are from out of town, and they'd like a job to make a bit of money here instead of taking a bus to a job by the ports. But spots are limited."

"Whoa, rad!" Latula grinned at Jack and handed back his resume. "Hope ya get a good job, guys!"

"Thanks, Latula!" Matt said, and Jack smiled back at her. Just then, the school store doors opened up, and Aranea stepped out, rereading over her resume. Both Porrim and Latula spotted her, and they quickly squeezed through Matt and Jack to get to her. "Aranea!"

"Hey, Serket!"

Aranea looked up, spotting the two girls heading over to her. She smiled pleasantly at them, "Oh, hi!" She turned towards them while putting her resume away and pulling out her textbooks from her Library Fetch Modus. "Are you both going to class?"

"I am in a few," Porrim said, taking out her own textbooks from her Rainbow Fetch Modus. "But Latula and I are getting some food first. Want to come along?"
"If you both wouldn't mind. I could use a quick snack." Aranea's smile grew as she nodded. "I have my Fitness Walking class after my next class ends."

"Damn, Serket, ya already get enough walking done by just getting to class! Why you doing more of it?" Latula grinned at the spider troll and Aranea snickered a bit. Hey, a credit was a credit. The three girls began walking towards the cafeteria again after Porrim and Latula waved goodbye to Matt and Jack. Matt cupped his hands around his mouth, "tell Damara and Rufioh there's a meeting tonight at six!!"

"Will do!" Porrim shouted back as they disappeared down the hallway. Latula glanced at Aranea's textbooks, noticing that there were already a few bookmarks in several places. She could already tell Aranea was way ahead of everyone else in her class. Aranea seemed to notice this as well, because she glanced back at Latula with a small smile. "I couldn't help myself," she admitted, slightly sheepish. "Some of these textbooks are a bit of a pain to understand, so notes are kind of essential."

"I'm surprised you're not taking Labor Studies." Porrim gave Aranea a smile as well. "Is that an elective?"

Aranea nodded, "I only had so many spots for my electives. I've decided to get my requirements done and out of the way, so that way, I can enjoy taking my electives for the rest of my enrollment here."

"Makes sense."

The three girls entered the cafeteria. The place was big, and it was noisy because of the large roof window span. The whole cafeteria looked modern compared to slightly nostalgic style like the rest of the Grand Huss building had. Round tables with at least five seats were scattered around the area, and in the corner of the room were the double door exits and a lounging area with vending machines, stools, and couches. There was a small line for the cafeteria, where food was made to order on the grill, and a salad and soup bar at the other end of the kitchen.

The girls then looked around the cafeteria, noticing that there were more than the usual amount of tables scattered around. Some were student loan and financial aid tables for students that came from poorer families. Porrim felt sympathetic for those poorer students; they would have this heavy burden hanging over them for a good portion of their lives.

Porrim, Latula, and Aranea began walking to the kitchen line. Latula lifted up her shades and placed them on her head, looking around the snacks to see if she should get anything for later. Porrim instantly found what she wanted and told one of the chefs, who nodded and filled out her order. Aranea grabbed a large water bottle from one of refrigerators before joining Latula in her search for the perfect snack.

The Libra troll's eyes glanced down at Aranea's resume again, "so, what were you doing in the student store, Serket? Tryin' to get a job here?"

"Actually yes." Aranea reached over the snack bar and grabbed a blueberry muffin. "The library is hiring for student workers, and considering that I'm going to spend most of time in there, I figured it would be the best option for me."

"It does suit you." Latula grabbed a frosted honey bun cake, smiling as she thought of splitting it with Mituna. "What does it include?"

"Well, the jobs here are flexible with hours, so you can work whenever it suits you best." Aranea smiled at Latula as she dug through one of her folders, looking for something. When she found it,
she handed it to Latula. It was a pamphlet for all the work study programs listed at Beforus University. "Their main priority is your schoolwork, so if you need to suddenly cancel your shift, they understand. And you can stick with them for however long you're studying here if you like your job enough."

"Huh."

Latula looked through the pamphlet, seeing all the jobs, tutoring, and paid internships listed for students. There weren't any set limitations for certain years since Beforus University had recently opened, and there were plenty of places to consider working. Cashier and stocking positions in the student store, chef for the kitchen, computer lab assistants, mail assistants, and similar jobs working within mainly the Grand Huss building, dorms, and the library. All jobs had students being paid by the hour, and the wage was equivalent to the usual retail job: fifteen dollars per hour. School holidays were included in days off, and the hours for each job were different, but highly flexible for everyone since each schedule was different from the last.

Despite this, Latula couldn't really see anything that interested her. Yeah, working on campus was a nice thought, and making a bit of money on the side would be a huge plus as well. But at the same time, she knew that there were people that were from out of town, state, and possibly even the country that needed it more than she did. Latula handed the pamphlet back to Aranea before pulling her shades down again. "Thanks, Serket. Hope ya get the job!"

"Thanks." Aranea put the pamphlet back in her folder, saving it for later in case someone back at their frat house was interested. Porrim then came over and regrouped, her chicken sandwich bundled up in aluminum foil. "Ready to go?"

"Yup! Let's head out!"

Just then, all three of their phones buzzed. They pulled out their phones and checked their notifications. It was from Kankri, starting up another memo with everyone included. Latula sighed as her heart dropped. "Oh no... What does he want now?"

"If this is about the Halloween dance, I'm going to block him for the rest of the night," Porrim muttered under her breath. She quickly pocketed her phone before heading to the dining area. Latula and Aranea quickly paid for their food and followed Porrim out, setting their stuff down on an empty table before looking at their phone screens.

collectionGenerator opened memo on board email a69ut the meeting t9night.

CG: I kn9w that this is 9ut 9f the 6lue f9r every9ne, 6ut I feel that it is imp9rtant t9 address this t9 y9u all in a new mem9. I am n9t sure if y9u all had checked y9ur emails lately, 6ut the dean has recently sent every9ne 9n campus an email a69ut a meeting t9night in the audit9rium. F9r what it is, I am n9t sure, 6ut he has included that tr9lls are n9t exempt fr9m t9night attending this meeting.

arachnidsGrief [AG] joined memo.

gnarlyCasperslide [GC] joined memo.

genderAndrogyny [GA] joined memo.

AG: And he sent this email recently?

GC: 4nd w3 H4V3 to att3nd th1s th1ng?

GC: Yes, and yes. I had s9me time 6etween my last class, s9 I had decided t9 check my email.
Thankfully I did, because he sent that email two days ago, and the meeting is tonight.

GC: 4w m4n!!

GC: th1s sucks! 1 n33d to br41nstorm for th3 h4llow33n d4nc3!

GA: I do+ubt that the meeting will take lo+ng, Latula. Do+ yo+u kno+w what the meeting is abo+ut, Kankri?

CG: Unf9rtunately, n9. He didn't specify what it is a69ut, 6ut I w9uld'n't assume it isn't imp9rtant if he wants all the students t9 attend this meeting.

AG: How annoying. For a dean, he sure is spontaneous and unpredicta8le.

GA: Agreed. What time is the meeting suppo+sed to+ take place?

CG: Six 9’cl9ck. And he said that we had t9 6e inside audit9rium at that exact time. N9 excuses 9r excepti9ns.

GC: g33z, no room for fl3x1b1l1ty, huh?

GC: th4nx k4nkl3z! wouldv3 fuck3d up 1f y4 d1dn't let us know.

AG: Indeed. Thank you, Kankri.

CG: 9f c9urse. I'll 6e sure t9 let the 9thers kn9w a69ut this as well.

GA: I do+n't think that will be necessary. They'll get the no+tificatio+ns fro+m this memo+ and see fo+r themselves.

CG: In that case, we sh9uld all plan to meet within the 6uilding at six, then. Regardless 9f 9ur individual l9cati9ns. And we sh9uld all have a sp9t 9urselves just s9 we kn9w every9ne has made it and isn't a6sent.

AG: I agree, 8ut I feel that we'll just respond to the memo to let everyone know we're in the same place. Our university may 8e smaller compared to others, 8ut we still have plenty of people to make it quite claustropho8ic.

GC: 1 4gr33 9s33 r3 w1th s3rk3t h3r3. w3ll 4rr1v3 wh3n3v3r w3 c4n, 4nd us3 th1s n3w m3mo to l3t 3v3ryon3 know.

AG: That so+unds like a plan. Aranea and I have to+ get go+ing to+ o+ur next class, but we'll be sure to+ keep everyo+ne updated if anything co+mes up.

AG: Rufioh and I have the class together, so 8e sure to let him know if he hasn't seen anything. We'll 8e sure to spread the word, Kankri.

CG: I supp9se that w9rks t99. 6ut still, let us try t9 get a sp9t alt9gether when the meeting is 6eginning.

GC: w3ll try our b3st, kankz. s33 y4 lat4r!

CG: Until then.

arachnidsGrief [AG] ceased responding to memo.
gnarlyCasperslide [GC] ceased responding to memo.
genderAbdrogyny [GA] ceased responding to memo.
coalitionGenerator closed memo.

The three girls stared at the recent post blankly. So in order to respond to the memo and let everyone know they saw the announcement, Kankri decided to close the memo? Porrim sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose, shaking her head disapprovingly. "I swear, I can't even deal with him."

"He certainly is something else." Aranea pocketed her phone and picked up her things. "I'm surprised he didn't bring up you thinking of the Halloween dance theme."

Latula nodded, not surprised that Aranea had said that as well. Up until now, only she and Porrim really knew that Kankri had lightened up on his lecture about their "potential cultural appropriation". Porrim leaned over Latula's shoulder and checked the time on her phone. A quarter to twelve. The time to head to class was drawing closer. Aranea noticed this too and looked at her friends and nodded, "I have to head to class now. But I'll be sure to see you all later in the auditorium."

"Indeed. I'll see you guys later too," Porrim said as she gathered her things and began walking away. "Good luck with the brainstorming, Latula."

"Best of luck!"

"Thanks guys! See you later." Latula waved them both off before heading to the lounge center. She plopped down on one of the empty couches and sighed, suddenly feeling really bored. She pulled out her phone to let Mituna know she was in the lounge, and then see if there was anything interesting in the apps. Mituna didn't get out until twelve thirty, so she had a whole half hour to herself. Tuesdays were usually pretty slow for her since she only had two hour and a half classes. Her day was done by lunch, and the Libra troll had found herself bored of just sitting around at either the lounge or at home.

She sighed and let her eyes wander around the cafeteria. It was more active than usual because of the meeting tonight. A few janitors and their carapacian assistants were carrying a podium, followed by several speakers. Whatever this meeting was about, it seemed to be important.

'Damn.' She rolled her eyes as she looked at the growing line towards the kitchen. 'Should've grabbed a plate of fries for myself when I had the chance.' Latula then looked at the honey bun cakes in her hand. The heat from her hand was starting to make the frosting melt slightly, and she opened up one end up to munch on because of her growing hunger. Thank God Porrim and Aranea left, or else she'd have to either see, hear, or deal with some sort of motherly disapproval from one or both of them. She took a bite of the honey bun, and almost instantly, the sweetness nearly overpowered her tastebuds.

The combination of the vanilla frosting and natural sweetness of honey was enough to turn off any kind of sweet tooth. The Mind player liked candy and pastries as much as the next troll, but God damn, there had to be a limit to things like the honey bun cakes. There were several soft crunches as she ate the cake; pieces of powdered sugar that was melted half-assedly. She might as well be eating regular sugar. She suddenly realized that getting a lecture from Porrim, or Kankri even, didn't seem to be so bad after all.

Sighing, Latula put the pastry down and pulled out some loose change. She had just enough to buy a water bottle from the vending machine. Leaving the honey buns on the chair so she wouldn't lose her spot, Latula got up and approached the vending machine with the water bottles as a choice. She
dispensed her money and picked the Poland Spring water bottle. As she heard it dispense, her eyes traveled to a bulletin board, seeing a bunch of flyers for club memberships.

"There's a freaking Matchmaking club?"

She couldn't help but laugh at that. Perhaps Meulin and Kurloz had already seen that? If not, she had to make sure they did. It would save nearly everyone a few headaches if Meulin could squeal about her ships somewhere other than their frat house. But when Latula pulled the info slips off the paper, something else fell to the floor.

"Whoops."

Latula kneeled down and picked up the flyer, not paying much attention at first. But when she saw the words 'Video Game Club', her eyes wouldn't budge from the piece of paper. The flyer itself had a list of the different consoles the club had, types of games to play on console and PC, monthly video game tournaments and when to sign up, and where to go to meetups. The Libra troll's mouth dropped as her mind raced. There was a Video Game club. There was a fucking Video Game club, and their next meeting was tonight!

"Tulip!!"

Latula's head snapped up at the sound of Mituna's voice. She saw her matesprit run towards her eagerly, his arms already spread out to give her a hug. Latula openly welcomed that and jumped into Mituna's arms, kissing him hello. "Tuna! How was math class?"

"Not bad. Rufioh helped me out with the problemth," Mituna gave Latula a toothy grin. He then saw the flyer in Latula's hands and leaned over her shoulder to get a better look. A grin appeared on the teal troll's face as Mituna's eyes scanned the piece of paper. "Isn't this rad? We have a Video Game club here!!"

"Yeah, that'th tho cool!!" Mituna's grin grew wider as he followed Latula back to her spot. She picked up her half-eaten honey bun and handed it to Mituna. "Here, babe. Hungry?"

"FUCK YETH!! Thankth, Tulip!!"

Mituna bit into the frosted cake, not caring that some frosting had started to drip down his face. Latula opened up her bottled water and took a sip, snickering a bit as Mituna kept munching on the honey bun. She was glad that Earth had honey that didn't cause any of the trolls with psionic powers to overload. Mind honey was a powerful thing. She found a few stray napkins on a nearby coffee table and handed them to Mituna, grinning still. "Here, babe. You got frosting on your face!"

"I know!!"

Mituna cackled as he licked the frosting off his face and lips before looking at the flyer again. The next meeting was tonight at six, but Latula then realized that the university meeting was at the same time. And then, she recalled that Matt told her to tell Rufioh that there was an Anime club meeting at six as well. She wondered what would happen to both clubs tonight since their meetings were at the same time as the mandatory meeting.

She pulled up her phone and decided to message Rufioh. It was better than flying around in the cool weather. Even though she was a midblood, the cooler weather still made her uncomfortable. Plus, he could still be in class, or in his next one. He wouldn't be able to see her anyway. Mituna leaned over her shoulder again, still licking his lips free of frosting. "What'chu doin'?"

"Letting Rufibro know what's up."
gnarlyCasperslide [GC] started trolling arisenTaurus [AT]

GC: ruf1bro you on?

GC: 1 got 4 m3ss4g3 for you from th3 4n1m3 club.

GC: Its k1nd of lmp0rt4nt s1nc3 sh1z 1s 4bout to go down!!

AT: yo, tula!

AT: sorry, 1 just got out of class w1th kurloz and tuna.

AT: what's up?

GC: your fr13nd m4tt told m3 to t3ll you th4t th3r3z 4 m33t1ng ton1ght for your club!

AT: oh sh1t! 1 d1dn't know that...

AT: thanks a bunch, doll. :) 

GC: no probl3m! >8]

GC: but dud3, th3r3z suppos3d to b3 4 m33t1ng ton1ght 1n th3 4ud1tor1um 4t th3 s4m3 t1m3.

GC: 4nd 1t suuuckz b3c4us3 tun4 4nd 1 found out th3r3z 4 v1d3o g4m3 club m33t1ng 4t th3 s4m3 t1m3 too.

AT: aw sh*t... that 1s a bummer...

AT: do you th1nk matt knows?

GC: not sure. do you h4v3 h1s numb3r or 4nyth1ng l1k3 th4t?

AT: no, not really... and ne1ther does damz...

AT: do you know where they're meet1ng? when the meet1ng 1s 1n the aud1tor1um, 1 mean.

GC: n4h. h3llz, 1 d1dn't kn0w th3r3 w4s go1ng to b3 4 m33t1ng ton1ght! 

GC: k4nkr1 told m3, po-m4ry, 4nd s3rk3t b34d3r 44, 4nd 3v3n kn0w th3r3 w4s go1ng to b3 4 m33t1ng ton1ght!

GC: h3 s41d th4t h3 ch3ck3d h1s 3m4l th3 d34n 4b4t 4 m4nd4tory m33t1ng m33t1ng m33t1ng m33t1ng. >8?

AT: oh damn...

AT: that's really we1rd. but 1 guess you can't argue w1th the ma1n man...

GC: 1 f33l th4t.

GC: 4ls0, k4nkr1 w4nts us to try to 4ll m33t up 1n th3 s4m3 spot wh3n the d34n g1v3s us th3 sco0p.

AT: I'm not surpr1sed...
AT: but I'll let damz and kurloz and meul1n and horuss know.

AT: does tuna know?

GC: y34h, h3s r1ght b3s1d3 m3.

GC: so 1ll s33 you l4t3rz, ruf?

AT: unt1l the meet1ng, 1 guess. }:)

AT: by the way, how's the braq1nstorm1ng go1ng for the halloween dance?

GC: 1 h4v3nt thought of 4nyth1ng yet, but 1ll b3 su3r3 to l3t y4 know.

GC: s33 y4 l4t3rz, ruflbro! >8]

AT: later, doll! };)

gnarlyCasperslide [GC] ceased trolling arisenTaurus [AT]

"Well that wath eathy." Mituna grinned at Latula as she put her phone away. Latula nodded and leaned her head back, resting it on Mituna's shoulder, "yeah, and he'll let the others know. So, I guess what we have to do know is find out when the next Video Game club meeting is."

"It's right now."

Both Mituna and Latula turned around and face a group of three boys. The middle one appeared to be a mix of Latino and Indian, while the two others appeared to be a mix of Hawaiian and Caucasian. The middle guy was slightly taller than the two other boys, slightly muscular, gray eyes, smooth and straight black hair, and had a cinnamon skin tone. He wore a black long sleeved Led Zeppelin t-shirt, a silver hoop earring in both ears, a silver wristwatch on his right wrist, ripped and faded indigo jeans, and brown Converse sneakers.

The other two, behind the first guy, were twins. They both looked like carbon copies of each other; even their clothes looked near-identical. The twins had dirty blonde hair with undercuts with green and blue frost tips, and light olive skin with dark blue eyes. Their ears had two hooped piercings; one green and one blue. They both wore red flannels with the sleeves rolled up to their elbows, black tank tops, black jeans, silver studded belts, and blue Vans high tops. The only differences between the two were their piercings, flannel style, and tank top style. One had their piercings in the left ear, and the other in the right. One wore a hood on his flannel and the other didn't, and one had his tank top tucked in while the other was loose.

Latula and Mituna blinked at the trio, almost speechless for a second. The darker-skinned student smiled charmingly at them, showing off his perfectly straightened teeth. "I didn't mean to startle you guys! But I overheard that you were looking for the Video Game club, and here it is! It's us!"

"Yo!!" Latula gave the guy a grin, holding out her hand for a high-five. "Latula Pyrope!!"

"Ace Rahim, President of the Video Game Club!!"

Ace took Latula's hand and high-five. the echo of the impact reaching the rooftop. Ace couldn't help but shake his a hand a bit, surprised by how badass Latula's high-fives were, "damn, girl!! Sweet high-five!"

"Hey, raddest gamer girl needs to give the raddest high-fives!!"
The two of them grinning brightly at each other. Mituna looked at the twins through his messy bangs, and they both stared at Mituna as well. One of them had their arms behind their head, and the other hand their hands in their pockets, and their gazes were both intense. Mituna felt a light shiver run up his spine, but he couldn't help but feel annoyed by how the twins were just staring at him. He opened his mouth, showing off his two sharp teeth, and-

"AHGVDUHEFB OH MY GOD WHY DON'T YOU FUCKERTH THAY THOMETHING IT TH FREAKING ME THE FUCK OUT THAT YOU'RE JUTHT THTARING AT ME WHAT THE FUCK-"

"Yo, you understand this guy?" One of the twins asked his brother. The other shook his head, shrugging a bit. "Nah. He's talkin' too fast."

"Oh, sorry!"

Mituna stopped shouting and attracting attention, and the twins looked back at Ace. Ace then placed his hands on either of the twins' shoulders, still grinning. "They're a bit shy when meeting new people and trolls." He gestured to the twin on the left; the one with the left ear piercings. "This is Marco Warner." He then gestured to the other twin, "and his younger brother by two minutes, Marcus Warner. They're the Vice President and Treasurer of the Video Game club."

"Oh, radical!!" Latula jumped up, her eyes shining brightly behind her shades. Mituna's attitude changed as well, and he seemed much more energetic in a positive way. "DID YOU THAY THE MEETING IS NOW?"

"Yeah, thanks to that other meeting at six." Marco said with a sigh. Marcus nodded beside his brother, "Dean Huss says it's important, but he won't say what it's about. Not even the faculty knows about what's going on."

"That's really weird," Latula muttered, glancing at Mituna. What kind of mandatory meeting takes place after classes, but the dean won't even let the students know what's going on? It was really weird. But the Libra troll eventually shook it off and went back to focusing on the club members. "So, where do you guys meet?"

"Over here!"

Ace, Marcus, and Marco turned around and walked to another door, one that had a sign hanging from it saying: Video Game Club Members Only! Ace unlocked the door, then pushed it open while turning on the lights. The fluorescent bulbs lit up a small room, big enough to hold about twenty people. The floor had a cheesy 90s arcade carpet theme, a ping pong table, a pool table, a small desk for sign-ins, a Gatorade and Powerade vending machine by the windows, three flat screen TVs on one wall each, three leather chairs facing the TVs, and a wide array of consoles and PC games organized neatly in the shelves behind the sign-in desk.

Latula had to lift up her shades. It was beautiful. "Tuna...?"

"Yeah, Tulip?"

"I think I just died. Again."

Mituna then saw the twins settle down on two of the closest leather chairs and pull out two slips of paper. Membership applications. Ace smiled at the two trolls, giving them a pen each.

"So, you guys like video games?"
Cronus: Attend the Meeting

Six o'clock came faster than Cronus could ever recall. It was if time was purposely meddled with in order for it come around faster. In the back of his head, he really hoped Damara wasn't fucking around with her Witch of Time powers. It would just make things on this new planet a whole lot harder.

Though, he had Kankri to thank. If the Cancer troll hadn't checked his email earlier and notified him about it, Cronus probably would have missed it completely. The seadweller made a mental note to thank his moirail for looking out for him. A small smile appeared on Cronus' face; seems like his small chat with Kankri two days ago really did change his point of view.

Cronus approached the library and opened the doors up, already hearing some students walking down the ramp. He looked to the left and saw a pair of open double doors and a label above them saying: Auditorium Entrance. He headed towards the entrance and walked down the ramp, taking a look around. The ramp had a red carpet, leading to the hallway to the main auditorium. The doors to the main auditorium were in the middle of the lobby, then two other ramps with the identical red carpets were at both ends of the lobby, leading to the two classrooms. The main auditorium doors were open wide, and Cronus easily walked through them, behind several students.

The main auditorium had twenty-four rows of seats divided into three sections a few steps below the balcony, twelve chairs to each row, giant speakers hanging on the walls in groups of three, dark red curtains on the stage, and a wooden stage finish. His eyes scanned around the seats, trying to look for Kankri or anyone from their groups of friends. He then saw a pair of horns that resembled a hook and a jade green scarf in the third row, third seat. A smirk appeared on the seadweller's face as he headed straight over to Porrim, his hand stuffed inside his jeans pockets. "This seat taken?" He asked, trying to smooth.

"Depends." She didn't look up from her phone as she typed something. "If you plan taking the empty one, then no, it's not taken."

"Damn, babe." Cronus plopped down into the seat beside the Virgo troll. He saw on the other two chairs beside Porrim on the other side were Mituna's hoodie, and Latula's hoodie next to the other. He crossed his legs and hung his arms behind the chair, watching as other students began to take their seats. It was only know when he realized how diverse Beforus University really was. In terms of race, and species. He turned back to Porrim, suddenly curious about what she was doing. His eyes saw that she was blogging on tumblr, passing some time.

Without realizing, he craned his neck to peek at her blog. He saw her scroll down the dashboard, but only for a split second. There was a sudden, yet sharp pain on his earfin. Cronus flinched and sat back up, hissing in pain as he rubbed the affected area. "Jesus fucking Christ...!! Wwhat the hell wwas that?"

"This." Porrim held up her index finger and swiveled it up in the air. Her nails were freshly manicured and seemed extra sharp and firm. There was a sly grin on her face. "Stay in your lane, Ampora."

Cronus growled, but low enough for her not to hear. That hurt; more than she probably anticipated. His earfin fluttered slightly, but when the pain subsided, he couldn't help but glare at Porrim. "You could havwe said something!!"

"If I did, you wouldn't have listened." Her sly grin didn't disappear for even a second. "Even in death, you don't listen to consent. What would make me think that you'd stop if I told you to buzz off? Of course you would need a bit of persuasion."
Another hiss escaped Cronus' throat. He felt the urge to retaliate, but instead, he decided to suppress it and sit right in his seat again. His stomach was twisting and turning with anger. He was pretty annoyed that Porrim had assumed that he wouldn't have listened if she told him to stop. Of course he would have stopped. He was someone who tried to make people feel comfortable when talking to him through friendly shoulder massages and whatnot. Who the hell doesn't like a massage from a royal highblood like him? "Fucking feminist bitches don't, that's wvhat," he muttered under his breath bitterly, his arms crossed on his chest.

"Excuse me?"

The Aquarius troll froze. 'Shit,' he thought, feeling the hairs on the back of his neck stick up. 'She heard me...'

Porrim put her phone away and faced Cronus completely now, her sly smile gone and replaced with a toothy snarl. "Would you mind repeating that so I can properly give you your comeuppance?" Her glare was piercing. Cronus felt himself shrink a little under her gaze. His insides swirled with fear and anger. He was mad at himself for slipping up, but more at her for how she poked a sensitive part of his ear instead of speaking up. In the low auditorium light, Porrim's eyes glowed as she stared him down. It was fucking terrifying. But at the same time, he felt himself feel frozen. Frozen, and also hypnotized as well. For some strange reason, Cronus couldn't pull away from Porrim's glare. It was scary, yet intoxicating. Intoxicating, and infuriating.

A rush of black ran through his veins.

Slowly, a grin appeared on Cronus' face. He reached up to Porrim, and grasped her chin with one of his hands, still leering into her glaring eyes. "I said, "feminist bitches". Did that trigger you, babe?"

"Don't call me 'babe', Cronus. You have no right to say that and then concern yourself if it triggered me or anyone else." Porrim hissed, grabbing his wrist and digging her nails into his wrist. The seadweller squinted an eye from the pain, but his grin stayed the same. "It's an insult to Kankri's lifestyle."

"Sounds like you're jealous of me."

"Jealous?"

"Yeah. Me being his moirail and evwerything."

Porrim snarled, "you're disgusting." Her rainbow drinker fangs gleamed in the low light and bared dangerously over Cronus' face. "You know I could rip your guts out this instant?"

"I knowv you could, baby." Cronus grinned up at her, showing off his own set of sharp teeth. "As wwell as I knovw that you're not gonna do it."

"Hey, Mary-games!!"

Both Porrim and Cronus froze. Quickly, Porrim let go of Cronus' wrist, and she got back into her seat before anyone could accuse her of anything. She froze. 'Accuse me of what?' She thought to herself, shaking that thought away. It wasn't as if she was hate-flirting with him. No way.

Latula and Mituna were walking down the ramp, followed by the rest of their friends. Meulin waved to both Porrim and Cronus, happy to see them after a long day of classes. She and Kurloz began to take their seats after Latula's spot, then the others decided to sit in the row behind them. Porrim smiled and waved back to the others, and Cronus thankfully saw Kankri walking down with the rest of the group. Kankri waved to his moirail and sat down beside him, "Hello Cronus, Porrim. I'm glad
"Wvell, it vwasn't on accident," Cronus grinned at Kankri as he leaned back in his chair. Porrim rolled her eyes at him as Latula and Mituna took their seats. She turned to them, seeing the snacks stuffed inside their arms. "Latula, what's all that for?"

"Well, we're not gonna know when this meeting ends!" Latula grinned as she handed Mituna a bag of nacho cheese Cheetos. "It could end in a half hour, in two hours, or three hours! Tuna and I wanted to be prepared!"

"FUCK YEAH!" Mituna cackled as he opened up the bag, making a few snacks go flying a bit. Latula and Meulin couldn't help but laugh as Kurloz got most of the snacks stuck in his hair. He gave Mituna a playful dry look, who snickered at his moirail and helped get the Cheetos out of his curly locks. "Thorry about that, buddy!!" Meulin helped Mituna out too, still giggling as Kurloz collected the Cheetos in his hands.

Just then, the lights dimmed down, and the spotlights began to focus on someone walking up on stage. Well, they were appearing on stage on the back of a white horse. Dean Hussie and his carapacian assistant hopped off the horse and landed on the wooden stage, the sound echoing through the auditorium. The dean was dressed in his Heir of Space god tier clothes with the hood up, concealing his face aside from his nose and mouth. His assistant was wearing dark gray robes similar to the Space aspect color pallet, but he had his hood down, exposing his black skin.

Rufioh felt a light shiver run up his spine as he stared at the dean. "Man. This guy looks like he means business."

"He's an Heir of Space," Aranea muttered, rubbing her chin a bit. "They're a passive manipulation class. Anything goes if they're god tier in their session." The Sylph of Light then noticed that the carapacian was holding several stacks of paper in their hands. "What are those for?" She wondered, glancing at Meenah to see if she had any idea. The fuchsia seadweller shrugged, looking just as bored and confused as everyone else in the auditorium.

"It seems like everyone's here." Dean Hussie's voice rang out through the auditorium even without a microphone. "Welcome to the meeting, students."

A few students returned his greeting, while a few others nodded. He stepped forward a bit, his eyes passing by each student in the first few rows. A few trolls cowered under his line of sight, feeling like their lives were in danger because of this one man. But that was impossible, right?

"I know you're all wondering why you're here. Considering that this was out of the blue and none of the faculty knew about this either."

A few students muttered under their breath. Rufioh rolled his eyes, sighing as he sulked into his chair. Horuss noticed this and glanced over at his matesprit, "Rufioh, are you alright?"

"Yeah, just bummed. Our club meeting was cancelled because of this."

"And some classes were held back, and club meetings were cancelled because of this abrupt change in events."

The bronze troll froze as he stared at the dean. While he knew that the Heir of Space would know about all meetings being a dean, yet, he couldn't help but feel extremely weirded out. He glanced over at Latula and Mituna on the row in front of them, noticing that they seemed a little on edge as well.
"I know you're all wondering what this is about. Well, I'll be sure to let you know now."

Suddenly, the dean waved both his arms up, creating a small dust cloud in front of his chest, then he moved it up above his head; creating a smoky diagram of the Washington State Convention Center. Three colored strobe lights focused on the diagram, lighting it up. The students began to focus in on the diagram as Dean Hussie circled around his own creation.

"If some of you aren't familiar with this building, it's the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle. In here, different conventions are held on a yearly basis. One of the most popular conventions is Sakura-Con, which is like the San Diego Comic Con and New York Comic Con, but on a smaller scale." He then created another cloud of dust and turned it into individual bipedal clouds. "Sakura-Con has people from all over the nation fly to Seattle in order to meet and greet their fellow artists and idols, other people in their fandoms, and whatever else."

He moved the bipedal clouds into the building, eyeing the students to make sure they were still paying attention. Most were, but the few that weren't seemed to have basic knowledge on the topic. They just wanted to know what this had to do with them. "Some of you are familiar with the term "panels". And if you aren't, it's just a fancy term for a scheduled event within the convention."

Slowly, a smile appeared on Hussie's face. "Since I'm your dean, and through my regular means and methods, I've decided to include our university as a panel event."

He then changed the building setting into an auditorium setting, only slightly different for the sake of change. "A group of twelve trolls each will have their own panels, spending the day with a large audience and answering their questions about your world, lifestyles, session, and anything in those categories. It was be broadcasted live on national TV, and this is not up for discussion: all trolls attending this school must do this."

Now everyone was paying attention. They all had a very good, and very bad, feeling about this. While the world knew about Beforus University and the existence of trolls, it wasn't like the whole world was keen on sharing their planet with aliens. The Beforus trolls recalled these memories often when they first arrived in the new world. While their dancestors were experienced with living with humans and how they behaved, the Beforus trolls barely had any kind of knowledge on human behavior until enrolling at the university.

Aranea looked thoughtful with a bright smile on her face, 'this is interesting! People all over the world will be watching us tell tales and facts about our world!' She glanced around the room, seeing that there were several other groups of trolls discussing the oncoming event. She wondered how this would all be organized.

"Here's my question to you all." Everyone looked back at the dean. He had his arms crossed in front of his chest. "How many human students in here have ascended to god tier?"

The trolls blinked. Why only humans? Several humans seemed confused about that too, but they decided it was better to not question it. A small group of students around the auditorium raised their hands, and the numbers added up to about twenty to thirty. Twenty to thirty out of the two hundred students attending the school. Dean Hussie then made the diagrams disappear before gesturing to his assistant. "My assistant will pass these out to the human students that raised their hands."

The carapracian walked down the stairs and began to walk to those specific students, handing them the sheets. While that was going on, Hussie then made another diagram with those thirty something students. "To those who have achieved your god tier status, you will all be in charge of guarding the trolls in the panels. Like security."

The god tiered students either gaped, began to mutter among themselves, or just simply froze.
Security? A smile appeared on Dean Hussie's face, "the best way to fight fire is with water, and fire. Don't you all think?" He looked at the god tiered students, "these sheets are for you to fill out, designating which panels you want to guard for. I will only allow up to ten god tiers for one panel. We'll only be at the convention for three days, so three days means one panel for each day."

More mutters.

"Surely you don't think that Beforus University is the only school doing this?" He grinned at his students. "Don't you know Alternia High has several troll students attending there too? They'll need more seasoned god tiers to help them out as well, and since I'm the founder of both this university and that high school, I need to take responsibility."

The auditorium began to quiet down a little. Taking this as a cue to keep talking, Hussie made the cloud diagrams completely disappear. "The panels will be organized by day. One group of twelve will take Thursday, the next will take Friday, the next will take Saturday, and then the last will take Sunday. The three days where your specific group isn't doing the panel, you may spend it as you wish. But make sure to spend at least three to ten hours participating in some way, shape, or form to the convention. People are fucking psychotic and I don't want anyone getting hurt or killed."

Now everyone was beginning to mutter. The whole place seemed like it was a mixture of excitement and confusion. This all seemed too sudden. Sakura-Con normally ran in the spring; they were in the middle of the fall. Surely this would cause widespread confusion and things of the sort? Not only that, but the weekend that this was supposedly planned for would also interfere with clubs trying to get things ready for Halloween. It was too sudden, and almost too much work.

"If you doubt this generation's ability to adapt, you might as well be dead."

Silence. Hussie's smile slowly dropped, and he had a stoic expression once again. "Humans who refuse to understand their own kind won't want to understand a different species... They aren't to be concerned with. They are not the ones who you should worry about. Worry about the ones who do see you more than just another type of living creature."

His eyes drifted towards every single troll and human in the room. "Because the one who refuses to change themselves, or the world, promotes ignorance."

The students felt themselves loosen up a bit, especially the trolls. They couldn't tell if that was because of what the dean just said, or if they had just been opened up to a new opportunity. When they all arrived to the new world, they had immediately began to settle with their dancestors or with other trolls to establish their own little place in the human communities. They had never interacted with anyone other than themselves or their peers lately. But this was their chance to shed some light and change that. Both species would become closer because of a mere Q&A panel.

"Any questions?" Dean Hussie asked as his assistant walked back up to the stage, handing him the filled out sheets. Someone raised their hand, and Hussie nodded in their direction. The student stood up, "what about cosplaying? Can we cosplay at the convention?"

"As long as it's not during your panel, yes. You can all cosplay however you wish. But I do ask that the trolls and humans wear the clothes they wore in their sessions and that god tier security guards wear their god tier robes."

"Can we adjust the god tier clothes?"

"As long as you're still able to use your powers and protect the trolls in the panel, yes."
That seemed to satisfy the student. She nodded at the dean and then sat back down. Hussie took a quick look at the sheets to make sure they were all filled out, and when he was satisfied, he put them in his Fetch Modus. "Alright. Any more questions?"

Nobody raised their hand. Nodding his head, Dean Hussie raised a hand and opened up the auditorium doors with a grin. The loud bangs startled nearly everyone and a few screams were heard. He put his assistant and horse in his Fetch Modus as well as he began to float a few feet off the ground. "Well then... I'll send you all the information about the convention at the end of the week. Try not to let the workload kill you."

And with that, the dean flew out of the auditorium, only leaving behind his bewildered and slightly aggravated students.

**Alpha trolls: Whine and Complain**

"Maaan, this glubbin' suuucks!!"

"Easy, Meenah, we didn't even get the slip yet."

The twelve Alpha trolls were heading back to their frat house, all of them either worried or excited about the upcoming convention. Rufioh and Damara had attended similar events back on Beforus, but they were small-scale within the Lost Weeaboo tribes. Those were going to be nothing compared to Sakura-Con. Rufioh looked a little apprehensive, Horuss was sweating but he seemed joyful, and Damara was smoking the last of her blunt. Neither of the three seemed like they could offer any sage advice about convention survival and whatnot at the moment.

Meenah groaned and tugged at her braids as Porrim unlocked the house door. "But man, it ain't pike we have time fer this! I'm up to mah gills in work and shit!"

"We all are, Meenah..." Rufioh muttered, rubbing his forehead. He had a headache. "We have a dance to work on, and now we have a three day convention to attend."

"While making sure we don't fall behind." Latula sighed and collapsed onto the couch. She ripped her glasses off her face and ran a hand through her bangs before Mituna lied down on top of her, burying his face into her stomach. It looks like the workload was beginning to start testing their patience was well. "Do you think the professors will let us off easy with this shiz going on?"

"Considering that this applies to the other trolls on campus as well, I don't see why not."

"The dean said it would be on the script when it is processed in the mail," Horuss sighed and went into the kitchen. Rufioh followed him, and Kankri did as well. "But I cannot think of how this would be beneficial to our schedules."

"[It isn't.]" Damara crushed her blunt on the porch before shutting the door behind her. "[The only thing this does it make this place an even more gigantic pain in the fucking ass.]"

"God damn it." Cronus yawned while he rubbed his eyes. He was clearly exhausted. Kankri then approached his moirail and handed him a mug. Cronus raised a brow, and Kankri nodded at him. "Hot chocolate. I know that the cool weather isn't favorable to you, so it will warm you up. And chocolate has caffeine, which will help energize you for a short while."

Cronus grinned at Kankri before lifting the mug to his lips, savoring the taste as he peeked out at
Porrim from behind the mug. He could see Virgo troll's glaring at him, and he couldn't help but smirk smugly while slurping down the hot chocolate. Kankri didn't seem to notice because he was busy tasting his own hot chocolate.

"Hold on, guys, let's not jump to conclusions just yet." Aranea sat down on the loveseat beside the couch, "We've all been through worse. This thing seems like a pretty big deal to not just humans, but trolls as well. It's an opportunity to get closer with the humans and live in a more peaceful coexistence."

"That's nice fer the papers, Serket, but don't cha think that this woulda been waves betta if we knew about this beshore we attended this place?" Meenah groaned and collapsed beside Aranea, her head leaning back behind the loveseat. "What are we efin gonna do in this convention shit betides the panel?"

"I'M SURE WE CAN FIGURE SOMETHING OUT." Meulin leaned on Kurloz's shoulder. It was clear she was tired, but she stayed awake like a champ. "I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THIS JUST YET. LET'S JUST SEE WHAT WE CAN WORK OUT WHEN WE GET THE SLIP IN THE MAIL SOON."

The whole place was silent after Meulin said that. It was true; there was really nothing they could do at the moment. The best thing they all could do was wait for the information slip in the mail. Just then, Rufioh came in while carrying a tray full of mugs and hot chocolate packs. Horuss was following him, carrying a hot tea kettle and marshmallows. The two set the tray and supplies down, and the other trolls eagerly took a mug each. The scent of hot chocolate was almost intoxicating, and the temptation to slurp down the drink was almost overpowering.

Meenah poured over a dozen mini marshmallows into her hot chocolate. She honestly had mixed feelings about this. A part of her was glad she would be able to travel again instead of being cooped up in the fraternity house and campus buildings, but the other part was infuriated that this was a sudden change of plans. She doesn't know what's up with the universe and deciding to fuck up her plans and everything, but it was beginning to get on her last nerve.

Latula sighed as she swirled the contents of her hot chocolate. So, they absolutely had to go to this convention. No excuses, no exceptions. And depending on the notion if some of the Anime club's members being god tier, they might be going to this event as well. It would just hinder the production of the Halloween dance.

She suddenly stood up and began heading to her room. Mituna noticed this too, "where you going, Tulip?"

"I gotta brainstorm for the Anime club. If they aren't going to the dance, then I better get to thinking!"

"Latula."

Porrim got up and followed the teal troll up the stairs. "You know, you have about two weeks. You don't have to think about an idea now."

"C'mon, Mary-games!" Latula gave Porrim a smile as she sat down on her desk. She set down her hot chocolate, pulled out one of her notebooks and a pencil, and set it down on top of her husktop. "I'm the raddest gamer at BU! I got this! I bet I'll be done in five minutes!"

-30 Minutes Later-
Latula sat at her desk, hitting her head on top of her notebook and scattering the bunches of crumbled up papers that contained failed ideas.

*BANG.*

"Nothing!"

*BANG.*

"No ideas!"

*BANG.*

"Useless, empty, think pan!"

*BANG.*

It was official. Latula Pyrope, the self-proclaimed best skater and most radical gamer girl ever at Beforus University, had no ideas for the school Halloween dance. She only had herself to blame; she just had to open her big mouth. Porrim was leaning against Latula's bedroom doorframe, smiling almost smugly at Latula as she finished off her hot chocolate.

"Wow. Washed up in a half hour. So sad."

"Not helpin', Po-mary..."

Porrim playfully rolled her eyes. Okay, this girl clearly needed some help. The Virgo troll walked inside and gently patted Latula's head. "Like I said, Latula, you have time."

"Yeah, but not much... I feel like my brain is fried..."

"It's normal. We've all had a long day."

Porrim stood upright when Latula finally decided to lift her head off her desk. "Do we have any Gatorade or Powerade left?"

"I don't know. You and Mituna guzzled it down when we were walking home," Porrim deadpanned and Latula let out a groan as she headdesked again. From her peripheral vision, she glanced at the time. It was around eight thirty. Latula then reached into her pocket and pulled out a few quarters. She still had some loose change!

Porrim was walking out the door with both empty mugs in her hands. "Mary-games, wait!" The jade troll stopped and looked back at Latula, but was met with the spare quarters in her palm. "You going back to the Grand Huss building anytime soon?"

"...Not that I planned on it." Porrim looked at the loose change, already aware of where this was going. "Why?"

"I need a Powerade. I have a feeling I'm gonna stay up late trying to think of something." Latula gave Porrim a pair of puppy dog eyes. "Just quickly fly to the Grand Huss building, then come right back!"

"Dare I ask why you can't do it yourself?"

Latula didn't say anything. She just pointed to her cluttered desk and empty notebook. Porrim gave Latula a dry look. Despite this, Latula's puppy dog eyes remained strong. It was clear that neither
party was going to give up easily. The two continued to stare at each other, one telling the other to do it herself, and the latter telling the other that she'll pay her back for this. Latula also knew Porrim wasn't the most fond of the cool weather, so she also knew she had to owe the Virgo troll for that too. Not that she minded. She just wanted a Powerade!

In the end, Porrim simply sighed and held out her hand for the loose change. Latula grinned and dumped the change in Porrim's hand before giving her a hug. "Thanks, Mary-games!! You're the best!"

"Yeah, yeah." Porrim rolled her eyes before prying Latula off. "But you better do some brainstorming if I do this for you."

"Hells yeah!!"

"TULIP!"

Mituna came rushing up the stairs, the biggest grin on his face. "I GOT AN IDEA!"

"You did?!" Latula rushed to her matesprit and cupped his face, her eyes glimmering with hope and excitement. Porrim hoped he did too; she really didn't want to go back to the campus after the day she just had. Mituna cackled and grabbed Latula's face, nearly jumping out of his skin. "Okay, the idea for the party ith..." He suddenly backed up, took off his hoodie, and then his t-shirt. "A PORN PARTY!!"

"[I'm in.]

Latula and Porrim stared blankly at Mituna. The Virgo troll raised a hand to her mouth to hide her growing smile while Latula's head dropped, her hopes and excitement vanishing into thin air.

"Mituna, baby, that idea is so fucking rad... But they said we can't do anything that isn't eighteen..."

"Eighteen? Thweepth?"

"No, human years. For sweeps it's eight and a half sweeps."

"HGHFFKJGFDGHY FUCK THAT THIT!!"

"[Seriously.]

Porrim sighed and shook her head. Looks like Latula really would need that Powerade after all. She placed a hand on Latula's shoulder as she began to walk down the stairs, "I'll be right back, Latula."

"Hurry back, Mary-games! My title is on the line here!"

**Porrim: Discover a Secret**

Porrim walked inside the Grand Huss building, still tossing the change up and down in her hand. The building was a lot less crowded now since it was close to the night classes ending. It was almost peaceful. She walked into the main lobby, looking around for a vending machine that had Powerade as an option. The cafeteria seemed to be closed for the time being.

'Probably taking this quiet time to clean everything up,' Porrim thought, her eyes darting around the place. She saw the vending machine she needed to get to and almost ran to it, but the cafeteria had locked shutters; preventing anyone from getting in or out for the time being. She growled and hit the shutters angrily. There was no sign saying when it would open up again, and Porrim really did not want to be stuck here all night over a fucking Powerade.
She looked down at the change in her hand. She wondered if any convenience stores had Powerades for a dollar fifty. But then she thought about actually flying into town and walking around in this cool weather. Porrim shook her head. "No way I'm going to the ends of the Earth just for a fucking Powerade."

She stood up and began to pocket the change and walk out back to the frat house. "Latula's just going to have to deal with not having a Powerade toni-"

BAM

The Vigro troll nearly jumped out of her skin. That noise came out of nowhere, and she almost dropped the loose change on the floor. While her outfit was flexible and stylish, she didn't feel like taking off her heeled boots just to collect some quarters. With her heart still hammering in her chest, Porrim looked around to find the source of the noise. The cafeteria seemed to be same as before, and the shutters weren't shaking. The nearby offices and school store were still dark and vacant. Nothing out of the ordinary there.

But then she saw a door beside the school store. It was painted the same color as the wall, and had a tiny plaque that read: "God Tier Students Only". She blinked. A place for only god tiers to go?

"A classroom?" She asked herself as she reached for the door handle. Porrim then noticed there was an electric padlock and chain attached to the handle, and beside the handle was a card scanner. They weren't kidding when it said for god tiers only. Porrim took out her student ID and swiped the card. The red light on the scanner turned green, and the electric padlock unlocked itself, allowing the jade troll to open the door.

Instantly, she could hear a loud commotion coming from the room. Someone was already in there. That must have been the source of the noise. A part of her was satisfied that she knew where the noise came from, but that wasn't enough to satisfy herself completely. Porrim was really curious about this place now. She stepped inside, hearing her heeled boots echo from the set of concrete stairs. It was really dark inside, but the stairway lit by a pair of fluorescent lights. She began to walk down the stairs cautiously, almost feeling the urge to bring out her chainsaw.

Her steps echoed as she descended, but they were beginning to get drowned out by the other noises coming from the room. It sounded like fighting. A clashing of weapons of some sort. And... laughter.

"Oh my God, you ripped the imp's head off!"

"Good! Little fucker tried to cut my head off earlier, so karma's a bitch."

Porrim blinked. 'Imps?' She hadn't seen imps since playing their session of Sgrub. 'What the hell is going on here?' She reached the bottom stair, and looked around. The place was extremely well lit, and Porrim could see a set of digital battlegrounds lined up like tennis courts. There were at least five courts, all having a computer operating system set on a podium. Almost all of them were vacant, except the one that had a thin but powerful forcefield. Inside that field was a student while two others were outside the field, operating the battlefield. Porrim looked over to her right and saw a complete set of the Sburst/Sgrub Phernalia Registry. From the Alchemiter to the Gristtorrent CD, the whole thing was there. The Space player couldn't believe it. 'What is this place?'

The three students, all human girls, seemed to be training with their Strife Specibi. Two were outside the field, managing the amount of imps that the other girl was fighting inside. She seemed to be a little worn out, but she had a grin that said "let's keep going" as she rubbed her fists. Her knuckles were bleeding a bit, but it didn't seem to phase her. Her eyes were wild as more imps began to charge at her, but she froze when she saw Porrim staring at her.
Porrim didn't realize she was staring as well, and she almost wanted to leave since she kind of was eavesdropping on them. The girl fighting waved at hand at her friends, and they both stopped the onslaught of imps before turning around to face Porrim.

"Damn!" The girl in the field said as she rubbed her fists. "And I thought everyone else was either home or in class."

"Sorry about that," Porrim said, smiling at the trio. "I saw the door and heard a loud noise, so I let my curiosity get the better of me."

"You heard that?" The tallest girl cried, facepalming. She had a different accent compared to the other two. "Oh man, I thought I put the silencing mode on!"

Porrim laughed pleasantly at them, finally able to size them up. The three girls appeared to be the same age and good friends with each other. The shortest one stepped up to Porrim, sizing her up as well. She was a little on the short side- only reaching up to Porrim's shoulder. She had peachy tan skin, brown eyes, long, straight brown hair that ended towards the middle of her back. Both her ears had a silver industrial piercing, and two silver hoop piercings on her lobes, and she wore a black cross around her neck. She wore a dark gray short sleeved v-neck t-shirt, blue jeans that were faded around her knees, and red Converse sneakers. She had a smile that bled confidence and a go-getting attitude, and her attitude within the ring also supported that.

The middle one stepped beside the shorter one, only about half an inch taller than her. She had pale skin, short red hair, blue eyes, and purple framed glasses. She wore red lipstick, and her ears had pink studs on her lobes. She wore a white dress that had a gradient that went to white, to pastel purple, to cobalt blue. She had a red heart chain bracelet on her left wrist, black kitty cat leggings that went up to her thighs, and purple boots with black soles.

The taller one stepped up behind the other two. Porrim was surprised to see just how much taller this girl was- she was taller than her by about six inches! In comparison, the other two just barely reached over her shoulders. She had pale skin, but was slightly darker when compared to her middle friend, short dark cherry red hair that had a flair around her shoulders and v-shaped bangs, black framed glasses, and dark blue eyes. Her ears had one dark blue stud piercing on her lobe and then two dark blue hoop cartilage piercings. She wore a dark blue green shirt, light blue skinny jeans, and ocean blue Converse sneakers.

Porrim then noticed they all wore similar varsity jackets. The jackets had cobalt blue as the primary color, and black as the secondary color. On the left, they had their god tier aspect symbols on their chests, and the name "Bear Squad" on the back on their jackets in big, bold text. The only difference was that the shorter one had a hood instead of a collar on her jacket.

"So you heard us practicing?" The shorter one said, still grinning. "If I scared ya, sorry about that!"

"No worries," Porrim smiled pleasantly at them again. "But what are you all practicing for?"

"The convention," they said in unison. "We're god tier students."

"Who's panel are you all going to supervise?"

The three exchanged glances, all still smiling. "Yours, hopefully."

Chapter End Notes
Okay, so I have a request for you guys. Since this story is diverse concerning humans and trolls, I need your help. I want to be extremely diverse for humans in terms of race, gender, etc, and the same thing goes for trolls, but I don't want to do it alone. So, if you'd like, you can comment with a description of your fankids and fantrolls, and if you have a link, feel free to put that in the description as well, and I'll feature your characters in my story!

Also include if they're LGBTQAP+, in a specific major, and are involved in a certain club, please put that down too!

Anyway, I hope this was worth the wait! It's good to be back! Enjoy the update!
Porrim seemed shocked when she heard that. These three girls wanted to guard *their* panel at the convention? "Why would you all want to guard our panel? We don't even know what we're going to do for it."

The shorter one shrugged, a smile still on her face. "Your history is interesting. A lot of people know about trolls, but only the trolls from Alternia. We know nearly nothing about Beforus and the trolls from that planet."

"But what makes you all so interested in us?" Porrim asked, her posture becoming a bit more relaxed. Initially, she was on guard when meeting these girls. But now she was just curious to know why they were so intrigued about her and her friends so much. "We're just trolls raised in a different society."

"Yeah, but with a different society comes different values, traditions, and roles," the tallest one piped up, using the shorter one as an arm rest. She apparently didn't like that because she quickly gave her friend a painful dig in the ribs. Porrim couldn't help but smile a bit at their antics; they all seemed to be good friends with each other. That prompted a question.

"Okay, so you three want to guard our panel." She flipped her hair behind her shoulder, capturing their attention instantly. "But, would you mind telling me who you all are? I don't want to put anyone in my group in danger."
She muttered under her breath about almost everyone not getting hurt, but the trio decided not to ask. It felt like it was a bit personal anyway. The shorter one smirked and stepped up, deciding to introduce herself and her friends altogether. Porrim listened to her as she spoke, amazed and intrigued. The trio referred to themselves as The Bear Squad around campus; mainly because they enjoyed the cartoon, We Bare Bears, and needed a catchy name for their group. They didn't say their real names, but their nicknames were somehow universally known throughout their majors, and were slowly gaining speed around campus.

The shortest one, who currently went by the nickname Sparky, is a god tiered Mage of Breath, a 21-year-old cis girl, and the oldest member of the Bear Squad. She works part-time in the school store with the middle one, DFG, as cashiers, but her main job is working on a popular webcomic and selling prints of popular underground comics and games online. She transferred into BU from her community college all the way from New York, and is apparently extremely smart and talented. She's currently a Cartooning major with Culinary Arts as a minor at BU, and because of her art talent, she wound up on the dean's list multiple times at her community college.

The middle one, nicknamed DFG, is a god tiered Sylph of Heart, a 20-year-old cis girl, and the middle member of the Bear Squad. She works part-time in the school store with Sparky, but her main job is an assistant therapist; which gave her a head start in her main major. She's a Children's Psychology major, and she transferred to BU halfway through her second year from a private school in upstate New York. Because of her major and aspect, DFG was extremely smart and aware of her surroundings, and she always takes notice of little details in life to keep in mind in the future. Either for herself, or to protect her friends.

The tallest one, Roxy, is a god tiered Witch of Void, an 18-year-old male-to-female transgirl, and the youngest Bear Squad member. Like DFG and Sparky, she works part-time in the school store as a shelf stocker, but her main job is assisting a local computer tech store, cleaning computers infected with viruses, malware, and those alike. She's a Computer Technician major who moved in with DFG and Sparky when the school year began, and being an computer tech assistant, she is tech savvy and has the ability to hack into laptops and PCs, but was still learning about hacking cellphones. She managed to get a full scholarship to BU, and after she turned eighteen, she dropped the moving out bomb and the F-bomb to her transphobic and homophobic family, and peaced the fuck out. And because of her different identity and address, her family has been unable to pinpoint her location to this day, and they more than likely never will. Sometimes being a Void player had its major benefits.

They had entered Sburb not too long ago, and managed to defeat the game with relative ease. Their session was a doomed session since they didn't have their sprites before entering the Medium, and lacked both a Time and a Space player. But because of Roxy's Void powers, she managed to find a healthy session through extracting info from the void of space and the Horrorterrors. Sparky then led them into the healthy session, and it had a Mind player, a Space player, and a Time player; two out of the three aspects that they needed in order to beat the game. When the players beat Sburb and claimed their reward, there were two new worlds created; the planets Kepler-186f and planet Kepler-62e. After the planets were created, the six players came back to Earth, and went their separate ways. The Bear Squad had no idea where the other three players were, and judging by how they talked about them, they didn't really seem to care. After coming back to Earth and successfully enrolling in BU, the three girls all chipped in on a house not too far from the college, and moved in together.

Porrim realized that the Bear Squad had known each other for years, and they were extremely tight. They would obviously protect each other from whatever danger came their way, and neither of them wouldn't hesitate to kick ass if it was necessary. One could tell that from just their body language alone. They had no problem with touching or being in each other's personal space. Especially DFG and Sparky. They seemed extra chummy with each other. Porrim wondered if they were romantically involved, but it didn't have a romantic vibe to it. She couldn't help but wonder why.
Nevertheless, the jade troll was amazed. She didn't think she'd find such a tight squad at BU. From what she heard about college kids, they were constantly stressed and pulling all-nighters and were unable to go out very often. But judging by how this trio managed each other seemed to be proving her wrong. They seemed to have their priorities at hand, while making sure they have enough time to spend with each other and on themselves. Life looked like it was perfectly balanced for the Bear Squad.

Just then, the Space player remembered where she was. She took a look around the room again, studying the different Sburb/Sgrub machinery. Normally, these would be used once a player was in a Sgrub/Sburb session with their server player helping them along, but there wasn't a session playing now. At least, not that she hoped. Roxy noticed Porrim's slight apprehension and smiled, walking towards the Cruxtruder and tapping it lightly with her knuckles. "Yeah, the dean has his ways of getting this shit in here. We don't know why or how, and it's best not to ask."

"Hussie is a madman," DFG muttered as she began to start up their battlefield again. "This machinery is best for playing in Sburb, but since there are battlefields replicating the ones in the game, he figured it was better for god tiers since we're used to it. At least, most of us are."

"But why is it here?" Porrim asked, looking around at the empty battlefields. "What's the point of all this?"

"God tier students here are rare. Many students have played Sburb, but only several of them have achieved their title. Thanks to tonight's meeting, we know who has and who hasn't," Sparky said as her outfit suddenly changed into her Mage of Breath garbs. She tucked her hair into her hood and pulled it up, concealing her eyes slightly. "So, in order to make sure we don't get lazy or whatever, he made this room specifically for god tiers to battle and train in. We personally use it to keep our skills from getting rusty."

"But it's more than likely going to get more crowded since Hussie wants us to guard the panels at the convention." DFG began to press a few buttons, and the battlefield began to change shape as Sparky walked back in. Roxy typed in some code, and the battlefield began to dip into the ground, creating an uneven surface with a rocky terrain.

Porrim watched as Sparky floated on the battlefield, cracking a few knuckles and joints to keep herself from pulling anything. She turned back to Porrim, "so, what brings you down here? Other than the fact that you heard me slaughter some imps?"

The Space player blinked, a bit confused at first, but then remembered why she even came to the Grand Huss building in the first place. She just remembered she was holding the loose change in one of her hands as well. Porrim had a feeling Latula was wondering why she was taking so long, and she probably should head back to the frat house. But curiosity was preventing her from leaving. For some reason, she wanted to see just how strong the Bear Squad was. 'Probably to confirm that they aren't lying,' she thought to herself. Porrim walked up to DFG and stood beside her, "do you mind if I watch for a little?"

"Yeah, you can stay!" DFG smiled back at Porrim as she set a timer. It was timed for two minutes. "It won't be too long. This is our last warm up for the night."

"Sparky, I'm coming in with you." Roxy raised a hand to the forcefield, then casually walked through. She stood on a crumbling boulder, then switched into her Witch of Void outfit. The two floated side-by-side, smirking and getting themselves riled up for the fight. DFG looked up from the podium, "what kind of settings, guys?"

Both god tiers looked around. The battleground was constantly changing, and they had the timer set.
They exchanged glances, then smirked slyly. Sparky turned to DFG, "underlings. A hoard of them."

"Mix 'em up, DFG!"

DFG looked a bit apprehensive. While she knew her friends were strong, they sometimes bit off more than they could chew, and got themselves injured badly. This was looking like it was becoming one of those cases. "Guys, are you sure about that? You both remember last time you had those blades stuck in your shoulders, right?"

"Hey, that was a cheap shot!" Sparky cried as she floated over to the podium on her side. "Besides, I got him eventually, and you healed me with no problem."

"Sparky, that's not the point. You take things lightly, even severe injuries," DFG muttered while shaking her head slightly. "Sometimes I worry that you're going to end up getting yourself killed and I won't be able to help you."

"Hey, c'mon, DFG." Sparky floated down to DFG's eye level, her features soft and with a smile to boot. "You know that I know when to get serious. You worry too much."

"I can't help it." DFG smiled back up at Sparky, though hers appeared to be more melancholy. "I like being alive at the same time as you."

Porrim couldn't help but stare at the two. Again, she felt that powerful, loving vibe radiate off of them. It almost felt like a matedship, but at the same time, it wasn't. It didn't have a romantic feeling to it, but they appeared to be more than just friends. Porrim thought it was a moirallegiance, but that didn't feel right either. Humans didn't use the quadrant system, so they probably wouldn't even have knowledge of it if she asked. At least, that's what the Space player thought.

"If you two are done talkin' borderline romance over there, I'd like to finish this up so we can get something to eat!"

Roxy's voice apparently startled them since they both jumped a bit. Porrim grinned and turned away to hide it, just to spare the two a bit of embarrassment. Sparky rolled her eyes playfully while DFG looked a bit embarrassed regardless. The Mage smiled at her friend softly, "how about thirty randomized underlings?"

"I guess that's better than a hoard." DFG smiled back at Sparky. "But you owe me."

"Caramel-filled brownies for dessert?"

"Deal!"

Out of nowhere, Porrim felt her mouth water a bit. Why did the thought of brownies being filled with caramel sound so fucking irresistible? And why the hell did she feel so hungry all of a sudden?

Sparky floated back to Roxy, and DFG began to type in something on the podium. Slowly, static began to cling around the forcefield as pixilated beings began to emerge on the battleground. Porrim watched, intrigued, as DFG then turned away from the podium and headed towards the Cruxtruder. She floated up to the top of the Cruxtruder, then pulled out her Strife Specibi; boxcutterkind. She hit the Cruxtruder with the blunt end of her weapon, and out came a gray dowel.

DFG floated back down to the ground over to the Totem Lathe and put the dowel into the machinery. The Totem Lathe carved he dowel into a DNA-shaped object in a split second. She then took it to the Alchemiter, waiting for it to shape into its object. Porrim watched this all play out, unable to take her eyes off of the activity. 'So, the Phernalia Registry wasn't there just for show,' she
realized. It was to help build the battlefield so that the players could have a better experience and enhance their strengths and overcome their weaknesses, while gaining different forms of grist doing so. Porrim saw that the Cruxtruder timer wasn't working, and it seemed like Time shenanigans had played a part in that. Which was a relief. The last thing she wanted was to wind up back in the game.

The Alchemiter was finally done creating the dowel's object. Out came a bookshelf, and a book fell from the top shelf. DFG caught it with ease, then headed back to the podium and put the alchemized dowel in a cabinet just below the control system. There was a loud whirring sound, like a computer hard drive starting up.

"I put a Mercury dowel in the podium." DFG told her friends as she began to type in the number of opponents. "We're running low on that."

"Awesome! God knows we'll need it in the future."

The static clinging to the battlefield began to increase. Mercury imps, ogres, and underlings all began to appear, all of them resembling something on a windy planet. Sparky and Roxy got ready to fight. DFG set the timer. "The time starts now!"

Instantly, the ogres and imps rushed towards Sparky and Roxy, hopping from one crumbling boulder to another. Roxy pulled out her Strife Specibi; brassknucklekind, and rushed forward. "Dibs!!"

"Oh, you suck!!"

Roxy leaped forward towards a mercury ogre, then punched it straight in the face. The ogre howled in pain, and Roxy took the open opportunity. She leaped back, then lurched forward as she punched it straight in its gut, then hit it with a massive uppercut. The ogre turned into grist, and a few imps began to charge at her to retaliate. A few managed to snag onto her clothes and scratch at her, but the Witch was beyond used to this. With brute force, she spun around, throwing the imps off and straight into the forcefield.

She raised a hand. Using her Void powers, she began opening a small portal above the imps, and then dropped a large, perfectly generic cube on top of them, turning them into grist. A smirk grew on Roxy's face. But that was cut short when she got a massive blow to the face. "Ugh!!" Both Porrim and DFG cringed a bit; that looked painful.

Roxy flew back a few feet, quickly regaining her composure to look at what just hit her. A mercury Acheron. She raised a hand to her right cheek, feeling it sting like hell. "Cheap shot." Roxy narrowed her eyes at it, and the Acheron growled and snarled back. Just then, Sparky floated behind the Acheron while waving a hand. A huge gust of wind blew against the Acheron, and a current began to wrap around its neck. The Acheron struggled pitifully just before she snapped her fingers. There was a loud crack, and the Acheron instantly dissolved into grist.

Roxy looked at Sparky, her eyes wide. "Did you just break its neck?"

"Yeah." That answer was almost too casual. The Mage grinned and shrugged lightly at Roxy before turning to the other underlings. A pair of mercury Titachnids were beginning to fly towards the two. Both Sparky and Roxy exchanged glances, then smirked. As the Titachnids got closer, Sparky disappeared into thin air, and Roxy became invisible. The underlings stopped, looking around to see where they went. Then, out of nowhere, a massive gust of wind started to pick up, and the underlings were soon swept up in a vortex. Sparky emerged in the middle of the vortex, controlling it with precision and patience. When all the Titachnids were swept up in the vortex, Sparky suddenly stopped, and Roxy emerged behind her and began to pound at the underlings with her Strife Specibi.
Porrim watched as her heart raced. She couldn't believe just how powerful these girls were. Each underling turned into grist seconds after being hit, the goods scattering onto the ground below them. The two floated over the battlefield, looking over at the remaining underlings. A few ogres, Basilisks, Giclopses, and several imps. Sparky looked at Roxy, "how many left?"

"I say about fifteen. Give or take."

"How much time left?"

"About a minute."

"Wanna go brute force, or use our powers?"

"Powers."

"Solo or combo?"

"Combo." She said that with a smirk. Sparky smirked back, and the two fistbumped. DFG's eyes widened. "Guys, you're seriously going to do that here?"

"Hey, we gotta practice it!"

DFG facepalmed, sighing. Porrim looked confused. She watched the Mage of Breath raise a hand above her head, creating a large cumulus cloud. It began to increase in size, and the air inside the battlefield began to shift in both temperature, and direction. Cool air began to blow from behind the girls while warm and humid air began to seep up into the clouds.

Meanwhile, Roxy's hands began to glow dark blue as she moved her fingers. From all sides of the battlefield, small, dark portals began to appear all over the battlefield. Roxy then floated in front of Sparky, and Sparky stretched out a hand, aiming inside the portal that had form on Roxy's hands. Static clung to her fingers as she launched a lightning bolt into the void. From one of the portals around the battlefield, the lightning bolt emerged, and zapped an unsuspecting ogre. It instantly dissolved into grist. Porrim's eyes widened, "THAT'S their combo attack? What's so bad about it?"

"It's not the attack that's the bad thing." DFG muttered, her head still in her hands. "It's when they try to break the cloud apart that's bad..."

One by one, the underlings were turned into grist. With the combination of Sparky's powerful lightning bolts and Roxy's void portals, the underlings had no idea of where to run, or when they would get hit. It was the ultimate sneak attack.

Finally, the last one was killed. Sparky's storm cloud was still going strong, but she began to hold back the lightning bolts as Roxy started to close up the portals. With her free hand, Sparky began to create two different wind currents, blowing against the ones that helped create the thunderstorm. The four different rush of wind gusts felt as if there was an category 5 hurricane hitting a city dead on, but it seemed to be working. The clouds had begun to lose their strength since the temperature was beginning to drop and the wind had started to die down.

Eventually, the clouds disappeared, and the battlefield began to disappear as well. The grist that was left from the underlings showered over to Sparky and Roxy as they high-fived, proud of their accomplishment. The forcefield eventually disappeared completely, and the two walked out as DFG and Porrim applauded.

"Well, that didn't as long as I thought it would." DFG looked at Sparky as the grist began to add up
in their spoils. The oldest Bear Squad member shrugged, a grin on her face. "Practice makes perfect. I had to try it out through process of elimination."

"So that method of attacking was used before, huh?" Porrim asked before the Bear Squad nodded. Sparky sheepishly rubbed the back of her neck, "you have no idea! It was a nightmare to try and control the first few times!"

"I'm surprised that a Mage could do that." Porrim's arms dropped down to her sides. "I always thought that only the Witch class and Heir class could manipulate their aspects."

"That's true, but Mages also have a very deep understanding of their aspect." Sparky gave the Virgo troll a big grin. "We're affected negatively by our aspect, allowing us to delve deeper into them and gain more knowledge of what we can and can't do with it. And since we're an active class, it's only natural that I'd try a few things for myself."

"Speaking of aspect effects..."

Roxy rubbed her sore cheek, feeling it begin to swell up a bit. DFG noticed this too and held up a hand; it was glowing a vibrant purple color. "Want me to heal that, Roxy?"

"Yeah, that'd be great."

Porrim watched as DFG placed her glowing hand to Roxy's cheek, then purple wisps flowed from her hand and into Roxy's skin. Within seconds, Roxy's injury began to shrink, and eventually there was nothing left. The Space player was amazed. Normally, only Sylphs or Witches of Life or Blood players would be able to heal an injury like that, but DFG was a Heart player. She couldn't help but wonder how she was able to do that. And not just through her class.

"Heart is linked to soul and feelings."

Her voice startled Porrim, breaking her out of her thoughts.

"Feelings don't just mean emotions; we have nerves in our skin to alert our brain about different sensations, which ties into the definition of 'feeling.' DFG smiled at Porrim, "And since pain is a type of emotional and a physical feeling, I'm able to heal injuries attaining to that, or anything similar."

"That's amazing." Porrim couldn't help but beam at the Bear Squad's knowledge about their aspects. Unlike her group, the trio had spent enough time getting to know not just each other, but their aspects and classes. They were stuck in a dead session, but they didn't just flounder about in it. They took the time they had to test their strengths and see just how much they could really do with their titles. At least, DFG and Sparky did. The Space player couldn't help but feel curious about how much Roxy could manipulate her aspect.

But, obviously now wasn't the best time. Roxy was too busy rubbing her newly-healed cheek; making sure that she wasn't hallucinating or anything. "Hey... what time is it?"

Just then, they heard someone heading down the stairs, shining a flashlight directly at them. The four shielded their eyes, trying to see who it was, but they all had a similar feeling of who it was. A security guard appeared in the doorway; his assistant right beside him.

"I thought I heard something down here. Good thing I checked." He said, turning his flashlight off. "Sorry to break up the party, but the building is beginning to close for the night. You should all head home."
"Oh, sorry!" Sparky smiled at the security guard. "Time got away from us. We were just heading out."

"Alright. Finish up down here."

And with that, the guard turned around and headed back up the stairs. When he was gone, both Roxy and Sparky changed back into their regular clothes while DFG shut down their battlefield and podium. The lights around the field began to dim, and so did the lights on the ceiling. Porrim instinctively felt the urge to turn on her rainbow drinker glow, but decided to go against it since the Bear Squad was beginning to head up the stairs.

She turned around and glanced around the room once more. A place strictly dedicated to god tier students. At first, she wondered why it was only for god tiers, but now she knew. Normal players wouldn't be able to use the room properly because of their lack of title. Or, at least take full advantage of what the room had to offer.

As Porrim followed the trio up the stairs, she saw DFG and Sparky walking closely together, then saw that they were holding hands with their fingers intertwined together. That emotional but non-romantic feeling struck her again. 'What the fuck is this?' She thought to herself, beginning to feel annoyed that she couldn't identify this feeling. Of all the trolls, aside from Meulin, she would be the first troll to pinpoint exactly what the feeling and their relationship was established on. And yet, she couldn't.

When they reached the door, they found the security guard locking up the cafeteria. He waved to them, and they waved back before heading out of the building. DFG turned to Porrim, "so, where are you going now?"

"Probably back home." Porrim smiled at DFG, "If you all don't mind, I'd like to tell my friends about you guys and of what I saw."

"As long as they're a god tier, you can tell them everything." Sparky shrugged casually. "You can even tell them we're hoping to guard your panel at the convention."

"I'm sure they'd feel better knowing one of us has met you all."

As soon as the doors opened, the night air instantly hit them like a ton of bricks. The late September air was beginning to get cooler with each night as it turned into October. Porrim shivered a bit; still trying to get used to the changing weather patterns again. She suddenly found herself envying the Bear Squad's varsity jackets. They looked really warm and comfy.

"You okay?" Sparky asked Porrim, clearly taking notice of her discombobulated body language. Porrim nodded, a light smile on her face. "I'm fine! Just not used to the cold weather just yet."

"Tell me about it," Roxy snickered, stuffing her hands into her pockets. "Fall's okay, but winter sucks."

"You guys hate the cold too?"

"I enjoy hot weather."

"Oh yeah."

"It's a problematic fav."

As they continued to walk past the Paradox Space building, Porrim found herself feeling more
comfortable around the trio. From the first moment she met them, she had took notice of all the little
details. They all had friendly personalities, and didn't seem at all intimidated or bothered that she was
a different species. Their body language was loose and expressive, showing that they were
passionate about their interests and had no qualms with sharing them with her and anyone else who
asked. They had open minds to meeting new people and trolls alike, and were eager to learn new
ideas and values.

Porrim smiled. *The only humans that I've met so far were the B1 kids in the game. But now...* She
stared at Sparky and DFG as they laughed at a pun Roxy made, prompting the other girl to laugh
along. She couldn't help but feel a bit excited. For what, she didn't know. But she knew that it was
for something good. *'...I think this panel thing won't be so bad as I initially thought.'*

Eventually, they reached the fork in the road. One way led to the dorms, the other the frat houses and
to the main road and gate. The Bear Squad changed into their god tiers as Porrim stepped towards
the street heading to her frat house. "I have to head this way. Latula and the others are probably
wondering where I am."

"We get it." Sparky smiled and held out her hand, which Porrim gladly shook. "It's been great
meeting you... Uh...?"

"Porrim. Porrim Maryam." The Virgo troll smiled a bit, mainly just to hide her minor embarrassment.
She couldn't believe she never gave them her name. "You all were awesome to meet. And I hope
you don't mind sharing that room with me and my friends."

"No way! We'd love to see your team!" DFG looked pretty excited. "Don't be a stranger!"

"Do you have a chumhandle?" Roxy asked Porrim, pulling out her phone. "You should add us on
Trollian!"

"Good idea." Porrim took out her phone and typed out her Trollian. When she was done, she
received three greeting texts from the three Bear Squad members. Roxy's was voidedRising, DFG's
was loyalAnalyst, and Sparky's was nomadicDischarge. Porrim smiled, "I'll be sure to tell everyone
else about you three!"

"You better!" Sparky winked before she floated up a few feet. "We gotta get going! See ya on
campus?"

"If not, then in the battle room!"

The Bear Squad waved to Porrim one last time, then took off, disappearing into the clouds. Porrim
wondered why they flew up so high, but she figured it was best to leave it alone. Especially since the
wind was beginning to pick up, only making the air much cooler than it seemed. She turned around
and began walking home, still staring at the three new contacts in her phone. She couldn't believe
that she had met the three god tiers that actually wanted to be around her, and the rest of the Alpha
trolls.

Something inside of her couldn't help but feel curious as to why. True, they told her it was because
of their interest in their society and whatnot, but Porrim couldn't help but feel as if there was
something else. Something that they didn't want to admit to. For the time being, or at all. Porrim
sighed and shook her head, telling herself she was just over examining the situation.

"I just met three new god tiers. Who knows what can happen?"

Then, Porrim froze. She suddenly remembered why she went to the Grand Huss building to begin
"Shit... I forgot the fucking Powerade."

**Aranea: Enjoy the Little Things**

She had forgotten how nice hot showers felt. Aranea smiled and sighed as the hot water soaked her skin and hair. The temperature in the house wasn't very ideal at the moment, and the temperature outside was proving to be a bigger pain in the ass. The wind stirring up was making it feel colder outside, thus, making it seem cooler inside. Not as much, true, but enough to make anyone in Aranea's caste and up feel uncomfortable. And since she was considered a highblood, she was more susceptible to colder temperatures than lowbloods.

In death, ghosts didn't need to use basic necessities in order to go about their existence. They just existed because of the game. They didn't need to eat, sleep, bathe, or anything of the sort, so it was extremely easy for ghosts to forget about the small, but rewarding, pleasures in life.

Aranea ran her hands through her hair, avoiding the base of her horns since they were sensitive. The water proved to be enjoyable since it wasn't provoking a reaction. The heat began to relax her muscles; and the Scorpio realized they ached a bit more than they normally did.

'It's probably because of the work study interview today.'

The interview proved to be a bit more nerve-wracking than she, and most of the other students, took it for. The competition to work on campus was stiff, which Aranea could understand. Students that worked on campus received benefits that some retail jobs didn't offer, and they had the convenience of getting their schedules worked around with their classes. Some retail jobs wouldn't even do that.

'Which is bullshit,' Aranea thought, rolling her eyes as she scrubbed her hair with her shampoo. In her opinion, retail jobs should be more lenient with college students. Around campus, Aranea had heard rumors of students having to cut their hours because of school, or even quit their jobs altogether. Simply because their jobs couldn't, or rather wouldn't, give them any other option. That was just unfair to these (already) broke college students.

Aranea grabbed a bar of soap off the shower caddy and let it soften under the running water before rubbing it on her limbs. Her eyes traveled to Meenah's portion of the caddy. It had one mango scented shampoo bottle, one coconut milk conditioner bottle, and a pink shower sponge hanging loosely on the edge. She smiled. No matter how old Meenah got, she would always have a major soft spot for tropical or nautically themed brands. It was another silent reminder that even though she and Meenah were sometimes polar opposites, they were still best friends regardless.

She lathered some soap on her arms and collar, feeling the suds in her hair run down her sides and back. 'It's as if this society is targeting young adults to be broke their entire life.' That was bitter. Bitter enough that Aranea surprised herself for even thinking of it. But she also had a feeling that she wasn't wrong either. With the crushing student loan debts that she's been hearing about (and partially dealing with), low pay, and expensive prices for nearly everything, it would be crazy not to think something like that. Only trolls and people with the wealth of highbloods wouldn't take much notice.

'Unless it's deliberate.' Another bitter thought. Aranea shook her head, chasing it away and whipping water everywhere. "What am I doing? I came in here to relax, but I'm stressing myself out all over again."

The Light player sighed a bit. School could bring out the best in someone, but she was now beginning to realize it could also bring out the worst as well. It was just a matter of the time,
environment, and stress levels. Deciding to focus on the hot water, Aranea finishing scrubbing her legs as her hair became shampoo free.

She reached over to the conditioner, but then saw the warm vanilla sugar body wash hidden behind Meenah's coconut conditioner bottle. It looked like it was used several times, but not recently. The Scorpio troll blinked, "Meenah using this kind of body wash? That's kind of surprising." She reached forward and popped the cap open, wondering if Meenah had bought it and she never noticed. The scent was sweet, yet light. It reminded Aranea of freshly baked sugar cookies.

"That explains why she would use it."

Meenah was a pretty skilled baker, after all. Yet, why not use it more frequently? The scent hit Aranea's nose again, and the Scorpio couldn't help but smile pleasantly. It was extremely soothing; something that one would smell on a late winter night or a rainy day. She assumed that Meenah wouldn't notice a slight difference if she used it. That, and curiosity got the better of her.

She quickly lathered her conditioner in her hair before letting the body wash fall into her palm. She then noticed and felt something rough; finely chopped almond bits. Those were put in to help exfoliate the skin, and it was a nice contrast when compared to the sweet scent. Aranea could feel her whole body relax as the body wash coated and exfoliated her skin. It was such a small difference, but it was a feeling that she had long forgotten. One that she rarely got a chance to enjoy back on Beforus, and much less within the game.

When she was finished, Aranea stepped under the warm water and scrubbed her scalp, making sure to get rid of the conditioner while being mindful of her horns. Leftover conditioner and shampoo could cause dandruff, and that was an itch and situation she could gladly live without. She let out a content sigh as the conditioner and body wash ran down her figure; the relaxation of a shower was greatly underestimated by some unfortunate individuals.

Once she was sure there wasn't any conditioner left in her hair and body wash left on her body, Aranea turned off the water and stepped out of the shower, seeing the bathroom filled with a decent amount of steam. The water must have been too hot.Oops.

The Scorpio troll grabbed a towel and dried herself off, tempted to flick on the fan to clear the steam, but decided against it. As Aranea dried her face, she suddenly became alert to the outside sounds. The house was unusually quiet. Rare with the trolls in the group, and for it only being a quarter past nine. She smiled. It was unusual, but it was nice.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU FORGOT THE POWERADE?!!"

Never mind.

"You were gone for that long and you FORGOT the POWERADE?!!"

"Okay, I know I fucked up on that, but I have very good reason why!!"

Aranea rolled her eyes. How Latula and Mituna liked those things, she'll never know. Aranea quickly dried herself off her and put on her pajamas, still towel-drying her hair even after exiting the bathroom. Porrim was dragging Latula into her room while the latter was trying to chew the other's head off. The Scorpio troll shook her head slightly at the quarreling duo and went into her room, hanging the used towel on the bathroom door towel rack before closing the door. Meenah was lying on her own bed. She wasn't dressed in her pajamas yet, just passing some time using the tumblr mobile app on her phone.
"If you need the shower, it's free."

"Thanks. I'll take mine in a bait." She looked up at Aranea for a split second, hearing the commotion outside, "what're Maryam and Pyrope beachin' aboat?"

"Apparently, Porrim had forgotten Latula's Powerade."

Meenah huffed and rolled her eyes. "I'm more surprised Maryam fergot it in the first place." She flopped over onto her left side, facing Aranea's bed. Aranea sat down at her desk and opened up her husktop, logging in to check her email one more time for the night. The seadweller noticed this, "still thinkin' aboat that work study job?"

"You can tell?" Aranea smiled at her best friend sheepishly. "I can't help but feel a bit of anxiousness. The competition is stiff."

"Shell, Serket, ya got Light as an aspect, don't'cha got all the luck?" Meenah rolled over onto her stomach, burying her face into one of her pillows. "Ya worry too much."

"I know, but still. I can't help but feel excited! It's been a long time since I've worked in a library. Or even been inside one, for that matter."

"Or one that wasn't a memory."

"Exactly."

Aranea clicked at her email, making sure that there wasn't anything important she had missed. There were a few new messages, but most were from her professors letting their students know about any possible changes to the syllabus. So far, nothing out of the ordinary. The work study job did say they needed at least three days in order to go over who would be employed. It was best to just wait it out until then.

So with that in mind, Aranea shut off her husktop and sat down on her bed, looking for a new book to read. Meenah had rolled over onto her back, and was now watching TV. Aranea rolled her eyes. Over the course of the past two weeks, Meenah went out and bought herself a mini fridge, and a small TV to put in their room. Aranea personally thought they were unnecessary. There was a perfectly functional fridge and television downstairs! But because of the seadweller's high status and ego, and with the encouragement and talk about most of the dorm students getting mini fridges and televisions, Meenah had decided to follow in their footsteps.

The bantering outside seemed to have gotten louder. Thanks to the hallway light, both Meenah and Aranea could see that there were two, or three, pairs of feet walking past their door in both directions. The fuchsia troll rolled her eyes turned up the volume on her TV, prompting Aranea to look at it as well. The show was one of those dynamic police duos and their investigations that took place in New York City.

"Law and Order?" Aranea deadpanned at Meenah. Meenah looked a bit puzzled and narrowed her eyes at her friend, "what? Got a probubblem?"

"No, but don't you think there's anything else you could be watching?" Aranea finally found a book to her liking and pulled it out from the shelf, her gaze locking onto Meenah's. She opened up to the first page, "one that possibly wouldn't disturb me?"

"Ya mean like heavy metal music?"

The Scorpio troll was about to retaliate and scold Meenah, but then she saw the gigantic grin on her
That was intentionally said. For a reaction. Aranea glared lightly at the seadweller, tempted to throw one of her pillows to wipe that stupid smile off her face. "Hilarious. Do you want a cookie for that, or could you live without a reward for once?"

Meenah opened her mouth, but their door suddenly swung open and Latula collapsing onto the floor. Both highbloods sat up and stared at the teal blood, eyes wide and almost ready to fight. Their fighting instincts haven't completely simmered down just yet, thanks to English.

Latula groaned at Porrim and began to stand back up, rubbing her sore head and fixing her red shades. "Damn it, that hurt like a bitch!"

"Yo, Pyrope, ya doin' alright?"

"Yeah, I think so, Paycheck." Latula slipped her shades back on and stood upright, just as Porrim appeared in the doorway. "Wasn't expecting that wipeout, though."

"What happened?" Aranea asked towards Porrim. "And why are you two still arguing over a Powerade?"

"It isn't about the Powerade anymore. It's something else," Porrim approached Latula and grabbed her arm, intending to drag her out of the room. Latula huffed a bit at the slightly overbearing troll, but decided to not saying since it was getting late. She was already pretty exhausted. Her brain was completely fizzled out from trying to brainstorm for the past two and half hours. She let out a soft sigh, "yeah, but I keep telling Porrim I don't wanna hear it. I'm at my thinking limit."

"I feel that," Meenah deadpanned and ignored the dull look Aranea gave her. Latula smirked at the seadweller, "you always get me, Paycheck!"

Both Porrim and Aranea rolled their eyes at the two. Latula freed her arm from Porrim's grip, adjusting her shades and putting them on top of her head. "Apparently, Mary-games met a group of god tiers who want to guard our panel."

"You've grotta be kiddin' me."

"Nope. Legit. Po-Mary says so." Latula pointed to Porrim with her thumb, provoking another eyeroll from the other troll. Aranea sat up in her, completely forgetting about her book, "wait, you've met them?"

"Yeah, they were in the Grand Huss building." Porrim leaned against the doorframe with her arms crossed over her chest. "They were practicing in a basement battleground, full of the Sgrub Phernalia Registry, and earning grist and things of the sort."

"What?" Meenah sat up this time, paying full attention now. "What'chu mean they was earnin' grist and shit? I thought we finally beat the shit outta that game!!"

"Technically we did, but from what they told me, the dean set up the machinery in order for the god tier students to practice and hone their skills." Porrim shrugged. "They're good; in both terms of strength and alignment."

"You saw them fight?"

Porrim nodded.

"And ya saw 'em win?"
Another nod.
"Are they our age?"

And yet, another nod.
"They ain't pike Megido, right?"

"Meenah!"

That, however, was another nod.
"Do they have basic understanding of their aspects?"

Surprisingly, there was another nod.
"They beat their own session?"

Another nod...
"Are they humans?"

Was that really another nod?
"You shore they ain't pike Megido?"

"Meenah."

Behold! Another nod.
"Did you see them combine their strengths together?"

And that... was another nod.
"Did'ja catch their names?"

"Better." Porrim, deciding not to nod this time, pulled out her phone with a smirk, "I got their names and their chumhandles!"

"Fuck, Mary-games, did ya interrogate them like a judge?" Latula muttered as she stared at Porrim incredulously. "How much do you know about these guys?"

"Enough to see that they are extremely skilled." Porrim uncrossed her arms and looked directly at Latula, "and I also know that one of them is an Art major. She can help you out with the brainstorming."

"Psh! Like I need her help! I got this, Mary-games!"

Porrim stared at Latula for a few seconds before she raised an eyebrow.

"...Okay, maybe not right now, but I know I got this!!" Latula stormed past Porrim, hands up. "I got this!! It's in the bag!"

After Latula entered her room, there was a slam, and a loud click. She locked her bedroom door. Porrim rolled her eyes, pocketing her phone. "She took that so personally. It was just a suggestion."

"You know Pyrope betta than anymoby eelse betides Tuna, Maryam," Meenah muttered. "She takes
everyfin pershoalnel. Espefishally if it's her rad act."

"I know."

The Virgo troll sighed and stepped back, "sorry for barging in on you two like that." She grinned a bit, and the two highbloods waved it off.

"It's a good thing it happened. If you didn't tell us about the three humans you met, you might have forgotten in the morning," Aranea said, smiling. "Especially since the workloads are only going to get bigger."

"Probably."

Porrim grinned at the two a bit before closing their door. Meenah groaned and stretched, feeling her vision begin to become hazy with fatigue. She had forgotten what being tired felt like; and she looked forward to passing out in her bed. She had also forgotten how awesome sleeping was. She got off her bed and opened up one of her drawers, pulling out an oversized t-shirt and fish-printed pajama pants.

"Going to take a shower?" Aranea asked as she finally opened up her book. The seadweller nodded and flicked the TV off before glancing at her friend, "yea, it's gettin' ta that point."

"I understand. Don't use all the hot water."

"No promise-." Meenah stopped short as she turned around. Aranea stared at the fuchsia troll as the latter sniffed the air, catching onto something. "What the glub?" She looked up at Aranea and got closer, still sniffing the air. The Scorpio troll felt a bit uncomfortable with Meenah so close to her; especially when she realized what the seadweller's nose had caught onto.

"What are you-?"

"Ya smell pike vanilla." Meenah grabbed Aranea's hand and smelled it lightly, confirming her suspicions. "Did'ja use my vanilla bodywash?"

"...I stumbled upon it by accident," Aranea said, flipping a page in her book to add a bit of extra flair. "If you don't want me using it, I'll simply-"

"Ya can have it if ya want."

Aranea seemed surprised. Meenah was always really protective over her possessions; even ones that weren't exactly money. But then again, the Scorpio troll did recall that the seadweller gave up a small amount of boonbucks back in the dreambubbles. What she didn't know whether it was out of rare kindness, or if it just didn't meet her wants and desires. Nevertheless, she raised a brow up at the fuchsia troll, "are you sure?"

"Yea, no probubble. I tried it with mah tropic hair shit, but it just clashed and made everyfin else smell weird." Meenah shrugged and headed to the door. "Keep it. I don't reely care."

"...If you're shore, Meenah."

The two froze. Aranea cursed herself for making that accidental pun. The biggest grin appeared on Meenah's face as she started jumping up and down, giggling, "shore!! Ya codda said sure but ya said shore instead!!"

Aranea grinned at Meenah's attitude. Her heart leaped because holy crap, she didn't realize how
much she missed making these dumb, laugh-provoking puns and Meenah's reaction to them. "Meenah, you better go and take your shower." She raised a brow coyly at the seadweller, "I have an inkling that you're going to need my help with your hair later."

"...Wazzat ink word a pun? As in... squid ink?"

Aranea shrugged, her sly grin still on her face. "Maybe it was, maybe it wasn't."

"Whale, if it was, I'mma hafta make shore yer up ta par with mine." Now Meenah grinned slyly. Aranea knew those puns weren't there simply because. Well, there was at least a small reason why. Memories of pun battles raced through her head as she turned her attention back to her book, her smile unable to leave her face.

"I am aware. But, the sooner you get done, the sooner we can dunk it out."

"Heh... dunk. Pike, dunk underwater."

"Exactly."

"Whale, don't fall asleep, Serks." Meenah smirked and began walking out, and while she managed to keep a cool front, Aranea could feel the giddiness from where she sat. She flipped another page and got comfortable on her bed, "I don't plan on missing this, Meenah. Not even for the world."

**Cronus: Stumble Away**

It was the next day at Beforus University, and the school was still buzzing with life even after four in the afternoon. Late afternoon classes were starting to conclude, and club members were heading to their respective buildings to meet up. The same could be said for Mituna and Latula.

The two trolls were boarding down the concrete paths, making sure to avoid anyone that was walking in the opposite direction. Because of her grudge match against Meenah (and her gnarly wipeout), Latula's reputation as a great skater was beginning to catch up throughout the entire campus. Skaters and regular students alike were dishing out high-fives, low-fives, and too slows all around.

"Man, this is so tubular!!" Latula cried at Mituna as he tried to catch up. "I feel like troll Tony Hawk!!"

"You thaid it, babe!!"

Mituna was getting some action too. Not as much as his matesprit, but enough to give the Gemini troll a big grin on his face for the whole day. That, and he hasn't fallen off his skateboard once! *I think I'm getting pretty good at thith!!* He thought to himself as he watched Latula jumping and cleanly landing a 360 nollie boneless combo. She gave another guy a high-five, and Mituna watched as the dude had to shake his hand a few times because holy shit, that bitch can slap hard.

'Heheh.' Suddenly, the yellow troll flew forward, flying off his skateboard. "WHAUGHTHFR OOF!!!!!"

He fell flat on his face and hit the grass hard, a large sum of leaves scattering up into the air and everywhere in between.

"Tuna!!"

Latula skidded to a stop and turned towards her matesprit, already boarding back over to him. A few
students rushed over to Mituna, asking him if he was okay or hurt. Mituna groaned and rubbed his nose, feeling it sting in pain. "Ow..." He sat on the grass, shaking some leaves out of his fluffy hair. "My nothe hurth..."

"Tuna!!" Latula hopped off her skateboard and kneeled down to Mituna immediately, brushing a few leaves out of his hair. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I think tho... That wath weird." Mituna rubbed his nose again, now noticing it was slightly yellowish from irritation. Latula sighed lightly in relief, a smile on her face. She turned back to the several students and waved them off, "it's cool! He's fine!"

The few students either smiled or nodded, expressing that they were glad he wasn't badly harmed. As they began to walk away, someone's laugh made the two trolls look up. It was Cronus, snickering at the matesprits from the other side of the concrete path. "Wovw. That wvas quite a sight, Captor! Nice job tripping ovwer a rock!"

To prove his point, the violet seadweller kicked a rock over towards Mituna. It was the right size; just enough to throw a skater off balance if they weren't paying attention. "You probably couldn't see it because of that bushy head of yours! Maybe vwearing that helmet isn't so stupid after all."

"YA WANNA GO, BULGE LICKER?!" Mituna scrambled up to his feet, his hands balled into fists. Latula grabbed onto his hoodie and pulled him back, shaking her head. "Tuna, don't worry about him." She glared at Cronus, raising a fist into the air. Cronus' heart skipped a beat as the memory of her punching him in the face a few weeks back replayed in his head. 'Fuck!'

"Alright, Ampora, I'm gonna give you five seconds to fuck off! If you don't, this fist will meet your teeth instead of your cheek!!"

Instantly, Cronus held his hands up in defeat, backing up. "Alright, alright! Chill out!" He began walking away, shaking his head and muttering to himself. He shoved his hands into his pockets, glancing back at Mituna and Latula, seeing that they were watching him leave. 'Probably to just make sure I actually am leavwing.'

Cronus shook his head again, muttering his grievances under his breath. "Pointed out that there wvas a rock in the path, captain helmet hit it and fell ovwer, and threatening to punch my teeth in is my thanks. Wvhat great friends I hawve!"

He kept walking past people, fuming and grumbling under his breath. He didn't even care that some were staring at him, noticing that he was muttering bitterly to himself. They were not worth his well-earned time. Cronus felt an urge to contact Kankri and complain to him, but then remembered he was probably in class, or filling something out for the student government. Then again, leaving a message wasn't a bad option either.

codpieceAquarium [CA] started trolling coalitionGenerator [CG]

CA: kankri?

CA: kankri, you on?

CA: if youre not on, then contact me later. i gotta rant to you about something.

codpieceAquarium [CA] ceased trolling coalitionGenerator [CG]

The violet seadweller sighed a bit, running a hand through his hair, "man. Nowv that Kankri's trying to get into the student govwernment, that might mean I wwon't see him as often."
Even though Kankri's lectures were hellish to sit through and he sometimes forgot about the matter at hand, the Cancer troll was the best moirail that Cronus could ask for. And not just because he was the only moirail he ever had. Whenever Cronus told Kankri he wasn't feeling like himself or was turned down again, Kankri would immediately swoop in and try his best to lift Cronus' spirits up. By droning on and on, sure, but it was still an attempt. Other trolls wouldn't hesitate to just leave him hanging.

The seadweller huffed and stuffed his hands further into his pockets, feeling even more bitter and angry. With Kankri not being around as often, that meant a few things. One, Kankri wouldn't be around as much. Two, Cronus realized that if the student government meetings did accept him, he'd be exhausted coming home. 'And if that's true, then he won't be able to pacify me as often!!'

Cronus growled. It was if the entire universe was out to get him at this point. A new life meant new changes, right? So why couldn't he even have some stability in his only filled quadrant? The Hope player growled again and kicked at a nearby bench, making the thing shake.

"CRONUS?"

He froze and pulled his leg away quickly, "shit!! Sorry!" In his blind rage and racing thoughts, the Aquarius troll didn't even realize he had kicked a bench that Meulin was sitting on. "I didn't see you there, kitten!"

Meulin smiled brightly up at him, telling him it was alright. In her lap was an English textbook, and a notebook with some handwriting in it. As in, actual handwriting. Cronus noticed that she wasn't using her quirk to write. The professors at Beforus University were aware that trolls used quirks in their speech and typing styles, and while they didn't mind the quirks in their speech, they were trying to help the trolls break their quirks when trying to do assignments. Homework? They were fine with that. Nobody checks homework in college. Tests, essays, research papers, etc? No quirks. It was either school policy, state law, government law, or a weird mix of all three.

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, CRONUS!" She looked up at him, noticing his less-than-stellar expression. "YOU SEEM MAD. WHAT'S THE MATTER?"

"Ah, it's just about Kankri." He sat down beside her, plopping his head into his hands. "I'm just thinking about what's going to happen if he joins the student government."

"OH, YEAH, PURLOZ TOLD ME ABOUT THAT. THAT SEEMS TO FIT HIM, DON'T YOU THINK?" She smiled at Cronus as she closed her notebook and used it as a bookmark in her textbook. Cronus smiled internally because fuck yeah, he was getting attention. In reality, she was just doing so to be polite, but the thought was still nice. Cronus nodded, groaning a bit, "Yeah, but that's the thing. If he spends too much time in the student government, he might not have time for me anymore!"

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN?"

"I mean, I'm just afraid of not getting to spend some time with him." Cronus looked up at Meulin now, sighing as he scooted closer to her. Meulin swallowed hard and shuffled away a bit, trying to avoid being too close to him. While she was fine with trying to help him with his possible pale quadrant issue, that wasn't an invitation to invade her personal space.

"He's my only moirail... Literally and figuratively!" Cronus didn't seem to be picking up on her body language because he began to lower his head onto her shoulder. Meulin cringed a bit and shoved him away slightly, but found that the seadweller was a bit heavier than she took him for. "If he takes this opportunity to join the student government, I probably won't have a moirail anymore!!"
"I'M... SURE IT'S NOT LIKE THAT." Meulin glanced down at her pen and held it tightly in her hand, planning to use it if Cronus couldn't take this one last hint. "KANKRI IS ALWAYS THERE FOR HIS FURRIENDS, AND I'M SURE THAT MEW'RE NO DIFFERENT. MEW ARE HIS MOIRAIL, AFTEPURR ALL."

She shoved Cronus away once again, this time successfully shooing the seadweller off her shoulder. He stared at her, looking offended. "Geez, kitten, you can't let a guy cry on your shoulder?"

"CONSIDERING THAT MEW AND I DON'T SHARE A QUADRANT, NO." Meulin huffed a bit. She straightened out her blazer and dress while her tail seemed to poof out a bit; a sign for him to back off. "I DON'T THINK I'M OBLIGATED TO DO THAT. MEW ARE KANKRI'S MOIRAIL, NOT MINE."

Now Cronus looked really annoyed and offended. "Fuck, kitten! I come here trying to wvent and this is howv you treat me? A guy that's sensitivwe and scared about losing his only moirail? I thought wve wwere friends."

"MEW ARE NOT LOSING HIM, CRONUS, MEW'RE JUST JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS." Meulin sighed and began to stand up, grabbing her things and putting them in her Scratching Post Fetch Modus. She faced the seadweller with her hands on her hips, "AND IF WE ARE FURRIENDS, THEN WOULD MEW PAWLEASE TAKE A HINT AND NOT LEAN ON ME WITHOUT MY CONSENT? I DON'T MIND HELPING MEW ABOUT YOUR PALE QUADRANT, BUT THAT ISN'T AN OPPURRTUNITY TO TOUCH ME OR LEAN ON ME WITHOUT MY PURRMISSION."

Cronus glared at Meulin, and she glared right back. He wracked his brain to remember the last time Meulin seemed so upfront. When he couldn't remember anything, he figured she must have been taking lessons from her dancestor. He didn't know much about Nepeta, but what he did know was that she and Meulin hit it off really well. 'Nepeta must have taught her how to be a bit more brave or something.'

"You knowv vwhat?"

The seadweller stood up abruptly, catching Meulin off guard. She stepped back a bit, her brave front collapsing entirely. 'Or, maybe not,' Cronus thought to himself, laughing internally about how quickly she lost her edge. That, and how he was so easily fooled by it. The seadweller looked into Meulin's eyes, a knowing glint in his eyes. There was a quick flash of fear in her eyes, but it was gone the next second because all that Cronus saw now was anger.

"MEW KNOW WHAT, CRONUS? IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT KANKRI NOT HAVING ENOUGH TIME TO SPEND WITH MEW, WHY DON'T MEW JOIN A CLUB?"

"...Wvhat?"

That question genuinely caught him off guard. Cronus' entire face went blank. He knew that some of the others in their group were joining clubs, but the thought of him joining one never really registered as a possible option once.

Meulin huffed again and turned away slightly, silently telling him that this conversation was just about over. "WHY NOT? IF MEW THINK KANKRI WON'T HAVE TIME FUR MEW, THEN WHY NOT DO SOMETHING THAT HELPS YOUR MAJOR? THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING."

"Wvhat do you mean?"
Cronus looked completely baffled. Meulin couldn't tell if it was from her addressing the idea, or him finding people that could actually stomach him for once.

"I MEAN, JOIN A CLUB. THE MUSIC CLUB. MEW MEET NEW CATS TO TALK TO, AND MEW CAN PURRACTICE YOUR MUSIC AND BETTPURR YOUR GRADES HERE."
She began to walk away, waving him off. "SEE MEW LATER, CRONUS."

"Wvait!"
But it was too late. Meulin disappeared into a crowd of students before he could even try to get more information out of her. It wouldn't have mattered if he shouted for her either. He let out a soft growl as he began to walk off towards the music building. He couldn't believe that he was doing this. It was ridiculous. With all the time he spent practicing his instruments and making songs, Cronus arrogantly felt that none of the other music majors had a snowball's chance in hell to surpass him.

But at the same time, it was better than just sitting at home and doing nothing. He didn't have homework to do, and he couldn't think of anything else to waste time. Aside from tumblr.

The Hope player found the music classroom, seeing that it looked relatively deserted and void of anyone's presence. At least, from the beginning of the dirt road. "Man," he muttered, shaking his head and stuffing his hands into his pockets as he walked, "if Meulin led me on a wild quack-beast chase, I'm going to flip."

Cronus walked to the music-portion building and peeked inside. It was almost too dark inside to see, even if he squinted. It didn't look anyone would be in there; even if there was a club going on. He felt his stomach churn in anger as he pulled his face away from the glass, ready to seek Meulin out and chew her head off.

"Can I help you?"

The seadweller froze. He saw a few reflections in the glass and turned around. A group of four, one adult and three students about his age, were standing behind him, carrying a few sets of instruments. The adult, who Cronus recognized as one of the music professors that taught in the Grand Huss building, stood in front of everyone else. He appeared to have Native American descent and had a pecan complexion, light blue eyes hidden behind square-framed sunglasses, jet black hair with a side part hairstyle, a gray dress shirt, a black tie, black jeans, and black dress shoes. He had an acoustic guitar slung around his shoulder.

"Uh... Yeah, sorry!" Cronus cleared his throat and quickly regained his composure. "I wvas told that there vwas a music club and I assumed they'd... meet here?"

The professor looked down at Cronus, and the Hope player realized how much taller he was and felt himself shrink a bit. "Normally, students who want to join the club meet in the Grand Huss building, but you weren't aware of our meeting tonight. Obviously."

Cronus felt himself shrink down a bit more. He could tell from one look that this dude could kick his ass if he really wanted to. At least, until the professor smiled at him. "But, that doesn't mean we're not open to new members! Right, everyone?" He turned back to the three students, who all nodded and smiled.

The professor held out his hand to Cronus," my name is Olin Glover. Normally I go by Professor Glover or Professor in my classes, but you can simply call me Olin."

"Nice to meet you, Olin," Cronus said as he shook Olin's hand, obviously much more relaxed and at
"Good to meet you, Cronus." Olin seemed fascinated by the troll's appearance. "I have several trolls in my classes, but you might be the very first to actually want to join my music club." He then turned around and gestured to the rest of the music members. "As you can see, we aren't the biggest club, but we make up in passion."

One of the students stepped forward to Cronus. He appeared to have African and Brazilian traits. He was tall and lanky, had walnut skin with dark freckles on his cheeks, brown eyes, and a red afro that had a crew cut hairstyle. One ear had a blue industrial piercing, and the other had a cartilage piercing. He wore a plain white t-shirt, a black jacket with white fur around the collar and his sleeves rolled up to his elbows, bootcut light blue jeans, and white and black basketball sneakers. He extended out his free hand since the other one was carrying a keyboard, "hey! I'm Tobias Bernard, Popular Music major."

Cronus gladly shook Tobias' hand, "nice to meet you, Tobias!"

Another student stepped forward to Cronus offering a fistbump, "s'up? I'm Dennis Henderson, Music History major." Dennis appeared to be Caucasian with coral color skin and well built, curly brown hair with a comb back hairstyle, green eyes, and two black studs in his ears. He wore a white tank top, a zip-up yellow hoodie, a silver dog tag chain necklace, a pair of gold and black longboarding gloves, ribbed baggy blue jeans, and red Converse sneakers. He was holding a pair of drumsticks. Cronus grinned and returned Dennis' offer for a fistbump.

The last student approached the Aquarius troll, a grin on her face. She was a bit chubby with a pear body shape, had a soot skin complexion, blue eyes, big square hipster glasses, and wavy teal hair that rested above her shoulders. She wore a dark gray pullover hoodie, a pair of bulky white headphones slung around her neck, ripped gray skinny jeans, and white Converse sneakers. Cronus' eyes traveled down to her hoodie pocket and saw a white can of spray paint and several guitar picks linked together by a small chain. She held up her hand to give him a high-five. "What's up? I'm Janice Owen, Music Therapy major."

"Hey there!" Cronus took the offer on her high-five, and holy crap, it was waaay more gentle than Latula's high-fives. Just then, the three music members began to walk past Cronus, and when he turned around, he saw them entering the building. He began to follow them in, his curiosity and excitement going wild.

Olin opened up the music room and walked inside, the four music majors following close behind. Cronus took a look around. The music room was barren of instruments since it wasn't in use. The only things there were some chairs, a few music stands, several music lockers, and a lone piano in the corner. Cronus couldn't help but feel a bit confused. "Olin, wvhat are vwe doing here? There aren't any instruments to use other than your guitar and the keyboard?"

"See, this is why you need to read the slip before you try to join, Cronus," Olin snickered a bit. Cronus blinked, not sure whether to feel embarrassed, confused, or offended. Suddenly, he realized that the group weren't turning the lights on, or moving chairs around in the room. Instead, they kept on walking. They headed down a short flight of stairs, and Olin pulled out a set of keys. He unlocked a door on the bottom of the stairs, and let it swing open. The group stepped inside, and Cronus couldn't help but gape a bit when he saw the most amazing recording studio he had ever seen.

Everything inside was filled with the best kind of music production, and the technology was up-to-date and designed for college students to create and learn about how to record and edit their music. In the corner of the room, Cronus saw a few stray wind and string instruments, ready to use at any time.
"Wvowv..."

"Like it?" Tobias gave Cronus a smile. "This place is yours to use at any time as long as you're in our group."

"For real?"

"Yeah!!" Dennis picked up a violin and began to test the notes and see if anything sounded off or flat. "We're currently using this to practice for our classes, but we all like to meet here occasionally and make any kind of music we can think of. When you let your mind wander, you tend to be a bit more creative."

"However..." Olin set his guitar down and approached Cronus, his arms folded neatly across his chest. "You have to impress me in order to use my studio. There's another reason why my group is so small."

'Shit..' Cronus' earfins fell flat against his head. 'I almost thought I'd get here for free...'

"So, what are you gonna do, Cro-bro?" Janice snickered as she sat down in a swivel chair. "Think you got what it takes to impress Olin?"

"Or you gonna chicken out?" Tobias stood beside Olin, arms crossed as well. There was a grin across his face. "You may be a different species, but that doesn't mean anything at BU. You really wanna take on Olin's challenge?"

Cronus' earfins flared out now, feeling annoyed that these guys had the gall to think he was a chicken? They might have bragging rights now, but that was going to change. He opened his mouth, but then a buzz from his phone distracted him. He looked at Olin, who smiled and nodded. "Go ahead."

Smiling sheepishly, Cronus quickly turned away, checking who or what was buzzing in his pocket. It was Kankri, answering him from his earlier replies.

collectionGenerator [CG] started trolling codpieceAquarium [CA]

CG: Cr9nus, I ap9l9gize f9r taking s9 l9ng t9 answer y9ur replies. I was in a meeting with the student g9vernment.

CA: nah, dont wvorry about it, kankri. i get it.

CG: Alright. Are y9u 9kay? D9 y9u need t9 talk a69ut s9mething?

Cronus then looked back up from his phone. Olin, Dennis, Tobias, and Janice were still looking at him, their smiles drawing him in and challenging him to try and prove himself. The Hope player's heart skipped a light beat as he felt himself become extremely motivated. He was going to blow this guy right out of the water!!

CA: i do wvant to talk to you about something, kankri, but can it vwait?

CA: im about to do something important.

CG: 9f c9urse! What time will y9u 6e 6ack at the fraternity h9use?

CA: not sure, but ill let you knowv.

CA: thanks for checking up on me!
CG: Certainly. I'll see you later, Cronus.

coalitionGenerator [CG] ceased trolling codpieceAquarium [CA]

Cronus quickly put his user status on offline before pocketing his phone and grabbing a nearby acoustic guitar. He slung it around his shoulder, and gave Olin and the others the biggest grin he had ever had on his face.

"Alright, Olin, I accept your challenge!! Bring it!"

Olin smiled down at Cronus, gesturing to the recording studio. "Very well, Cornus. After you."

Suddenly, everyone froze.

Tobias looked at Cronus' expression, which had a mixture of anger and shock and embarrassment. Tobias snickered, "Olin, you said his name wrong! It's Cronus, not Cornus!"

The band geeks all began to laugh, and Olin tried his best to not smile in front of the embarrassed seadweller. "My apologies, Cronus. Minor slip up."

'God. Fucking. Damn it.' Cronus stomped into the recording studio, fuming and flushed in the face. 'This better not become a thing here!'
Chapter Notes

For anyone who wants to listen to the songs in this chapter:

Aquasex Renegade from the Beforus album.
The Nights by Avicii

"So, you got accepted into a private music club?"
"Vwell, I wvouldn't say... accepted, chief."

Cronus was watching Kankri from his bed. His moirail was walking around their room, folding his laundry and putting it in the correct pullout drawers on his bedframe. It was late at night; close to nine PM, and the frat house was finally beginning to quiet down. Most of the other trolls were retreating into their respective rooms to finally relax and get ready for the next day, while a few others were still downstairs, unwinding. Cronus had arrived home about two hours ago, and Kankri could tell he was bursting at the seams with excitement.

"I don't understand, Cronus." Kankri stood back up and adjusted his shirt before placing a few sticky notes on the calendar by his bed. The Cancer troll had taken off his sweater, tie, and shoes, and just wore his khaki pants and plain white dress shirt. "If you have not been accepted into the group, then what is your current status regarding them?"

Cronus shrugged, still scratching his head. "Dunno, chief. I'm still scratching my head. Olin wvas kind of vague on wvhat he vwants me to do." He stretched his arms and sighed, feeling his tense muscles finally beginning to relax a little bit. "But he didn't say that I wvas out of the group. So to speak."

Kankri raised a brow. It seemed like Cronus was the one being vague here. Irritated and slightly triggered about all these vague details, Kankri sat down on his bed and faced Cronus with his arms crossed. "Well, then I suppose you should retell what happened. From the beginning."

"Alright." Cronus ran a hand through his hair and faced his moirail. "It's a bit of a long story."

"I have plenty of time. Besides, you always listen to my lectures... lessons, so it's only fair if I listen to your story."

Cronus had to fight back a smile. So, Kankri did pay attention to him!

-About three hours ago...-

Cronus sat down on the stool in the recording booth, an electric guitar in hand, microphone on front, and a pair of headphones resting nicely on his head. Olin was seated in front of the recording studio with Tobias right beside him, both wearing headphones of their own. Janice and Dennis were behind them, eager for Cronus to start his song. Olin grabbed the microphone on his left hand side and pulled it closer towards himself before clearing his throat. "Alright, Cronus, you can start whenever you're ready."

The violet seadweller grinned and shifted his position a bit on his stool, trying to get comfortable. His nerves were jittery as excitement coursed through his veins. This was the most excitement he felt in eons! He almost couldn't grip the guitar right. But, he made sure to. That damn thing looked expensive and he did NOT want to piss off Olin, get rejected from this music group, and pay for another electric guitar.

Cronus cleared his throat and brought his microphone closer to him, finally able to sit still. "Alright, this is a song I vwrote... just simply in my spare time." He saw the other group members expression lift up in mild amusement. So, they knew how that felt. That was reassuring.

The Hope player let out a soft sigh, then began to strum. The strings were a little higher pitched than he expected, but they were just right to fit the tune of his song. Olin and the band members watched his fingers move between the strings smoothly. It was clear Cronus had a lot of practice with the strong instrument.
Cronus leaned towards the microphone, his typical grin on his face, "Novw gather 'round me, cats and kittens, ease up on me close, I got my guitar and my mojo. Of THAT I got the most." Between the lyrics, his eyes traveled to Janice, and he wasn't above winking at her. Janice showed no emotion. "Novw vwho's big daddy-o there? Rocking in the shade I say: "Hello, pretty dolly. I'm the Aquasex Renegade'!"

Cronus shut his eyes and strummed faster, almost melding into the guitar as his fingers strummed on the strings. Olin and Tobias exchanged glances, both seeming to think the same thing.

"Renegade!"

They both turned back to the troll in the sound booth.

"Renegade!"

Olin reached over to grab the microphone as Tobias worked on some configurations on the control box.

"I'm the Aquasex Renegade!"

The volumes and wavelengths coming from the recording studio began to fluctuate. Both Dennis and Janice got closer, leaning over Tobias' chair to get a better look at what he was doing.

"Wvait! Lemme shovw ya!"

When Tobias kicked up the artificial drums, Cronus' fingers switched from high notes to low notes, making it sound like he had two different guitars playing at once. Cronus didn't show any signs of struggle or fatigue. Dennis and Tobias stared at Cronus in awe. Janice, however, seemed a bit less impressed. "Ooh!" And just like that, he was back to playing the notes from before, the illusion of the two guitars disappearing slightly. Tobias turned to Olin, whose expression was still stoic. He almost resembled a fucking statue.

"Olin?"

Olin didn't say anything. He just kept looking at Cronus before pressing a button, turning on the speaker inside of the sound booth. "Cronus?"

"Wvell I'm all up in your thinkpan, you're digging wvhat you see."

"Cronus."

"Chickie, slide a little closer... It's okay if you touch me."

"Cronus."

"Novw giwve big daddy some sugar. I knovw I got you made! Nowv let me shovw you wvhy they call me the Aquasex Renegade!"

"Cronus."

"Renegade!"

"Cronus."

"Renegade!"
"Cronus."

"I'm the Aquasex."

"CRONUS!"

The seadweller flinched, accidentally strumming a few notes off and an awkward sound filling the music booth. Tobias cringed and took off his headset, rubbing his ears to soothe the ringing while Dennis seemed to be laughing. Cronus' heart was pounding in his chest, the adrenaline rushing through his veins. He was really nervous even though he put on a cool and calm demeanor. Although he was used to playing the guitar with relative ease, he felt more than a bit anxious about playing in front of the group even though they were only four people. Being ostracized in the dream bubbles for so long does some crazy things to the brain.

Olin cleared his throat and took off his headset before signaling Cronus to exit the recording studio. Cronus swallowed hard before obeying Olin's command. He took off his headset and put it on the stool before exiting with the guitar in hand. When he walked through the door, Dennis took the guitar from his hands, "not bad, bro!"

"Yeah, that was pretty good." Janice spun around in one of the chairs for a quick thrill. "You've got some skills with the guitar."

Cronus looked dumbfounded. He clearly didn't expect to hear that. In fact, he was speechless even before he walked from the recording box into the studio. "...Wwhat?"

"Uh, Earth to Cornus Ampora!" Dennis playfully and lightly hit Cronus' forehead with his fist. "We said good job!"

The nickname snapped the seadweller out of his trance. His earfins flared out a bit as he growled, "dude, stop calling me Cornus! God knowvs if any of my frat roommates wvill hear you, and then I'll be an even bigger laughingstock among them!"

"Whoa, Cro, chill." Tobias slapped a hand onto Cronus' shoulder with a cheesy grin. "No worries! That nickname won't be spoken outside this studio! We swear."

Cronus gave Tobias a look, clearly not able to trust him. He wasn't sure if humans used the quadrant system himself, but if they did, he almost felt obligated to tell Tobias that his pale quadrant was happily taken and not up for grabs. But, that didn't mean he minded the touching. Cronus leaned into Tobias' touch, almost leaning against the dude's chest entirely. "You sure I can trust you, Tobias?"

Both Janice and Tobias exchanged confused glances for a few seconds, then Tobias stepped back, prompting the highblood to fall. "No sweat, fish dude." Cronus landed with an 'Oof', and Dennis snickered. Cronus shot Tobias another look, but froze when he saw Olin look down on him. Cronus pulled himself up quickly, already feeling his chances of getting into this music group dwindling into the single digits. Olin had his shades lying on top of his head, and he slowly pulled them down to clean the glass properly.

"Well..." He started, his voice low and stern; like a parent about to discipline their rowdy and disobedient child. Once again, like before, Cronus could feel himself shrink a bit under this man's gaze. The feeling that this guy could kick his ass into next week didn't go away either. "The others are right. That was very well done."

Cronus blinked. Again, he found himself being caught off guard. A smile began to appear on the seadweller's face.
"But you do need work."

And there it went.

Cronus' smile dropped, just as a smile appeared on Olin's face. "If you want to improve on your musical talent, you're going to need to reach out of your comfort zone." Olin walked over to the recording studio and tapped it lightly with his knuckles. Instantly, Tobias, Janice, and Dennis got up. One of them grabbed a keyboard, and another got the acoustic guitar. They all took a pair of headsets and walked into the recording studio.

Tobias set up the keyboard while Janice tuned the guitar, and Dennis began to pull out a small drum set from one of the closets. Cronus blinked, amazed. This whole studio was full of surprises, and he had a feeling that it would get even better. Olin closed the door and offered Cronus to sit in the seat Tobias previously sat in. He obliged and put on the headset, adjusting it to fit his head properly and to not irritate his earfins.

Olin put his headset back on and sat back down in his own seat. He pressed a button, activating his microphone. "Alright, everyone, play a song where you can switch between verses."

Cronus looked at Olin, baffled. "Swvitch betvween wverses?"

Olin simply smiled at Cronus while the gang in the booth seemed to have decided on a song. Dennis sat at the guitar, Janice at the keyboard, and Tobias at the drums. They put on their headsets and activated their microphones. Tobias looked up at Olin, "we're ready."

"Alright. I'll set the tempo."

He pressed a button, and a soft tempo was played in the background. The three music majors began to nod their heads or tap their feet to the beat, and Tobias hit three beats, and then Dennis strummed on the guitar, starting on the song as both he and Janice leaned towards their microphones, "Hey!"

"Once upon a younger year when all our shadows disappeared, the animals inside came out to play."

"Hey!"

"Went face to face with all our fears, learned our lessons through the tears, made memories we knew would never fade..."

The acoustic notes were heightened and complimented by Janice's smooth keyboard playing. Tobias began to hit a few drum beats, going in synch with the tempo. "One day my father—he told me: "Son, don't let it slip away"." Janice backed away from her microphone to let Dennis take over, "He took me in his arms, I heard him say: "When you get older, your wild heart will live for younger days. Think of me if ever you're afraid"."

Suddenly, they all stopped playing and started to sing in synch with each other.

"He said, "One day you'll leave this world behind, so live a life you will remember"."

They slowly backed away from their instruments.

"My father told me when I was just a child, these are the nights that never die..."

They circled around each other, each taking their instruments: Janice on the drums, Dennis on the keyboards, and Tobias on the guitar.
"My father told me!"

And just like that, they picked up where they left off. They all had complete mastery over their new instruments, and didn't seemed fazed by the change. Cronus was in total shock and awe. So much, he didn't see Olin's grin growing. Janice hit a few low notes on the drums, and Dennis picked up on the keyboard keys with Tobias following, creating an upbeat symphony between the lyrics. They were completely melded into their instruments.

Smiles appeared on all their faces as the progressed into the song. Tobias leaned towards his microphone now, "When thunder clouds start pouring down, light a fire they can't put out! Carve your name into those shining stars!" A few more guitar notes. "He said, "Go venture far beyond these shores. Don't forsake this life of yours. I'll guide you home no matter where you are"."

Dennis played and held a keyboard note while leaning to his microphone to back up Tobias, and Janice picked up on the drum beat again. "One day my father—he told me: "Son, don't let it slip away"."

"When I was just a kid I heard him say: "When you get older, your wild heart will live for younger days. Think of me if ever you're afraid"."

Again, the music toned down and they began to step away from their instruments.

"He said, "One day you'll leave this world behind, so live a life you will remember"."

They began to circle around again.

"My father told me when I was just a child, these are the nights that never die..."

They picked up the instruments.

"My father told me!"

Now it was Janice on the guitar, Tobias on the keyboard, and Dennis on the drums. They didn't play anything aside from clapping into the microphones for a few, signaling a quiet moment before the beat dropped again. Cronus couldn't take their eyes off them. He wanted the music to never end, and he wanted to have the headsets glued to his ears so he wouldn't have to take it off.

"These are the nights that never die! My father told me!"

When they picked up, the music was even better than before. Cronus now knew then that they were playing their best instruments. The whole song was amped up to whole different level because they specifically saved the very best for last. Janice looked like she was melding into the guitar, Tobias was jumping as he played his keyboard notes, and Dennis was grinning as he pounded against the drums. Cronus could literally feel their happiness and passion, even through the thick glass window.

He glanced at Olin, who was nodding his head to the beat, taking notes onto a notepad. The three music majors kept playing for a bit, then they all leaned into their microphones one last time.

"My father told me!"

And then it ended.

Olin stood up and clapped his hands, grinning brightly at the students as they all cheered and high-fived each other. Cronus was still sitting, eyes wide and mouth gaping like a fish out of water. He couldn't believe he had just seen that. It was clear that these guys were extremely skilled with not just
these instruments, but he already knew that there had to be many more. Many, many more. The seadweller leaned back into his chair. *Did they learn those instruments from their classes, or this music group alone?*

"Cronus."

Cronus looked up at Olin, seeing that the other band members were back inside the recording booth. He took off his headset and stood up, his expression still void of any emotion other than shock. Tobias grinned at Dennis and Janice, who were all smirking too. "I take you liked the show?"

"Liked? Dude, I fucking LOVED it!" Cronus gave the three musicians high-fives, all of them laughing and gladly accepting the praise. Olin put a hand to Cronus' shoulder, "and that could be you, Cronus. They learned to do that while in my group."

"But didn't the school year just start here? And isn't this school relatively new?"

"Here, it did." Tobias shrugged casually, "but we used to go to this other college called Scratch Academy for our freshman year, and Olin used to teach there too."

"But the place went under for some reason, so when we heard this place was opening up, we all came here." Dennis smiled at Olin, who smiled back and nodded at him. He turned to Cronus, crossing his arms, failing to notice Cronus' shock again. It just suddenly dawned on the seadweller that these humans were actually older than him. He almost forgot what it felt like to be younger than someone. Especially after being dead for a while.

"Cronus," Olin started and snapping the troll out of his thoughts again. "You saw firsthand what my band members can do. And since your major is Music Industry, you're going to need to know how to play a lot of instruments." He smiled down at Cronus, "and from what we saw, you have talent with the guitar. We can expand that into more than just the guitar."

Cronus' heart jumped in his chest as his eyes widened. Did that mean what he thought it did? He looked back at the other three band members, who were all grinning at him. Tobias spread out his arms, a huge grin on his face, "what do you say, Cro bro? Wanna join our group?"

-Present Time-

"Then I said 'yes!'"

"...So, you did get accepted into the group."

"...I guess so, chief!"

Cronus grinned, his eyes brimming with confidence and excitement. More than Kankri could remember. At least, aside from when he asked Cronus to be his moirail and explaining why he had loosened up on his platonic quadrants.

"Well, I am happy that you found a group that suits your interests, and fits your major, Cronus." And he meant it. There was a small smile appearing on Kankri's face. Cronus' grin widened, his heart pounding in his chest. He haven't felt this excited in eons, and now, he had a few more people to hang out with aside from Kankri! Suddenly, the seadweller remembered why he found his club in the first place. Cronus leaned towards Kankri and was about to ask about the student government, but then-

*BANG!*
That came around. And it was from their door too. Kankri and Cronus exchanged confused glances before turning back to the closed door. "May I ask who's pounding at our door?"

"Kankri, it's Rufioh! I need to tell ya something!"

"It's open, Rufioh, you can come in. Though next time, I advise you to knock and not bang since this house is relatively small and sounds can echo through the hallways easily, disturbing others and creating quite a ruckus, so-"

"Knock next time. I know, Kankri..." The door opened, and Rufioh slowly stepped inside, being careful to not get his horns stuck in the doorway. Cronus grinned internally. Maybe he wasn't the biggest laughingstock in this entire frat house after all. The bronze troll was shirtless and wore bronze shorts; his version of pajamas. Kankri looked a bit uneasy at the sight of the shirtless troll, something that both Rufioh and Cronus caught onto.

"Is Kankri okay?"

"Dude, put a shirt on. You're triggering him."

"Rufioh!"

Rufioh turned around and saw Horuss rushing behind him, holding a black tank top in his hands. Horuss was dressed in a black tank top, dark blue sweatshorts, and olive slippers. He wore rounded black sunglasses to compensate for his mask, since his eyes were much more sensitive than the average trolls of his caste. Not really the appropriate attire for a highblood, who are more susceptible to colder temperatures, but Horuss knew he was a slight exception. It's all because of his fucking sweat. The highblood would be bathing in it if he wore warmer clothes, or clothes that covered more skin.

"You trotted away before I could tell you to put this on," Horuss muttered, handing the tank top to his matesprit. "I remembered at the last minute that being shirtless triggers our degenerate, mutated friend."

Rufioh froze at the word mutant, his eyes nervously traveling to Kankri. If the Cancer troll was mildly triggered by someone being shirtless, then he was completely triggered by the word 'mutant'. Cronus sent Rufioh a look, telling him to do something. Sweating and thinking quick, Rufioh pulled the tank top on (from the bottom up), and smiled nervously at Kankri and clamping a hand on Horuss' mouth before anything else could be said, "there! See? Everything's chill, Kankri! I got my tank top on."

Kankri, who was blissfully naive to Horuss' use of the word 'mutant', nodded at Rufioh. He was obviously much more relaxed and at ease. "I can see that, Rufioh. Thank you for doing so and risk triggering the other inhabitants of the frat house because you decided to walk around without a decent form of attire." Silent sighs of relief came from both Cronus and Rufioh. Close call.

"But, if I may ask two questions to you both."

Rufioh froze. Candy red eyes were right on Horuss.

"My first question is: Why are you covering Horuss' mouth? Unless he gave you strict permission to touch him and put your hand on his mouth, I highly suggest you remove it from his oral canal at once. It could be triggering to our already sensitive, otherkin friend concerning his feelings of being out of place and-"

"No sweat, Kankri!"
Rufioh let go of Horuss, and the highblood blinked a bit, completely puzzled about what had just went down. The Taurus troll leaned towards Horuss' ear and whispered, "You said 'mutant' in front of Kankri. Be more careful, or else we're gonna get a lecture from him."

"My second question is: Why did you barge into Cronus and I's shared room?"

"HEY GUYTH!"

Mituna suddenly burst into the room, almost knocking Horuss and Rufioh off their feet. Kurloz was right behind him, papping his moirail on the head to settle him down a bit. Mituna was dressed in an oversized dark green t-shirt with the Doom aspect symbol on it with black and yellow striped pajama pants, and Kurloz wore a dark purple long-sleeved shirt and black sweatpants.

"Mituna, please, try to restrain yourself next time," Kankri gestured to Rufioh and Horuss, "you almost knocked Horuss and Rufioh off their feet because of your rushed entrance."

"Are your phoneth blowing up too?"

In Mituna's hand was his cellphone, and it was buzzing at a constant pace. Kurloz was holding his too, and his was going through the same thing. Kankri and Cronus blinked. They looked at Rufioh and Horuss, who also pulled out their phones. They seemed to have the same issue. The bronze troll rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly, "heh... Tuna beat me to it. This is what I originally came in for."

Cronus looked at his night desk, seeing that he had multiple unread messages. All from Eridan. He picked up his phone and opened them up, skimming by the messages. They were all trying to get his attention, and to get online and join the memo that was linked in one of the later texts.

Kankri looked at his phone, and he was going through the same thing with Karkat. He turned to the other boys, "are you all experiencing the same thing?"

"Yeah, that's why we came to you."

Rufioh sat down, backwards, on Cronus' desk chair as Horuss closed the door so they could have some privacy. Mituna sat on Kankri's desk chair and Kurloz decided to spin the Gemini troll around, just for a quick thrill. Kankri glared lightly at Mituna; mainly for sitting in his chair without permission. Cronus looked irritated too, but more at the fact that he had to be in the same vicinity as Mituna. He already had to share a class with him, he didn't want to have his personal space invaded by the gold troll.

Horuss decided to open up the latest message sent from Equius. "Have you all been sent a link to a memo?"

"Yeah." Rufioh snickered at the name as he clicked on the link Tavros sent. "These dudes sure know how to make a title."

Kurloz and Mituna grinned at the name too, and Cronus couldn't help but let out a lightly amused huff. Kankri was the only one that didn't seem amused. To use such a name was triggering to those who were sensitive to cursing, and he could tell that Karkat had a huge part in this. "This name is ridiculous. I'll have to make sure I catch Karkat up on my latest lectures... lessons about having these sort of words in titles and names."

"If you don't bore the guy to death firtht." Mituna muttered under his breath, and Kurloz grinned and huffed, patting and ruffling Mituna up on the head. Rufioh heard that too and snickered at him, "bangarang."
carcinoGeneticist [CG] has opened memo HOTEL FRUITY RUMPUS ASSHOLE FACTORY. FOR BOYS ONLY.

CG: ALRIGHT, YOU INCOMPETENT SHITSTAINS, IS EVERYONE HERE?

arisenTaurus [AT] has joined memo.
adiosToreador [AT] has joined memo.
terrorCalm [TC] has joined memo.
caligulasAquarium [CA] has joined memo.

AT: rUFIOH! };D
AT: whoa, bangarang! It's l1ttle me! };D
AT: what's up, tav? school treat1ng you well?
AT: yEAH, IT'S GOING PRETTY GOOD, SO FAR,
AT: hOW ABOUT YOU? aRE YOU DOING, OKAY, AT THE VERY LEAST?
AT: yeah, hang1ng 1n there, you know?
TC: :o)

CG: OH LOOK, IT'S FUCKING GOTHIC RONALD MCDONALD.
TC: :o/
CG: OH WAIT, I MEAN CARLOS MARACA.
TC: >>=o(

terminallyCapricious [TC] has joined memo.

TC: hey, karkat, don't be mockin my fresh as shit dancestor here.
TC: :o)
CA: hey at least you dont havve a fuckin codpiece human troll hybrid as a family member
CA: oh wwait nevvermind
CA: that applies to you too gam
AT: the sass...
AT: sICK FIRES,
TC: not motherfucking cool, eridan.

codpieceAquarium [CA] has joined memo.
timaeusTestified [TT] has joined memo.
turntechGodhead [TG] has joined memo.

ectoBiologist [EB] has joined memo.

EB: hey guys!

TT: Holy shit, the fun has just arrived.

TG: the party dont start till we walk in

CG: WHERE THE FUCK HAVE YOU BEEN, DAVE?

TG: rapping with one of dirks robots sawtooth

TG: motherfucker is good at rap

TG: havent beaten the dude once

TT: I made him unbeatable for a reason, Dave. To become better. He will never be conquered.

TG: well see about that dirk

TG: im a fucking knight of time ill beat his clunky robotic badass one day

CG: ALRIGHT, BEFORE YOU TWO FUCKS HAVE A HUMAN BONDING MOMENT, LET ME ASK: WHO ISN'T HERE?

CG: SOUND THE FUCK OFF.

TC: honk.

TC: :o)

AT: I'm here.

AT: hEY, gUYs,

TT: S'up.

TG: sup

EB: hi karkat

CG: FUCK OFF, JOHN.

CA: im here

CA: wvhat's up evweryone?

CG: ALRIGHT, SO WE'RE MISSING JAKE, MY DICKBAG OF A DANCESTOR, SOLLUX, HIS DANCESTOR, EQUIUS, AND HIS DANCESTOR.

EB: that's everyone we're missing? i thought we'd be missing more.

TC: nah it's just us boys in here, motherfucker.

TC: it'd be too damn crowded if we let the ladies in here too.
CA: hey vwantas lookalike, do you mind not talking shit about kankri in front of me?

CG: I'M NOT IN FRONT OF YOU.

TG: yeah man what are you babbling on about

CA: cro just shut up before you embarrass me an yourself

CA: eridan stay out of my business, vwould you?

CA: and you knowv wwhat i mean.

CA: dunno if eridan told you, but kankris my one and only moirail. id appreciate it if youd not talk smack about him or me.

CA: like literally hes right beside me. he can read my pesterlogs at any second.

CG: GOOD FOR YOU, YOU DESPERATE BODY BUTTER BULGE LICKER.

CG: HOW ABOUT YOU BE A DECENT MOIRAIL AND SHOOSH PAP HIM WHENEVER HE STARTS TALKING?

CG: OR, BETTER YET, TELL HIM TO GET HIS SORRY ASS ONLINE SO WE CAN GET THIS BULLSHIT OVER WITH.

CA: vwowv. not only are you insensitivwe to MY feelings, but to kankris too?

CA: some dancestor you are.

CG: OKAY, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU GOT THE MEMO ON WHAT *I* HAD TO DEAL WITH BACK IN YOUR SORRY DREAM BUBBLE, SO BACK THE FUCK UP, YOU SOGGY LAMPSHADE, AND LET ME SCHOOL YOUR DOUCHY ASS TO KINGDOM FUCKING COME.

CG: I DON'T KNOW IF YOU FUCKING NOTICED BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO FUCKING BLINDED BY YOUR OWN DESPERATION AND PENT UP SEXUAL TENSION, BUT KANKRI IS A FUCKING ASSHOLE. I ALREADY SPOKE TO TEREZI ABOUT THIS ONCE, BUT SINCE SHE ACTUALLY HAS MORE THAN TWO FUCKING BRAIN CELLS, I'LL BE SURE TO DUMB IT DOWN FOR YOU.

CA: owwned

CG: KANKRI IS MORE THAN JUST AN ASSHOLE. HE'S A SPECIAL KIND OF ASSHOLE. HE'S WALKING, TALKING CONTRADICTION. HE'S A FUCKING HYPOCRITE. HE CLAIMS TO BE A SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIOR, WHATEVER THE F*@K THAT IS, AND JUMPS IN TO DEFEND PEOPLE WITH "PROBLEMS" BUT JUST WINDS UP INSULTING THEM IN BACKHANDED WAYS. AND HE RANTS ABOUT THE STUPIDEST SHIT I HAVE EVER HAD THE DISPLEASURE OF LISTENING TO! HE ENDLESSLY LECTURES YOUR SORRY ASS ABOUT TRIVIAL SHIT, ALL WHILE THINKING THAT HE'S BETTER THAN YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE JUST BECAUSE HE CAN SEE SOME PROBLEMS THAT OTHERS CAN'T BECAUSE OF HIS BLOOD ASPECT ABILITIES!

CG: I DON'T KNOW WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE BACK ON BEFORUS, BUT WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT IT *SUCKED* COMPARED TO ALTERNIA. THAT DOESN'T GIVE HIM
A RIGHT TO FLAUNT HIS SHITTY OPINION AND BLOW HIS FUCKING WHISTLE IN EVERYBODY'S FACES JUST BECAUSE *HE* HAS A PROBLEM WITH HOW *I* DO MY OWN FUCKING BUSINESS IN MY OWN FUCKING WAY AND TIME! HE'S A SHALLOW DOUCHEBAG THAT TREATS HIS FRIENDS LIKE SHIT!

CG: AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, HE IS A GIANT SEXIST PRICK! HE THINKS FEMINISM IS NOTHING BUT "PSEUDOSCIENCE", AND WILL OPENLY DISMISS ANY TYPE OF DEBATE INVOLVING A WOMAN UNLESS IT INVOLVES HER BEING SECONDARY TO A MALE!

CG: NOT IF SHE WAS SOMEHOW ASSAULTED OR HARASSED. I KNOW IT EXISTS. I'VE SEEN THIS SHIT HAPPEN, AND I HAVE JOHN, DAVE, AND EVERY OTHER HUMAN AND TROLL FROM MY SESSION ON MY SIDE ABOUT THIS ONE.

TG: yeah

EB: it does happen, unfortunately.

TT: Wait, he thinks feminism is a pseudoscience?

CG: HE ACTUALLY SUITS YOUR SORRY ASS PERFECTLY SINCE YOU SEEM TO THINK THAT EVERYTHING THAT WALKS ON TWO LEGS IS YOUR POTENTIAL FUCK OBJECT.

CA: damn lil vwantas, i dont know whv you got that shit, but i dont appreciate you saying that kind of crap about kankri.

CA: hes a good guy! hes just misunderstood in a lot of vways! just like me!

CA: eridan, dont be like this vwantas and shit on your dancestor for not trying to understand them better.

CG: YOU'RE LIKE A MOTHERFUCKING SPAZZBOT ROCKET PROPELLING YOURSELF UP YOUR SPRINGLOADED ASS. TELL YOUR FUCKING SHAME GLOBES I SAID HI BECAUSE YOUR HEAD SEEMS TO BE THAT FAR UP YOUR SORRY ASS.

CA: wwait wwhat the fuck is a social justice wwarrior

TT: It's basically some douchebag on tumblr jumping into business that isn't theirs. They'll bitch and whine and moan about cultural appropriation, misogyny/misandry, and things like that on tumblr or reddit, but never in person. Their arguments and their personalities are pretty damn shallow and not well thought out, and they mainly fight just to boost their own ego and reputation online.

CA: wwhat the fuck

CA: no wwonder you hate kri so much kar

CG: FUCKING THANK YOU.

CA: wvelp. looks like im talking to myself again.

TG: shit man you went to town on your bro

TG: kinda feel sorry for you

CG: I DON'T NEED SYMPATHY, DAVE. I NEED A FUCKING ASPIRIN.
GT: Holy toledo its dirk and dave and john!
EG: hi jake!
AT: hi, jAKE! }:D
GT: Boy howdy tavmeister is here too! How have you been park tavenue?
AT: dOING MUCH BETTER,
AT: yOU SEEM TO BE IN BETTER SHAPE, THAN THE LAST TIME i, SAW YOU,
GT: You better believe it. Living with everyone has been a swell time.
GT: Plus dirk and i have been patching up our friendship.
TC: :o)
AT: sh*t, l1ttle me, looks l1ke you've made fr1ends w1th just about everyone, huh?
AT: iN A WAY, }:)        GT: Oh are you a friend of tavros?
AT: yeah, I'm h1s dancestor, ruf1oh n1tram. :)        GT: Dancestor? What in blazes does that mean? Im not all caught up with how you trolls act around each other.
AT: It's a fancy term for descendant/ancestor. sgrub sh*t and th1ngs l1ke that. It's a long story.
AT: probably someth1ng that aranea would love to expla1n.
TC: :o!
GT: Aranea? How is she? Is she in here?
TT: Nah, Jake, it's just us dudes.
GT: Is that so?
GT: If I may ask... Why are us fellows having a get together without involving the lasses?
EB: it's to discuss the plans for the con we're attending.
EB: the girls have their own memo going on as we speak.
TA: WH475 G01NG 0N

TC: :o/

TA: does it fucking matter?
TA: let's just get this shit over with.

CT: D --> Indeed

CT: D --> My roleplaying session with Nepeta was so rudely interrupted because of this foalishness

CT: 8=D < Equius, you roleplay with your moirail?

CT: D --> Yes, actually

CA: are we going to get this over with what?

CT: D --> It is actually one of our favorite activities to partake in

CA: guys.

CT: 8=D < Fascinating. I must try that with Meulin one day.

CA: this is bullshit.

CT: D --> How is Meulin, by the way

CT: D --> Nepeta wanted me to ask since she's a bit preoccupied at the moment

CT: 8=D < She is doing quite well! Tell Nepeta she misses her and she cannot wait to see her again.

CT: 8=D < We are both looking forward to seeing you both at the comic con panels!

CA: guys, shut up. i'm trying to talk, will you let me speak?

TA: lmao bitch, nobody's trying to hear you.

TA: OWN3D

coalitionGenerator [CG] has joined memo.

CG: OH FUCK ME.

CA: the cavalry has arrived.

CG: It has come to my attention that some of the trolls, and humans, in this mem9 have a tendency to swear, and I must say that if that has 6e done, then I w9uld like t9 list the appropriate kinds of tags so that you may all list them in a perfectly and orderly fashion because there are some trolls in here that find swearing a form of indecency and an, n9t t9 m9nt9n, immature way of speaking and expressing n9e's thoughts and feelings about certain subjects, themes, and topics.

TT: Holy fucking shit.

TA: J35U57H FCKU1NG CHR5175 K4NKR13

AT: uM, WOW, THAT'S A LOT OF WORDS FOR JUST ONE SENTENCE,
TA: wow, you are really good at talking a whole fucking bunch. and not stopping.
CA: kind of reminds us of someone else we all know of
TA: what? the talking or the bitching about everyone swearing?
CA: the swearin wwhat the fuck else do you think i was talkin about you loww piece of dijon mustard
TA: is your cape on too tight tonight, fish dick?
CT: D --> It would honestly be wonderful if you two could not nicker during this important meeting
CT: 8=D < I must agree with my dancestor. This f**lishness is beginning to feel quite cumbersome.
CT: 8=D < And Kankri is not wrong about the positively l*wd language. This is why Rufioh and I have decided to cens*r our f*ul language.
AT: well, that was a thing i did before we met, horuss...
CT: 8=D~ < It is most unbecoming of highb100ds such as Equius and I to resort to such h*rrible pr*fanity.
CT: D --> I am glad that one of us has the correct mindset
CT: D --> I wouldn't have expected any less from my noble dancestor
CT: D --> You lesser b100ds should be thankful that we are in your vicinity, providing you all with ways of bettering yourselves despite your low stances
TA: meanwhile you were horny as fuck for aa before, during, and after we won our session.
TA: H4H4H4H4H4H4H4 YU0 73LL H1M 50LLUX
CT: D --> Such lewd accusations
CT: D --> Who told you these abysmal lies
TA: it was fucking obvious you sweating indigo crap coated mailbox flag.
TA: Y0UR 5W34R1NG 157H FCUK1NG 57HH4K37HP34R34N.
CG: Pard9n me, but what's your name again?
TA: flighty broad.
TA: H4H4H4H4H4H4
TC: xoD
TC: heheh his name is motherfucking sollux captor, red vantas.
TA: fuck you, gamzee.
TC: honk. :o)
CG: Thank y9u, Gamzee. S9llux, please, we must respect the status qu9s 9f 69th Equius and H9russ'
p9siti9ns in the hem9spectrum. In 69th 9ur w9rlds, they are c9nsidered t9 6e extremely n96le
renaissance tr9lls up t9 the highest degree, aside fr9m purple 6l99ds, vi9let 6l99ds, and fuchsia
6l99ds respectively, and they h9ld the duty 9f pr9viding a m9re upper class way 9f life 9f tr9lls 9f
9ur caste and 6ey9nd. Even th9ugh they are freakishly 96sessed with neigh-6easts and muscle-6easts
9f all kinds and making th9se w9ithin a five mile radius 9f their presence extremely unc9mf9rta6le and
uneasy, and if their 9d9r d9esn't 6l9w y9u away simply 6y h9w much they sweat all day and night,
y9u have my deepest c9nd9lences, but their p9liteness and their extravagant way 9f life is en9ugh t9
c9nge s9me9ne's th9ught pr9cess 9n h9w 9ne sh9ove in this new s9ciety f9r us tr9lls.

TA: d0es anyone have an ice pick s0 i can sh0ve it into my skull?

TC: shiiiit this motherfucker talks a whole lot.

TA: 175H Y0RU F4UL7

TC: how can y'all stand this sort of shit? :o/

TA: W3 C4N7

TC: :o

AT: when you're 1n a group l1ke ours, you k1nd of... get used to 1t?

CA: lucky for you all, im kankris moirail, so ill be sure to list all the triggers so you dont havwe to.

CA: howw fuckin generous of you cro

CG: Cr9nus, there are m9re than just simple swearing triggers inv9lved in this chat. Are y9u sure
y9u g9t them all?

CA: yup! got them all right here!

CA: #swvearing, #class oppression, #culling culture and vviolence against grubs, #lusus abuse,
#complementary and analogous hate speech, #pail filling, #slurries and other concupiscent fluids,
#lifespan shaming, #ableist slurs, #prolix dissertation.

CG: Well, it seems like y9u have 6een paying attenti9n t9 my lectures... less9ns. I'm pr9ud 9f y9u, Cr9nus.

AT: wOW, THAT DOES KIND OF MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR US,

CG: HALF OF THOSE DON'T EVEN MAKE FUCKING SENSE.

CA: and if you think thats nice of me nowv, you should see me vwhen i take you out to dinner one
night.

AT: uH,,,

TA: H0LY FUCK1GN 5H71 H3 JU57 C4N7 G13V 17 4 R357H

AT: cronus, stay the f*ck away from tavros.

GT: I agree. You may seem like a fairly decent guy but i wont tolerate you hitting on my buddy tav.

TT: Wow, Tavros, you got two bros looking out for you. I'm jealous.
AT: hey, he is a cinnamon roll. we do not corrupt the cinnamon roll.

AT: :)D

CA: can we all shut the fuck up an get to why were here in the first place

TG: seriously this is starting to get on my fucking nerves

CG: AT LEAST ONE OF YOU SHITFUCKS HAS A GODDAMN THINK PAN.

CG: ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP.

CG: THIS PANEL BULLSHIT LITERALLY CAME OUT OF THE GODDAMN BLUE. LIKE, WINDY THING COMING OUT OF JOHN’S GIGANTIC HEIR WINDSOCK HOODIE BULLSHIT.

EB: i didn't know you liked my hood!

CG: I DON'T, JOHN. IT'S A FUCKING EXPRESSION.

CG: IT LOOKS STUPID ON YOU TO BEGIN WITH.

EB: it'd probably look even stupider on you.

TT: Probably.

CG: WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU SAYING, STRIDER 2.0? YOU HAVE PANTALOONS AS A PART OF YOUR GOD TIER OUTFIT, YOU CAN'T SAY SHIT.

TT: Touché.

CG: ANYWAY, LET'S GET THIS BULLSHIT DONE AND OVER WITH BECAUSE I'M SURE WE ALL HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO.

CG: THAT GODDAMN HEIR OF SPACE TOLD US THAT THERE ARE THREE DAYS FOR THE PANEL, AND OF THOSE THREE DAYS, ONE OF OUR THREE GROUPS HAS TO SPEND A FEW HOURS ANSWERING QUESTIONS TO THESE AIRHEADED AND OBLIVIOUS HUMANS.

GT: Well correct me if im wrong but not everyone played sburb right?

TT: Yeah, there's only several hundred recorded humans on Earth that played Sburb, got to god tier, and won the game. Many more are undocumented. So, this is probably Hussie’s way of getting word out that there are actually two worlds living on one.

CG: YEAH, WHATEVER. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT IT'S FOR, BUT WHAT DOES MATTER IS THAT WE ARE BEING *FORCED* TO DO THIS. I CAN'T IMAGINE A BETTER WAY TO SPEND MY FUCKING WEEKEND.

TA: 7H3N WHY 43R W3 1N 7H15 M3M0

CG: IT'S TO DECIDE WHAT DAYS WE CAN ALL PLAN ON DOING OUR PANELS. IF WE COME UP WITH A SCHEDULE, THEN TELL THE GIRLS, WE CAN JUST GET THE DAYS DONE FASTER INSTEAD OF FIGHTING OVER WHAT DAYS AND WHAT TIMES TO DO OUR Q&A. AND SINCE THERE ARE THREE DIFFERENT GROUPS, THEN LET'S JUST DIVIDE OUR GROUPS DEPENDING ON THE DAY.
TA: but how can we know what day to take if we don't even have the slip? didn't the douchebag who did this said he'd send us something?

TA: Y34H H3 541D 7H47 70 U5 700

TG: karkat what's the point of doing this?

TG: we dont know what's in store for us at the panel so why dont we just chill out until we get it

CG: DAVE.

CG: IF WE DON'T AT LEAST UNDERSTAND WHAT DAYS OUR GROUPS GO, IT'S GOING TO CAUSE MASS CHAOS AND FUCKING TIME PARADOXES FOR ALL WE KNOW.

CG: FROM WHAT I KNOW NOW, THERE ARE THREE GROUPS. JOHN'S GROUP, KANKRI'S GROUP, AND MY GROUP. I'M THINKING THE HUMANS TAKE THE SHORTEST DAY SINCE YOU ARE ALL HUMANS AND NOBODY IS GOING TO QUESTION YOUR PATHETIC CULTURE SINCE YOU'RE ALL ALREADY A PART OF IT.

EB: but they might have questions for us about being god tier or winning sburb.

CG: THAT'S MY POINT. THAT'S LITERALLY ALL YOUR GROUP CAN OFFER, ASIDE FROM YOUR DUMB HUMAN FAMILY INTERACTIONS AND ROMANCE BULLSHIT.

TT: Fuck, if it means having less time to ask questions and more time to look at fucking anime, buying swords, and ponies, I'm down for it. The last thing I want to do is sit in a room and speak into a microphone for God knows how fucking long.

TG: when you put it that way im down

EB: i think you saved us a lot of time, karkat!

GT: Ive never even been to a convention so this will be the bees knees!

CG: GLAD WE CAME TO THIS CONCLUSION.

CG: SO THAT JUST MEANS IT'S UP TO MY GROUP AND KANKRI'S GROUP TO DECIDE WHAT DAYS WE SHOULD HAVE.

CG: Well, we don't particularly know when this is going to happen, so I'm going to assume that this will take place over the weekend since most conventions happen on days where students have days off. And if my assumptions are correct, then there are three days where one day is particularly short, one extremely long, then one that seems balanced.

TA: way to point out the obvious, vantas 0.5.

TA: 3H3H3H3H

CG: And if I'm correct, then I believe your group should take the longest day.

TC: :oO

TA: 4GFHYGH1J0K WH444447
AT: kankr1, what?

CT: 8=D < That seems to be such a... 100dicrous idea.

CA: um, kankri, dont you think that might be stretching it?

CG: N9t at all. If what Karkat says is c9rrect a69ut the human gr9up, then the same must apply t9 their gr9up. They have had m9re interacti9ns with the humans than we have, as they have 6een 9n Earth f9r far l9nger than we have. N9t t9 menti9n their wh9le mete9r j9urney and spending a69ut a sweep and a half t9gether, and since m9st 9f Karkat's gr9up is m9re familiar with the way humans interact, whereas we 9nly kn9w 6ecause 9f 9ur clu6s, classes, etc., I feel that we sh9uld take the l9ngest panel 6ecause it gives us all a chance t9 tell 9ur tales 9f living 9n 6ef9rus, t9 starting the game, initiating the scratch 6ef9re dying, the dream 6u66les, the fight against L9rd English, and then 9ur ultimate resurrecti9n. We will 6e a6le t9 share inf9rmati9n that n9t even the tr9lls that grew up 9n Alternia kn9w. This c9uld lead t9 a p9tential 6reakthr9ugh inv9lving c9existance with tr9lls and humans alike.

AT: well, I guess when he puts 1t that way...

CT: 8=D < I suppose I can see where the low100d is c*ming from.

TC: :o/

TA: 7H15 15 7H7UP1D

CA: i say wve do it.

CA: you sure about that cro

CA: hell yeah! if it giwves us trolls a chance to learn about humans, and wvice vwersa, i say lets go for it!

AT: but w1ll th1s fly w1th the dolls?

CG: I'll 6e sure t9 inf9rm P9rrim, Kanaya's dancest9r, a69ut 9ur plans. She is als9 9ne f9r 9pp9runities like these, and can 6e quite c9nvincing. I'm sure the 9thers in 9ur gr9up will understand. They w9n't c9mplain if we have a 6asic understanding.

TC: :ol

TA: UGH 7H15 15 G0NN4 57HUCK 50 H4RD

CT: 8= D < It neigh as well be the best chance we have. I can harnessly say that we neigh as well go for it!

TC: :ov

TA: 7H15 15 G0NN4 5UCK 50 FUCK1NG 84D

CA: glad wwe got this shit done an organized

TA: mituna, y0u sh0uld just be thankful this hasn't been dragged on forever.

CA: agreed

CA: hell wwe could evven ride into the con in style
CG: AND HOW CAN WE DO THAT, ERIDAN?
CA: in a car that has no hood kar get wwith it
CG: WOW. EXCUSE THE FUCK OUT OF ME.
AT: wait, this garners the question of what kind of car we should all have!
CG: ARE YOU SERIOUS.
EB: how about a volkswagen?
CG: YOU'RE FUCKING SERIOUS.
CA: wait, what does that look like?
TC: :o)
CA: eridan, i havve decided that i vvant a wvolksvwagen.
CA: vvhat
CA: a wvolksvwagen.
CA: wait do you mean a vvolkswwagen
CA: no, a wvolksvwagen.
CA: wwhat the fuck is a wvvvolksvvwwagen im talkin about a vvolkswwagen
CA: you clearly don't understand what im talking about. vwhat evven is a wvvvolksvvwwagen.
CG: 9h f9r heaven's sake.
CG: OH GREAT, JOHN. YOU BROKE THEM.
EB: whoops. :B
TC: >>:o)
TC: sweet motherfucking grace. :o)
TG: the fucking prayers of the striders have been answered
CA: wweh
CA: nyeh.
CA: wwell talk about it later
CA: wword.
CA: i just vvanted to be free from that pain of all those 'w's and 'v's.
TA: that's funny since i'm sure that's what y0ur lusus said when he was raising y0u.
TC: xoD
TA: 00000000HHH 7HN4P
CA: that wwas fuckin brutal
TA: 3H3H3H3H3H3H
TG: but yo seriously
TG: karkat you aint got a place to talk
TG: you fucking broke the speaker when we ate at taco bell two weeks ago
TT: Is that why that drive thru over there hasn't been open lately?
TG: yea pretty much
TA: g0d damn it, kk.
TG: didnt jake tell you that
TT: No, he didn't tell me anything.
GT: Mustve slipped my mind.
TT: God damn it, Jake.
GT: Sorry ladies and gents. Still getting over the time differences here.
EB: jade's like that too. no biggie.
EB: but, wow karkat.
CA: wway to break my only source of food for the day kar
CG: YOU CAN STILL GO INSIDE AND ORDER IT, YOU FUCKING HALFWIT.
CA: its not the same
TT: Younger fish dude has a point.
CT: D --> Where is this conversation going
CG: JOHN, ERIDAN, DO ME A FAVOR AND STAPLE ALL YOUR FINGERS TOGETHER.
CG: DAVE, LISTEN TO ME.
EB: together how? like have our fingers stapled together on our own hands, or on each other's?
CG: DOES IT EVEN MATTER?
CA: actually yeah because howw are wwe supposed to staple our fingers together if wwe dont knoww howw to do it
CG: OH MY GOD, I DON'T CARE HOW! JUST DO IT.
CG: DAVE!
TG: what i wasn't paying attention

CG: YOU ABSOLUTE FUCKING WALNUT, DAVE.

TA: WH4757H 4 W4LNU7

CG: RIDDLE ME THIS.

CG: WHEN YOU HAVE A FUCKING CRAVING FOR A GODDAMN GRANDE SUPREME WITH THE LARGE MOUNTAIN DEW BAJA BLAST, I DON'T QUESTION IT.

CG: BUT WHEN I HAVE A FUCKING CRAVING FOR A BURRITO SUPREME WITH EXTRA CHEESE AND GODDAMN POTATOES, I'M SUDDENLY THE BAD GUY BECAUSE I BROKE THE PIECE OF SHIT VOICE BOX AND SPEAKER BECAUSE OF YOUR ALREADY SHITTY AND DIRT-POOR HUMAN TECHNOLOGY?

GT: What?

TG: yeah pretty much

TT: Breaking a Taco Bell speaker? That's hard to forgive, dude.

GT: Whats a taco bell? Is that a bell made out of tacos or a taco made out of bells?

TG: jake

TG: did you seriously just ask that question

TG: dirk how the fuck does this guy not know what fucking taco bell is?

TG: john i thought you were schooling this guy

EB: sorry, i've been hanging with roxy a lot more often lately.

TT: Dude, he lived most of his life on an island. I'm trying to help him get adjusted to civilization slowly.

GT: Dirk thats not necessary.

TT: It is if you don't know what fucking Taco Bell is.

CT: 8=D < I do not know what this "Taco Bell" is either. Perhaps you can enlighten me, hornless being?

TT: Alright, we have to take a moment to gather our thoughts. Dave, want to help me start this history lesson?

TG: fuck yes dude

CG: NO!

CG: BOTH OF YOU, SHUT THE FUCK UP!

CG: WE'RE NOT HERE TO DISCUSS WHAT TACO BELL IS! WE'RE HERE TO GET THIS COMIC CON PANEL SHIT THOUGHT OUT AND GET IT DONE AND OVER WITH.

AT: wa1t, what's taco bell?
TC: 😲

CA: i neuer e even heard of that.

TA: 1 4HV3 4 M1GH7Y N33D 70 NK0W WH47 7H157H 15

CG: Pray tell, what do you Striders know about this Tac9 6ell'? Is it a fast food restaurant of some kind?

TG: fuck yeah it is

CG: NO, SHUT UP, KANKRI!

CG: Karkat, it's n9t polite to interrupt. Y9u should consider yourself lucky that I'm being very tolerant t99ur un9rth swearing and childish behavi9r as seen in this mem9. If it wasn't for Cr9nus' involvement and having him tag the p9tential am9unt 9f triggers ahead 9f time, s9me9ne here could have been triggered by just the sheer am9unt 9f indecency that y9u have provided t9wards us this night s9 f9r.

CG: EVERYONE HERE IS SWEARING, YOU BLITHERING SHITPILE.

CT: D --> I refuse to p9rtake in such a lewd conversation of you lesser b100ds

CT: 8=D < Nay, neither have I.

CG: My dear descendant, I'm n9ly t99int y9u in the right directi9n. If y9u c9ntinu9usly swear like a ra6id muscle-6east 9n the l99se, I cann9t help but think t99ur sense 9f directi9n in life is quite p9ssi6ly g9ing awry and9r askew. I w9uld like f9r y9u t99int u9 your choice 9f w9rd9 to av9id 9ffending any9ne that could possibly be a p9tential friend/ally t9 y9u.

CG: AND I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO STOP POISONING MY AIR WITH YOUR TOXIC PRESENCE, BUT THAT PROBABLY WON'T BE HAPPENING ANYTIME SOON.

TG: dirk its official

TG: we have to school these fuckers about the almighty taco bell

TG: lets school this uneducated older trolls about the beautiful grande supremes and baja blasts until the fucking second reckoning is upon our sorry godly asses

CG: DAVE, CHOOSE ON A SPOON. OR BETTER YET, HOW ABOUT I SWITCH YOUR APPLE JUICE WITH PISS?

CG: WE DON'T HAVE FUCKING TIME FOR THIS SHIT.

TG: nah that won't even work man

TG: your piss is the same color as your blood

EB: wow karkat, he's right.

EB: that's a pretty shitty prank, even for you. :B

EB: i would have thought you'd catch up to something like this by now. how long have you been living on earth?
CG: OH MY GOD, PLEASE SHOVE A BOTTLE OF TABASCO SAUCE UP YOUR ENTITLED ASSES AND SHUT UP.

TC: whoa bro, that won't motherfucking work. how can one bottle be shoved up two sorry asses at the same time?

TC: :o?

TC: :o/

TC: what my motherfucking dancestor said, yo.

TC: :o

TC: or, didn't say. :o)

TC: :o)

CG: OH MY FUCKING GOD, GAMZEE, SHUT UP OR I SWEAR, I WILL SLIT YOUR KNEECAPS AND SEND YOU TO THE HUMAN CONTINENT ANTARCTICA.

AT: aNYWAY, WHY ARE WE STILL HERE? dIDN'T WE GET EVERYTHING DONE AND OVER WITH?

AT: aT LEAST, TO A SMALL, DEGREE,

CG: NO, TAVROS, WE ONLY GOT DOWN TO THE NITTY-GRITTY.

CG: I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOU FUCKS BITCHING AND CRYING IF THINGS GO WRONG.

TG: thats all on you dude

EB: yeah, karkat. you're like the biggest crybaby out of all of us.

TG: ahaahaha bro even john fucking knows it

TT: You really are, Karkat. I think everyone in fucking China heard you screaming at the TV when you kept dying on the Xbox's Impossible Game.

EB: wait, karkat played the fucking impossible game? do you striders and lalondes have death wishes?

TG: nah man it was the funniest shit ever

CG: DAVE, DON'T TELL THE FUckING STORY.

TG: you should have seen him

TG: he kept dying over and over again because of the goddamn triple spikes on the first level

TT: On the first level, of all things too. He could at least rage quit on the second level. That shit is hard.

TG: word on that

CA: wwait wwhats the impossible game
TT: It's a game where you control an orange square, and you have to jump over platforms, spikes, and gaps using boxes and different leveled platforms. It sounds easy, but it's actually pretty hard if you don't know what you're doing. The music is pretty badass too, but if you play on practice mode, the music gets really quiet.

AT: what's it like before you click practice mode?

TT: It's all fucking dubstep. And it's good dubstep too. Nothing is recycled like how you hear on today's piece of shit radio stations.

CG: THAT'S WHY I KEPT DYING OVER AND OVER AGAIN. I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY ON FUCKING PRACTICE MODE, I WANTED TO PLAY WHILE LISTENING TO GODDAMN FUCKING DECENT MUSIC.

EB: but you kept dying, right?

CG: YES, JOHN. I KEPT FUCKING DYING.

CG: I DON'T EVEN CARE IF I HAD TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING. IF I'M GONNA DIE LIKE TEN, TWENTY, OR FORTY-THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX TIMES, THEN AT LEAST I'LL BE DYING FORTY-THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX TIMES LISTENING TO SOME DECENT GODDAMN MUSIC, NOT FUCKING A BUNCH OF FAIRIES FLYING AROUND, AND FUCKING CUPID AND HARP'S AND SHITTING OUT THE ASSHOLE AND SHIT! FUCK THAT SHIT.

CG: I WAS GONNA PLAY THAT SHIT HARDCORE AND I WAS YELLING AND SCREAMING LIKE A STUPID MOTHERFUCKER.

CA: howv is that any different than right nowv?

EB: heheh.

CG: YOU KNOW WHAT?

CG: THIS MEMO IS GETTING OFF TOPIC, AND IF YOU FUCKS DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IMPORTANT SHIT LIKE THE CONVENTION PANELS AND ITS ORDER, FUCKING FINE BY ME!

CG: IF YOU FUCKS CRASH AND BURN WITH YOUR PLANNING, DON'T COME CRYING TO ME!

carcinoGeneticist [CG] closed memo.

Cronus stared at his phone screen, not sure of what just happened. Aside from the panel planning, that is. He looked up at Kankri, who was rolling his eyes and began writing down on a sticky note. Probably another reminder for himself to lecture Karkat soon. Cronus then turned to the others, and Mituna was laughing at Sollux's insults and showing Kurloz them as well. The Capricorn troll gave his moirail a big smile and thumbs up, showing his own approval for Sollux's comebacks.

Horuss was beside Rufioh whispering something into Rufioh's ear, and Rufioh nodded in response before scrolling back up the chat log, looking for something. Cronus flopped down onto his bed, sighing a bit. It was getting late, and he really just wanted to crash already.

But at the same time, he knew he needed a shower. Even though he didn't have any physical education classes today, practicing for three hours inside a small studio room with four other people
was tiresome. Especially if it was underground and the AC wasn't turned on. By the time they all left, they were all sweating quite a bit despite the cool temperature outside. Cronus begrudgingly had to get out of bed.

While the seadweller got on his knees to pull out his own pair of pajamas, Kankri was clapping his hands to get everyone else's attention. "Alright, I understand that talking with our dancestors was a very exciting moment, but the issue needs to be addressed here."

"What?" Rufioh looked dumbfounded. His floppy bull ears fluttered a bit in surprise. "Dude, you said so yourself in the chat: we'll take the longest day because of our history."

"Rufioh is correct," Horuss placed a hand on his matesprit's shoulder, clearly oblivious to the other troll's discomfort. Kankri raised a brow, wondering if touching was becoming a trigger to Rufioh as well. "We were all in the same trollian chatroom. We are all aware of what we should talk about with the mares in our group."

"That wath a dick move." Mituna muttered as Kurloz patted his fluffy head. "Latula ithn't going to be happy that you made a decithion for everyone."

"Mituna, I'm well aware of what I did." Kankri crossed his arms, "and you all must know that this matter is something that is coming very soon. We could get the envelope in the mail at any time, so we need to decide what day we host our Q and A panel."

"I thtill think we thould've told the girth firtht."

"Hey, Captor, c'mon, giwve Kankri some slack here." Cronus threw his pajamas over his shoulder as he stood back up. "He is right; we do need a day. And he ewven said Porrim would be vwilling to at least listen vwhy wve chose the longest day."

"Whatever that day may be, I'm sure we will handle it quite well."

The other four trolls exchanged glances, all of them either unsure of uneasy of how this exactly will play out. Eventually, Cronus shrugged, "I trust Kankri. I think he has enough intuition to knovw how to convwince Porrim that his decision is probably for the best."

Kankri sent Cronus a relieved expression, careful enough not to show a smile in front of the others. Cronus understood why. While Kankri was open about loosening up his celibacy vow on his platonic quadrants, he was still wary about it being expressed that he and Cronus shared a quadrant together. Mainly because he hasn't had someone in his quadrants for quite a long time.

Mituna narrowed his eyes a bit at the two, already not buying this. "You're jutht biathed becauthe he'th your moirail."

Cronus shot Mituna a glare, but instantly backed down when Kurloz stepped between the two, a deadly smile on his face that just bled "try it, you body butter motherfucker". Cronus shivered a bit, then uneasily stepped out and away from the taller troll's gaze. Kankri narrowed his eyes at Kurloz, "Kurloz, I would greatly appreciate it if you didn't undermine Cronus. He wasn't going to touch Mituna. He knows better."

Kurloz raised a brow at Kankri, then glanced at Cronus before he backed down. He still stood beside Mituna, petting his hair as Mituna snickered up at Kurloz, proud of him for putting the seadweller in his place. Cronus sighed and began to leave his room, "I'm taking a shower."

Kankri nodded, and as Cronus left the room, he turned to the other trolls. "But, that aside from what just happened, that wasn't my original question."
That genuinely surprised everyone. Except Cronus. The seadweller opened the door, letting it swing open.

"My original question was: Why is everyone in our room?"

Cronus shut the door, sealing their fate with a grin on his face. *'Good luck getting out of this one, Captor!'* He thought smugly as he walked to his bathroom, a towel around his neck and his clothes hanging loosely on his shoulder. He was sure feeling damn proud of himself for that one. So much, he bumped into someone because of his pride.

"Oof! Hey!"

"Watch it, Cronus."

His heart skipped a beat. Of all the trolls, he bumped into Porrim. Cronus stared at the other troll, his mouth already agape because of her choice of night attire. Or, lack of thereof. Porrim just wore a black tank top that openly exposed her cleavage, black panties, and a pale yellow loose-fitting dress shirt to avoid the cooler temperatures from getting to her too much. Porrim raised a pierced eyebrow at the seadweller, already used to the kind of staring that he was giving her right now.

"You plan on moving, or do I need to shove you out of my way to get to my room?"

Instantly, Cronus snapped out of stare and fantasy, and glared at the jade blood. A familiar twinge of black gave a quick rush through his chest. "Oh, that's nice. Do you always say that? Or am I given special treatment?"

"You're going to need special treatment if you don't move."

Her tone was a bit slurred from fatigue, but it was still blunt and to the point. Cronus could tell she was pretty tired. There were faint, but visible bags under her eyes. She apparently had a long day. He smirked internally. *'Maybe I can use that to my advantage?'

"And what are you going to do about it, babe?" Cronus put his hands on his hips, purposely blocking off any free space Porrim could have used to slip past him. Porrim's glare darkened, and she too put a hand on her hip. Cronus smirked outwardly now, "what if I keep you here until tomorrow morning?"

"You sure you're ready to hear a lecture about that from Kankri?"

"Kankri's my moirail. I don't think he'd take your word over mine, babe."

He could see the hate rush into her eyes. His glee at making Porrim mad was getting more and more apparent, and the rush of black inside his heart was spreading to his stomach. Cronus knew for a fact that Kankri choose him over her to be in his pale quadrant fucking infuriated her. It went without saying that Porrim did hold some pale affections for Kankri; making him his sweater, wiping his face when it was messy, shooshing him, etc.

"I don't think Kankri would enjoy knowing that his moirail was treating a good friend of his like this," Porrim shot back, and began to smile when she saw the anger rise in Cronus' eyes.

Then, the smug grin Cronus had on earlier came right back. "And yet, he chose me over you."

That did it. Porrim's eyes flared with anger and hate, and Cronus momentarily had both a moment of triumph and fear. Porrim's eyes went bright yellow as her fangs gleamed in the low lighting of the frat house. In an instant, Porrim socked Cronus in the chest, a blow that he wasn't prepared for. That
was enough to blow the highblood off balance. Cronus hit the carpeted floor with a soft thump, and before he could even sit up, Porrim grabbed his shirt and held him by his collar, her eyes still flaring and her fangs gleaming in the light.

"I don't know who you think you are Cronus, but if you wind up using Kanny as a defense mechanism to avoid getting your just desserts, I'll be sure he's the first one to know."

Cronus' heart was pounding in his chest. Even though his mind was still trying to process just how he managed to get knocked down by a mere jade blood, all he could focus on was Porrim's pissed off expression that was only a few inches away from his face. *Holy shit, she's so hot when she's mad!*

Porrim leaned over and hissed into his ear, her hot breath making his earfin twitch a bit. "Don't do that again. Or I'll make sure you'll pay." Cronus felt a shiver run down his spine as his fingers dug into the carpet. His body begged for him to grab onto Porrim's hips, waist, or legs. But that desire was cut short when she got up and let go of his shirt, dropping him to the floor like a ragdoll and walking past him to finally get some sleep.

Cronus watched her enter her room, getting a quick glimpse of both her ass and her middle finger before the bedroom door was shut. He raised a hand to his earfin, almost able to still feel her hot breath on his skin. His heart skipped a beat, and he was seeing spades like a card player. The Hope player finally sat up, almost unable to process what just happened.

But then he felt eyes set upon him.

Cronus turned around and saw Kurloz peeking out from the inside of Kankri's room. There was a devious smile on the Capricorn troll's face, and the seadweller felt every bit of hot, black excellence turn into cold fear. He could certainly process that with ease.

"You fucking creep!!"

The seadweller rushed into the bathroom and slammed the door shut. Kurloz smirked a bit, relishing Cronus' fear, but was far more interested in what he just saw. A black relationship between Cronus and Porrim? Sounded pretty damn interesting.

'I give it a motherfucking week.'

**Latula: Get the Panel Info**

It was Friday, and the weekend was upon the Beforus University campus. Just one more day the gang had to go through before relaxing for the weekend. It was still fairly early in the morning; only around 10:45, and the nine o'clock classes were still well underway at the time.

In the Paradox Space building, Aranea and Latula were in their science class, watching a documentary about the Earth's planetary orbit and how it was believed that geocentric rotation was how the solar system operated for centuries. The documentary was fairly interesting, but most of the students were still half-asleep. Before the movie even began, the professor had allowed students to quickly stop by the cafeteria for some coffee, but even that wasn't enough. It was just too damn early.

Latula and Aranea were sitting at their shared desk, trying to pay attention. Aranea kept her mind working by taking some occasional notes, but only what she heard on the speakers. It wasn't really anything too important despite what the professor had egged on about. Latula was resting her head in her hands, trying to stay awake. *Man,* she thought, her eyelids beginning to feel heavy. *This is something Mary-games would like to listen to.*
She let out a soft sigh, glancing at the rest of their classmates. There were several more trolls than humans in the class, but only because they were probably required to take this class. Just like her and Aranea. They were all either half-asleep, asleep, or surprisingly wide awake. Latula had a feeling those who were awake were probably either Space players, or Science majors. She glanced at the professor, and she was busy trying to figure something out on her laptop. Latula wondered how the movie went uninterrupted even though it was being shown on the same laptop, but she remembered Mituna's dacestor saying something about that when hooking up their TV a few weeks ago.

She felt eyes upon her and looked over, seeing Aranea looking at her. Latula felt confused at first, but then saw the handwriting on the blank page on Aranea's notebook. It read, "Are you falling asleep?" Latula huffed a bit, grinning and pulling out a red pen and wrote her response. This was a bit old schooled, but it was a lot safer to do it this way while in class. Some professors didn't tolerate phones while class was in session, and they can and will openly take a student's phone away if they so much as saw the screen light.

"kind4. you?"

"Halfway. Taking these notes is 8eginning to feel cum8ersome."

"h3h, so 3v3n you h4v3 your l1m1tz whe3n 1t com3z to l1st3n1n."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"y4 4LW4YZ t4lk l1k3 no tomorrow, not r34lly p4y1ng 4tt3nt1on 1f the poor dud3 who w4z l1st3n1ng to you l3ft or not."

Aranea shot Latula a look, and the teal troll stuck her tongue out with a cheesy grin. No offense intended; just playfully pushing buttons.

"I suppose so. Have you thought of anything for the dance, or is this class preventing your Mind powers from working properly?"

Now Latula sent Aranea a look. Aranea gave her an overly-innocent smile. Latula smirked.

"n4h, noth1ng y3t. th3 cl4ss 41nt h3lp1n 31th3r. 1v3 b33n try1n to th1nk of som3th1ng, but noth1ngs com1ng to m3. 1 bl4m3 th3 l4ck of coff33."

Latula grinned and Aranea playfully rolled eyes. Every day, everyone but her and Mituna seemed to be getting more and more addicted to it. It was almost officially the morning routine for the trolls in their frat house at this point.

"Latula Pyrope! Aranea Serket!"

The two trolls stiffened and Aranea flipped her notebook page over quickly. They looked at the professor, who looked unimpressed with them not paying attention to the documentary. "I hope you're both paying attention. It could be the difference between getting a passing or failing grade on the midterm."

"Yes ma'am!"

"Of course!"

The professor stared at them for another second, then went back to her laptop, trying to figure out what was still wrong. Both the girls let out soft sighs, thankful that nothing further was brought upon it. Aranea flipped back to her notes, just to make it seem like she was still paying attention. At this
point, the documentary's narrator was beginning to die down; his voice dull and void of any emotion.

Latula sneaked a peek at the time on her phone, and saw that it was 10:55 AM. The class ended at 11:50 AM. Less than an hour, but way too long to go. She let out a sigh and went back to nursing her head in her hands, still trying to keep herself awake. While science in general intrigued her, this video was beginning to put her to sleep. She was envious of her classmates that were passed out and haven't been caught yet. That normally wouldn't have happened, so the professor's laptop issue must have been really taking all her attention away.

Suddenly, the video stopped and began to buffer. Any students that were still conscious were suddenly completely awake, surprised that the documentary stopped out of nowhere. The professor noticed this too, and let out a growl, "damn Wi-Fi. What's going on?"

Latula blinked. So it was the Wi-Fi taking all her attention? The professor got up from her chair and walked over to a nearby lightswitch and flicked it up, but the lights didn't turn on. Everyone was awake now. The professor tried again, flicking the switch up and down numerous times, but nothing turned on. "What in the world?"

Just then, there was a knock at the door, and it swung open soon a second later. It was a security guard and his carapace assistant, both of them holding flashlights in their hands. "Hey, sorry to interrupt, but there's a blackout throughout the building."

"A blackout?" The professor approached the security guard. "Do you know what caused it?"

"No, but we're getting to the bottom of it. I just wanted to let you know."

"Do you know how long it's going to take to get the power back?"

"Honestly, I'm not sure. It might take up to thirty minutes since we don't know what caused it."

"Alright. Thank you. I was wondering why the Wi-Fi wasn't connecting."

The security guard left, and the professor pinched the bridge of her nose. Clearly, that wasn't a part of the lesson. She turned to her class, who were all either confused or surprised by the sudden turn of events. Latula glanced at Aranea, who shrugged. She had no part in this.

"Okay, well, thanks to the blackout, I can't continue with my lesson since the video is buffering." She walked down the middle isle and sighed, trying to think of something to make use of what time was left of the class. But considering her options, her whole lesson was through the documentary, and the laptop was left on half a battery. Since it was an older version of a new brand, it wouldn't last the rest of the class, and she couldn't plug it in to charge. She didn't have any worksheets to give out either.

"...I suppose I can put the lesson and the homework online. We'll watch the documentary another time." She turned to her laptop, narrowing her eyes. She turned off the documentary and pulled up a worksheet file, some questions based off the video. "I'll omit the questions from the film on the sheet since we didn't get that far. But other than that, complete the rest of the sheet online for homework."

She closed her laptop, "I'll see you all next Friday."

Instantly, the class got up and gathered their things, all of them relieved that they didn't have to listen to that sleep-inducing film anymore. Latula and Aranea put their things in their Fetch Modi before heading out.

"Man, that was sure lucky, huh, Serket?"
As they passed by other classes, they were going through the same thing. The professors couldn't do their lessons without the power, thus ending their classes early. Aranea, however, paid no mind to them as she looked at Latula, incredulously. "Latula, I hope that you aren't suggesting that I was the one who made that happen."

"Well, I wouldn't put it past ya!" They went down the stairs and exited the building. "You're a Sylph of Light; a healer, and luck is a part of Light, right?"

"Yes, that's true. But I wouldn't have done something like that." Aranea grinned, finding Latula's accusations somewhat hilarious. "I've promised myself that I wouldn't meddle in other's business unless they specifically wanted me to. Especially after what happened in the game. What just happened was purely by chance!"

"Yeah sure, Serket!"

"I'm serious!"

Latula laughed and playfully punched the Scorpio troll on the shoulder. "I know, I know! I'm just teasin' ya! Lighten up!" Aranea snickered, not sure whether to tell the Mind player she made a Light pun without realizing. But, she could use that to her advantage.

"Lighten up how? From forty watts to eighty watts? Or from eighty watts to one hundred and fifty watts?"

"Oh, can it!"

The two girls laughed a bit as they walked down the path to their frat house. Even though it was still early in the school day, both Latula and Aranea had found out they only had one class on Friday; making their weekend more enjoyable by getting out of class just before lunch time. And today was simply even better thanks to the blackout.

The weather was nice for early fall. The trees were all covered in multicolored leaves and there was the occasional crunching sound under their shoes. The air was crisp and cool, and sometimes, Aranea could detect the faint scent of apples on the air. It was nice; she had forgotten what being in different seasons were like.

"Heads up!!"

The two girls looked up, seeing an prolate spheroid shape rushing straight towards them. Aranea stopped in her tracks and watched as Latula held her hands up and caught the object with ease. It was a football. A ratty one, actually. Latula turned the object in her hands curiously before looking back up. A group of six jocks were out on their front yard, playing a scrimmage of football. All of them wearing the Beforus University football jerseys, and the three players on the opposite side wore black bands on their biceps. The jerseys were Game-cut, colored cobalt blue with a black collar and black stripes on the sleeves, and in thick white text with a black outline were their numbers on the front and back, and their last names above the numbers on the back.

This was something that surprised Aranea. While she knew there was a football field by the Grand Huss building, she didn't realize that the college would have their very own football team. 'Seems like this place is catching onto human life quickly.' She wondered if this was Hussie's doing again. She wouldn't put it past him if it were true.

"Yo, Ace!!" Latula's voice rang out in the mid-morning air. "Go long!!" She threw the football hard. Ace, the dude with the jersey number 12, ran after the football and caught it in the air, only to be
"Take a rain check on it, Rahim!!"

Both she and Aranea started walking back home again, but Aranea kept her eyes on the boys as they continued their game. They apparently had been going at it for a while since their clothes seemed to be a bit dirty. She turned back to Latula as the Mind player finally stopped laughing, "you know him?"

"Yeah! He's the President of the Video Game club, and he's in my soccer class." Latula playfully stuck her tongue out at Aranea, "I thought that'd be pretty obvs to ya, Serket!"

"Just confirming my suspicions," Aranea playfully shot back, grinning a bit. "I didn't think we would have our own football team here, however. Especially when you consider that this school is still fairly new."

"Yeah, I thought so too, but Ace told me and Tuna not too long ago." Latula shrugged nonchalantly. "The dean and his crazy-ass ways managed to get our school a few sports teams to get our name more well-known. Ace told me we have a football team and a soccer team so far. He plays front on the soccer team."

"He doesn't play football?"

"Only for fun. He doesn't like the competition for some reason." Latula looked confused. "He said the armor is too bulky? Dunno what that means."

Aranea shrugged too. Normally, the talk about any kind of sport would bore her. She wasn't really one for strenuous physical activity or anything that involves anything crazy. The only sports she really participated in was the Badminton class and the Fitness Walking class for the physical education credits, and that was it.

"Do we only have football and soccer teams?"

"At the moment. From what Ace told me, the dean's also trying to get a tennis team, a basketball team, and a swim team going."

Aranea huffed a bit. Meenah was probably going to go crazy when she hears about that. From what her best friend had told her recently, there was an indoor pool in the indoor physical education section of the Grand Huss building, but only students who were scheduled for swim classes were allowed in there. Any unauthorized personal would be given harsh consequences. Now that she really thought about it, Cronus would probably try that too, for that matter. She hoped Kankri put him on an extra tight leash. For both Cronus' sake, and the poor people he would harass in their bathing suits.

When they finally got to their frat house, Aranea realized that the mailbox was open slightly, and a manila folder was sticking out a bit. She took it out of the mailbox, and it read: "To the A1 Trolls". Below it was their frat house address, and the sender was from the Sakura-Con staff and their dean, Andrew Hussie. Latula took a look and began to open it after swiping it from Aranea's hands.

"Hey!"

"C'mon, Serket! Let's see what it says!"

"Shouldn't we wait for everyone else first?" Aranea asked bluntly, but Latula already opened the
folder. "This involves them too, you know."

"Hey, I'm wracking my brain here for an idea for the Halloween dance, Serket! If this thing has any info about costumes, I'm not waiting for Kankles to nip at my heels!"

Aranea sighed and rolled her eyes, already aware that she wouldn't really win this sort of thing. Once Latula opened up the folder completely, she took out the contents. It was a rough draft file for the Sakura Con scheduled events and times, the different floor plans, and a list of nearby hotels for the group to choose to be staying at while there.

**Sakura Con 2016 Special Event! Meet the Sburb/Sgrub Winners of Earth!**
Limited Showings for each day! 10/6 - 10/9! First come, first served!
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**See:**
The A1 trolls: The trolls from the Scratched planet Beforus! Learn about their culture, society, and roles!
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**Warning!! Some restrictions apply!**
Unregistered god tiers are **forbidden** from using powers **inside convention or during** Q&A panels!
Registered god tiers are to use their powers only when **absolutely necessary**!

The only things missing were the panels for their group, John's group, and Karkat's group.

"Damn." Latula scratched her head. "This guy really meant it!"

"I wouldn't put it past our dean." Aranea sighed as she walked into the house. "He's busy creating sport teams despite our school being open for a few months."

Latula didn't say anything. Aranea had a point. The Mind player followed her from behind and entered the dining room. She put the slip of paper back into the manila folder and put it on the table before heading into the living room to play some video games. Whoever came home later had the pleasure of seeing that themselves.

She just hoped Kankri wouldn't have a cow.
Chapter Notes

So, Kankri's basically an arrogant prick here.

Plus there's a lot of hate flirting and black vibes. You're welcome.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
It was later in the day, and almost all the Alpha trolls were home now because of the earlier blackout. Kankri had arrived home shortly after Latula and Aranea, and just recently went over the convention slip with everyone at this point. Much to their utter dismay. Everyone was in the living room, either sitting down on the couches or standing around, trying to all come up with ideas for what to do for the panels. Or, prevent themselves from killing the Blood player because he admitted to withholding information from them.
Kankri had just finished filling in to the girls about his decision to take the longest day for their Q and A panel. And they weren't pleased; Porrim and Latula especially. They both looked absolutely scandalized, much like how Mituna had predicted. The Gemini troll sent Kankri a smug smile, or an 'I told you so' look from where he was sitting, at least. Kankri made a mental note to lecture him sooner or later.

"Kankri, you've made a decision without us! Of course we're going to be furious!" Porrim was sitting on the recliner chair, her arms crossed over her chest and glaring so venomously, it could rival a cobra. "Not to mention that you didn't allow the other boys to discuss it when you even made the decision to begin with!"

"Porrim, I've told you this before, and I shall tell you again: It was a mutual agreement between us all within Karkat's memo," Kankri huffed, arrogantly mimicking Porrim's body language and sticking his nose up into the air. The perfect "I am much more informed and much better suited to talk about this than you are" stance. "And the others did have a say in it. Once I explained my side about why we should all partake in the longest convention day, they all agreed without question. Quite unlike you and the other females in this hive."

"[You arrogant little shit.]" Damara flipped Kankri off, and Rufioh was quick enough to clasp his hand over hers before the Cancer troll could tell what she was doing. Rufioh shook his head at her, and she hissed something at him under her breath. Meenah, Aranea, and Latula all looked extremely annoyed now. Aranea huffed, deciding to speak for the other girls in the room, "Kankri, it's one thing to withhold a decision from us about something that we are all supposed to be involved in, but to call us unreasonable? Especially because we're understandably angry? Who exactly is in the wrong here?"

"She's right, Vantas! Yer bein' a shit, and I'm this close from stickin' mah fork in ya!!" Meenah snarled, her earfins stretching out threateningly as she held up a hand with her thumb and index finger showing what little patience she had left. "Don't test me on this one, Vantas! I ain't takin' yer bullcarp! You knew that we was all waitin' for this slip and decided ta discuss this shit as a school o'fish!!"

"Meenah, I would advise you to watch what you say. Threats or speech about violence can trigger somebody quite easily, but I'll let you off with a warning." Kankri crossed his arms over his chest. He wasn't even looking at Meenah as he spoke, and that made her even more angry. The Cancer troll then turned to Aranea, "and Aranea, I had simply assumed that it would have just been better for all of us if I had decided the days for us. It not only saved us some time since I know we have homework left to do, but it also managed to clear up some air regarding the other two groups, Karkat's group and John's group, to decide what days they were going to choose."

"And you decided to wait two days after you've come to that decision to tell us now?" Latula muttered, rolling her eyes. Mituna's arms were wrapped around her waist; an affectionate attempt to try and keep her calm. It seemed to be working, but it was starting to lose its effect.

"I had assumed that you would want to hear about it after we had received the slip of paper, Latula. That's why I withheld from saying anything to you all aside from whoever was in the memo with me a few nights ago."

"Kankri, you're an asshole," Latula deadpanned, rolling her eyes again. She was starting to get a headache from all this eyerolling. But, it wouldn't be helped. For someone who was so constantly worried about being triggered or triggering others, Kankri could be, and was, an outright dick. Aranea was having none of that.

"The more you assume, the more you're going to be wrong, Kankri." Aranea glared at the candy red
troll. "I would know."

Kankri glared back at Aranea, now completely turning towards her, "I think you should mind your own business, Aranea. Your intrusion of how I operate and manage situations is beginning to become triggering. I suppose you're quite lucky, no pun intended, that you aren't the only mad about my, excuse me, "shitty" attitude despite everything that I was only speaking out for the majority benefit within our group of friends."

He huffed a bit. "Or, is it asking too much from you to mind your own business?"

"Kanny!!" Porrim snapped as Aranea trembled in rage at that. How dare he assume that she felt his arrogant vibes because she WANTED to! That was the last thing Aranea would ever want to experience! If she could turn off her empathetic powers, she would have! But then again, even if she could, she was sure she wasn't the only one who could feel Kankri's arrogance radiating off in all directions. And she was also sure that she wasn't the only getting pissed off because of that either.

Sparks flew between her and Kankri. Kurloz raised a brow. Were these black vibes he was sensing, or was it just the high tension? He couldn't tell, but one thing was for sure, it was kind of interesting. And even though she couldn't hear anything, Meulin could tell tensions were getting extremely high, and fast. She glanced at Porrim, begging for her to do something.

Porrim sent Kankri a nasty glare. From her spot on the loveseat, Aranea could sense the rage swirling inside of her. Meenah smirked toothily, leaning forward and muttering under her breath, "fight! Fight! Fight!" Aranea swatted Meenah on the arm, shaking her head disapprovingly at her friend. While she herself was furious at Kankri for not informing them sooner, she knew that fighting wouldn't lead anywhere. At least, nothing beneficial. But that didn't mean she wouldn't mind hitting him for his previous retort. That was just uncalled for.

Still, it didn't stop Porrim. The Virgo troll arose from her seat, her fingers twitching. She was so ready to chew Kankri's head off. Cronus, however, had a different idea. He was leaning against the wall a few feet from Kankri, but now moved closer to his moirail. Porrim stopped in her tracks as Kankri stepped beside Cronus and glanced up at the seadweller, "I have Cronus to vouch for me. He was the only one in the memo that supported my suggestion initially."

"Hey, chief, you always have my back. Of course I'd return the favor." As he spoke, he looked at Mituna and smirked smugly. Mituna glared at Cronus through his messy bangs, ignoring the light affectionate head ruffles from Kurloz. Kurloz was glaring at Cronus too, but as a warning. Kankri was sure to send the same look back at Kurloz in regards for his own moirail. The Cancer troll glanced back up at Cronus, "I appreciate that, Cronus. Thank you."

"No sweat, Kankri." He glanced at Porrim, a smug look in his eyes. Porrim glowered at the highblood; her scleras glowing a few hues lighter than normal. Cronus could practically see her pupils turning into spades at this point. The joy at making her mad was almost unbearable. Seems like he one-upped her from punching him last time!

"Ugh, Ampora, would'ja not try ta be a fail kismetfish in front of us?"

Meenah's voice rang out like a bell. Cronus, Kankri, and Porrim turned to Meenah, noticing that she was leaning against Aranea in a half-assed attempt to stay interested in this... whatever the fuck it was. Aranea looked annoyed at Meenah; mainly because of how much body weight she was putting against her. Contrary to popular belief, not all highbloods were as physically strong as they were said to be. Aranea was one of those examples.

Snorting, Aranea shoved the seadweller off before looking up at the trio, "I agree with Meenah. It
would actually be extremely nice to not see multiple failed attempts on Cronus' end to hate-snooze anything with a pulse."

Both Mituna and Latula snickered at that, and Rufioh couldn't help but grin. "Ohhh, sick fires!" He half-whispered under his breath. Both Meenah and Aranea raised a brow at Rufioh. Was being unable to whisper properly a Nitram thing? Regardless, Cronus glared at the two girls, his face flushed a bright shade of violet. He was about to retort, but Kankri placed a hand on his chest, holding him back while shaking his head. "Cronus, I apologize if me touching you is triggering, but I must say that allowing you to stoop to low levels of name-calling wouldn't be doing any favors here."

"You not telling us this panel shit any sooner isn't doing favors either, Kankles." Latula growled. She finally lifted up her shades to glare at him properly. Even though Mituna's arms were still around her waist, the Gemini troll could already tell that he wouldn't be able to stop his matesprit from kicking a few asses today. Not that he didn't want to see that. Especially towards Kankri and Cronus.

Porrim huffed and turned back to her seat, her hair flipping over her shoulder. Her hair smacked Cronus straight in the face, and even though the seadweller was a bit stunned, he managed to catch a whiff of her lavender and vanilla scented conditioner. His eyes traveled down to her ass, but before his mind could wander to explicit imagery, Kankri's snort snapped him out of his trance. Apparently, his moirail wasn't too pleased with how poorly Porrim was handling this, and he couldn't help but smirk a bit at just how far Kankri was on his side. Cronus tugged at his jacket collar nonchalantly, "well, it's not like Kankri isn't telling the truth."

"And what exactly do you mean by that, Cronus?"

Cronus glanced at Porrim through the corner of his eye. Her arms were still crossed over her chest, and a pierced brow was raised. A silent demand for him to explain himself, or shut the fuck up. Kankri huffed at Porrim. His arms were now crossed over his chest again. "Porrim, please let Cronus speak before you pass judgment upon him."

"Kanny, stay out of this and mind your own fucking business for once, will you?"

Kankri glared at Porrim, but Cronus placed a hand to his shoulder and shook his head. "It's alright, chief. Thanks for sticking up for me."

"You're welcome."

Cronus smiled at his moirail, but then faced Porrim with a more serious expression. He shoved his hands in his pockets and shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly. "All I'm saying is that Kankri isn't a liar. I did agree with him in the memo, and once he explained why we should take the longest day, everyone else agreed with him too."

He looked at the other boys and glared slightly. Rufioh rubbed the back of his neck, Horuss was beginning to sweat, Mituna glared back at Cronus, and Kurloz kept patting Mituna on the head to calm him down a bit. Damara glanced at Rufioh, raising a brow suspiciously, "[you agreed with the virgin-sworn celibate?]"

The bronze blood flinched at her tone, but ultimately nodded his head, "yeah, we did... At first we all thought it was a crazy idea. Who wants to spend their whole day in front of a set of speakers and mics? So, we did call him out on it. Even Cronus did at first..."

"But then when Kankri had explained his side of the situation, we all managed to come to a conclusion." Horuss wiped his face with a towel, a shaky smile on his face. "He explained that his
danccesthor and the human group already have a heap of knowledge regarding the human society, whilst we do not. The world that which we now graze upon barely has any knowledge of our world, and vice versa. That's why we hoof decided to go along with his decision."

The awkward smile on Horuss' face got worse. Damara huffed, rolling her eyes, '[It must hurt his pompous highblooded ass to stick up for a lowblood.]

Mituna rolled his eyes behind his messy bangs, "I told him to tell you girth firtht, but nobody fucking lithenth to crazy guy over here!!" He began to quiver a bit from an oncoming tantrum, but the quick and gentle paps from Kurloz was more than enough to calm him down. Mituna smiled up at his moirail, and the expression was gladly returned. Latula smiled too and kissed Mituna's cheek, "hey, babe, I totally appreciate that you thought of me and the other girls. That was really rad of you!"

"Hellth yeah, babe! Alwayth!"

Cronus rolled his eyes at Mituna, and Kankri shut his eyes to avoid anyone from seeing that he was jealous of the yellow troll. Aranea smirked internally. He wasn't hiding anything from anyone; his flush crush on Latula was just as obvious as Cronus'. The only one who didn't pick up on it was Latula herself. Aranea especially knew that he was jealous, and he also knew that she could use that to her advantage. But that was what he wanted; to paint her in a bad light. He knew she could sense his emotions, so if she used that as blackmail against him because of his previous retort, he could call her out on it and make it seem like he was the better troll.

But she knew what he was planning, and she had the perfect plan to use it against him: To not use it at all. Then, to call his bluff, and one-up his arrogant ass. 'Call me an intrusive manipulator, will you, Kankri?' Aranea thought venomously, her glare sharp enough to stab someone. 'You're quite the hypocrite.'

Meulin, who had decided that the tensions were too high for comfort, got up and held out her hands, trying to calm the others down. "NOW, NOW, CALM DOWN, EFURRYBODY." She smiled Mituna and Latula, "THERE HISS NO USE IN ARGUING OFUR THIS. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. IF WHAT KANKITTY MEOWED IS TRUE, THEN I SUPPOSE WE REALLY CAN'T DO MUCH MEOW."

The others began to exchange glances, all seeming to think the same thing. Kankri and Cronus began to loosen up on their body language, and their expressions softened as well. They could tell the others were beginning to see it from their side. They were thankful Meulin finally did.

"FUR ALL WE KNOW, IT COULD CAUSE PURROBLEMS WITH OUR DANCESTORS AND THE HUMANS IF WE TRY TO CHANGE ANYTHING MEOW." She looked at Cronus and Kankri now, "I AGREE THAT KANKITTY SHOULD HAVE CONSULTED WITH US FIRST, BUT HE HAD OUR BEST INTERESTS IN MIND. WE SHOULD JUST MAKE THE BEST OF IT MEOW."

Meenah rolled her eyes at the brown blood, "yea, nofin pike sittin' in front of a buncha humans and answerin' their shitty questions aboat our crappy birth planet. Might as whale stick a fork in me and serve me fer dinner."

"[That can be arranged,]" Damara chimed in with a sick grin. Meenah raised a brow in mild
confusion, but still shot her rival a look. A rush of black coursed through her veins. Oh, she was so getting it later.

Kurloz blinked at the two, then pulled out his phone and took down some notes. A reminder to himself to look further into Meenah and Damara's black advances. Meulin nosily peeked at his notes, then flushed lightly at what he wrote. Horuss peeked at his moirail as Kurloz smirked up at Meulin and signed something to her. Her blush worsened. Probably something naughty. The thought alone started to make Horuss sweat all over again.

Eventually, Porrim let out a sigh and got out of her seat, running a hand through her hair. "You know what? Meulin and Rufioh are right. We might as well go through with this."

"You bein' serious about this, Maryam?" Meenah scowled at Porrim. Porrim nodded, now rubbing her temples. "Meulin has a point. If we try to rearrange the dates, it could cause problems. And even thought I hate to admit it, Kankri has a point as well. Barely any humans know about us, and our home world. They know quite a bit about Alternia, but barely anything about Beforus. We probably will need more time to explain our society and what was expected of us."

"I'm relieved that you're beginning to see it my way, Porrim." Kankri looked much more relaxed now that everyone seemed to be calming down. More so since they were beginning to go along with his decision. Porrim gave him a dull look, "you're just lucky we have other things to worry about. And that you had Meulin and Cronus to defend you on this."

"I wouldn't expect any less from Cronus." Kankri glanced up at Cronus. His expression remained neutral, but Cronus could clearly see the gratitude in his eyes. He then turned to Meulin and nodded in her direction, "and thank you, Meulin, for making the tension die down for siding with me."

"UM... SURE THING, KANKITTY..."

Meenah rolled her eyes. 'Spear me now.' She glanced at Aranea, who shook her head with an equally dull and annoyed expression. This was fucking stupid. The Scorpio troll brushed her bangs away from her eyes. If she was being honest with herself, she was just relieved that all of this was resolved. As annoyed as she was with Kankri, she knew that arguing with him was pointless; he was the most stubborn troll in the entire frat house.

"Well, now that that's over and done with," Cronus muttered, turning to face Porrim. "What are we going to do for the other panels?"

Nope. Nope, nope, a thousand nopes. Meenah was so done with this convention shit and it only just begun. She rubbed her forehead, got up from her spot, and began to walk towards the stairs. "Whatebber. You dumb glubs have fun figurin' this shit out."

"Wait, you're not going to join us, Meenah?" Kankri sounded absolutely scandalized. Meenah lifted up a hand waved to them, not bothering to look back. "Shell no! After what you and Ampora just pulled? I ain't discussin' this shit with ya efin if mah grades depended on it."

She began to ascend up the stairs, ignoring the looks the others gave her. After about ten seconds, a domino effect was in process. Meenah's actions were shortly joined by Aranea and Damara, and they both headed up to the second floor. Latula found the remote and turned the TV on before snuggling into Mituna's lap, and Kurloz signed something to Meulin, and they both disappeared to the den. Rufioh got up and stretched before heading to kitchen, and Horuss rushed to the bathroom to get a fresh towel.

Porrim, however, opted to stay downstairs and sat down on the recliner chair again, pulling out her
phone to kill some time on tumblr. Cronus looked at Kankri, who looked more than thoroughly annoyed about how everyone just blew him off like that. The Cancer troll squeezed his sleeves in an attempt to keep his temper under control. He looked at Porrim, his brows furrowed, "I'm surprised you're not jumping to the chance to organize the panels, Porrim."

"Like what Meenah just said earlier; after what you two just pulled?" She didn't even glance up at either at them. Kankri didn't seem to mind it, but Cronus looked annoyed. "You're just lucky I'm not tugging at both your ears and lecturing you myself."

"Have we triggered you, Porrim?"

"You've triggered everyone but Cronus, Kankri." Her phone buzzed, and she opened up the newly received text message. "How about you do us all a favor and disappear for a few hours?"

Kankri glowered at her straightforward response; she didn't even tag her potential triggers. He opened his mouth to lecture her, but then felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Cronus, but he wasn't looking at him. "Sorry if this is triggering to you, chief, but..." He pointed to the couch, and Kankri saw the glares that Mituna and Latula were sending him. If Mituna's psychic powers weren't fizzled out, there would red and blue sparks flying all over the place. And Cronus and Kankri both knew that if they pushed Latula too far, they would feel her wrath later on. They've clearly had enough.

With a huff, Kankri turned on his heel and began walking up the stairs. "Very well, Porrim. But I would advise you to tag anything triggering with your blunt and straightforward honesty in the future. Come, Cronus." Cronus didn't argue. He gave Porrim a cursory glance as he followed the Cancer troll up to their room.

Porrim didn't answer him. She was so fed up at this point. If she were to say something to Kankri or Cronus now, Aranea would need to use her mind control powers in order to make her stop. Instead, she just focused on her message and listened to the music playing from the TV, finally feeling herself calm down a little.

**Aranea: Check your Email**

But not before you rant a little, right?

"I cannot BELIEVE him!!"

Yep.

"Whut? Vantas?"

"Yes, him!! The nerve of that arrogant little...! Ugh!!" Aranea slammed the bedroom door shut, her face flushed a light shade of cobalt from anger. She stormed over to her bed and threw herself onto the mattress, not even caring that it messed up her neatly folded sheets and pillows. Meenah sat down at her desk and sat backwards in her chair as she faced her irritated friend. "Shit, I half expected ya ta bite his face off. Or make him slap himself a bait."

"Oh, believe me, I was SO tempted!!"

Aranea grabbed one of her pillows, pressed it to her face, and screamed a bit. Meenah smirked, unable to fight back her mild amusement. Aranea rarely ever got bent out of shape. Aranea's anger was a more controlled kind of spite. If she got offended or angry, the Scorpio troll usually had great control over her foul mood initially. But afterwards, she would act cold and vindictive, ignoring the target that angered her out of spite. And then, when they least expected it, she would use her words to strike them down and hit where it hurts them most. Words were a powerful thing.
It's not like the seadweller could blame her for feeling that way either. What Kankri said earlier was severely uncalled for. If that were her in that situation, Kankri would need Feferi's help to come back to life. Maybe even Jane's help too. Meenah wasn't ashamed to admit that she was much more aggressive than Aranea was, and she gave her friend kudos for not lashing out at the Cancer troll.

"I wanted to make him slap himself until his cheeks looked like fucking tomatoes!!" Aranea shouted, her voice slightly muffled from the pillow. "How dare he assume that I intrude on other peoples and trolls feelings on purpose!!"

"Yeah, 'cause ya can't turn that off, right?"

"No, I can't!! Trust me, Meenah, if that were possible, it would just save me so much trouble!!"

Aranea finally lifted her face out of her pillow, her glare hot enough to fry eggs. She was squeezing the pillow with so much strength, Meenah almost thought the feathers were going to burst out the seams. The seadweller huffed and rested her head on her arms, slouching in her backwards chair, "whale, I dun think he would be worth usin' yer mind control stuff on anyway. At least yer the betta troll here. I'm surprised ya didn't use his flush crush on Pyrope against him."

"Oh, Kankri was hoping that I would!!" Aranea snarled and threw her pillow down on the bed as she stormed over to Meenah. At first, the fuchsia troll thought it was a symbol of aggression, but when Aranea sat down on Meenah's bed, she could tell she wanted to keep her voice down for this. A smirk appeared on Meenah's face, "ya figured out his reel motive, huh?"

Aranea nodded, pausing to try and calm herself down. She knew that if she spoke while still feeling this heated, it would just attract the wrong attention. Meenah grinned and scooted closed to the Light player, her earfins stretching out slightly from the excitement. Whenever Aranea had a devious plan in mind, it enticed the worst kind of results for the target. And after the shit Kankri just pulled today? Meenah relished in the thoughts of him getting his just desserts.

Finally, Aranea let out a sigh and felt herself calm down. Her internal body temperature finally cooled down a bit, and her pulse finally began to slow down as well. "He knew I could sense his jealousy towards Mituna. And he knew I was annoyed at him for his retort on my empathetic powers. So, he was hoping I would use that against him. And if I did, he would be able to call me out on it and label me as intrusive with his thoughts and feelings."

"What the flyin' fuck?"

"Exactly." Aranea crossed both her arms and legs, the tips of her ears burning. "It would just paint me in a bad light, and it would have benefited him because it would have blown off some steam. It would have shifted everyone's attention to me and create an even higher form of tension in the air."

"Pyrope tried the same thing on ya a few weeks ago." Meenah rolled her eyes at the memory. "Remember how she called ya out on meddlin' in the timeline back in the game?"

"I know it all too well." Aranea rolled her eyes too, facepalming a bit. The whole world seemed to be against her when it came to these powers, didn't it? "Thank you for defending me about that, too. I appreciate it, Meenah."

"Yea, shore thing, Serket." Meenah shrugged nonchalantly. "Shoal, what'chu gon' do aboat Vantas' manipulation?"

"Nothing at the moment. But because I managed to figure out his true intentions, I'll be sure to save it for the right moment." A smug smile appeared on the Scorpio troll's face. "He has the nerve to call
me a manipulator? We'll see about that."

Meenah chuckled deviously. Aranea's was quite the force to be reckoned with. Her inner bitch was awakened back in the game, and Meenah was glad it hadn't died down even after they all came back to life. The seadweller had to admit; she was pretty proud of Aranea for sticking up for herself like this. Even if it was a bit of a prolonged comeback. Still, the thought of seeing Kankri absolutely horrified of being found out by Aranea was enough for her! Meenah gave Aranea a high-five, "grotta give ya credit, Serket! You ain't the type ta be messed with anemore."

"I should hope not. I may not enjoy fighting, but that doesn't mean I won't stand up for myself." Aranea huffed and crossed her arms. "This is the reason why I ran off on my own; I'm constantly underestimated or belittled because of how my powers work!"

"I know, and it's total bullcarp."

Meenah got up from her chair and sat beside Aranea, slingin' an arm over her shoulder. "And yanno what? Vantas is gon' get a searious wake up call from ya." She smirked a bit, "shell, maybe efin' Ampora will learn a thing or two."

"I doubt it, but one can dream." Aranea rolled her eyes at Cronus. "Those two are perfect for each other."

"Fo' shore. But, fer a moment, I almost thought you and Vantas were hate flirtin'."

"Absolutely not!!"

Aranea stood up in a rush, looking absolutely scandalized as her cheeks became flushed with a bright shade of blue. Meenah's grin grew at the sight of a flustered Aranea Serket. She raised a pierced brow, and Aranea instantly put her hands on her hips, "don't give me that look, Meenah!"

"Whoa, chill out, Serks! I'm just messin' with'chu!"

The Scorpio troll huffed and turned away from her friend, her hands still on her hips. "I don't appreciate that. Kankri and I may not have the friendliest attitudes towards each otter now, but that doesn't mean I think of him a potential kismefish." Her eyes snapped open, suddenly realizing that she made two fish puns in one sentence. Oh, fuck.

"Oh my cod!!"

Meenah jumped up, her eyes sparkling as she threw her arms around Aranea's neck and tackle-hugged her. That was enough to throw the two off balance, but luckily, they landed on Aranea's bed. The two trolls bounced a bit, a small reminder to the two of them about how fragile the furniture was compared to seadweller strength.

"Ya coulda said 'other' and 'kismesis' but ya said the otter two instead!!"

Meenah nuzzled against Aranea's cheek as she hugged her friend close, totally giddy about the two fish puns. Aranea managed to keep a sour look on her face, but Meenah's excitement was proving to be a formidable opponent. She could just feel her annoyed attitude slowly ebb away simply from Meenah's affections.

"Alright, alright, I get it, Meenah. I used two fish puns." Aranea slowly began to smile. "Could you please let go of me?"

"What's in it fo' me?"
"I'll help you with our history homework."

Meenah blinked, staring at Aranea in pure shock. "Ya saw me strugglin'?"

"We sit next to each other, Meenah." Aranea smiled and even giggled softly at the seadweller's surprise. "Of course I could tell which subjects you have trouble with or not."

Meenah huffed and puffed out her cheeks, but ultimately decided to get off Aranea anyway. She had the sudden urge to listen to some music, and she hoped Aranea wouldn't lecture her about procrastinating. She had a feeling the Light player wouldn't, but still. Who the hell could do their homework without clearing their head first? School was such a pain in the ass!

"Whale, can we do that later? I wanna lisfin ta some music beshore we do anyfin."

"I suppose so. But let's not wait until nine o'clock to start a three chapter-based review sheet."

"Yeah, yeah."

Relieved, Meenah sat back in her chair and turned on her husktop, taking out her set of pink headphones. The headband and plug were hot pink, a black slider, black earpads, and pink shell shaped clips on the housing. Aranea thought those things were so tacky. But, she had to admit, they did look good on Meenah. The seadweller rocked anything that involved either pink colors, nautical themes, or both.

Aranea decide to check her email to see if there were any updates on the school blackout. If it still wasn't resolved, then the afternoon and evening classes were for sure to be cancelled, and it would be wise to alert the others just in case they had any later classes as well. Plus, the worksheet from her science class might be up too, and it was just better to get it done now. That meant more time could be used for reading and relaxing.

She went into her school inbox, and saw that there was one unread message in it. It came from the school, but it wasn't about the blackout. Curious, Aranea clicked on it, and attached to the email was file a link to another website. Her eyes traveled up to the email, her heart skipping a beat.

To Miss Aranea Serket,

I am very pleased to inform you that your resume and application as a library assistant in the Topatoco Building has been accepted. We are very excited to have you on our team and look forward to having you as an employee to contribute to Beforus University.

As previously stated in the pamphlet, your starting salary will be set at $15.00, along with the flexibility of being able to add or cancel work study shifts to achieve a balanced schedule. Remember, we have your best interests at hand, and we want you to work a schedule that fits your time and pace while attending Beforus University. Attached to this email is the website that you will be using to create any possible changes to your schedules. Be sure to send an email to alert the staff of any changes as well.

Training begins Saturday, September 24th 2016, at 9:00 AM. All student workers will meet tomorrow in the library conference room beside the entrance to the auditorium. All student workers who are registered god tiers are required to fill in an extra forum at training tomorrow. Schedules for each student worker will be made appropriately tomorrow after training, and if there are any additional requirements and/or concerns, please feel free to contact the library at its usual email: library.beforusuniversity.edu
We look forward to seeing you all tomorrow.

Sincerely,
The Beforus University Library staff.

Aranea sat back in her chair, blinking every so often, almost unable to process exactly what she had just read. She got the job. She got the library assistant job. Even after just reading the email, she still couldn't believe it.

She got the fucking library job.

"Oh my God!!!"

From behind her, Meenah nearly jumped out of her skin. While she was blasting her Nicki Minaj music, the sudden intrusion of the other voice had clearly taken her off guard. She moved her headphones away from one of her earfins, raising a brow curtly as she turned to her best friend, "holy shit, Serket."

"Meenah!!" Aranea rushed to the seadweller and grabbed her shoulders, the biggest smile on her face. "I got the library job!!"

"...Whut."

"The job? The work study job that I applied for?" Aranea pointed to her husktop, "I got the job!!"

"Wait, reely?"

"Yes!! See for yourself!"

Meenah took off her headphones and stood up, letting Aranea tug her towards her husktop and show her the email. She leaned over Aranea's chair and squinted at the text, skimming over the paragraphs because whatever. Aranea was bouncing in her spot, her mind racing as she went over the possibilities of how much this job was going to benefit her.

"I cannot wait to meet everyone else who got accepted! We can all read and sort, read and sort, read and sort... And we could do it every day!!" She paused. "...Well, just about every day."

"Dam, Serket, it ain't efin tomorrow and yer already thinkin' aboit what yer doin' next week." Meenah gave Aranea a small smile. "But, good work. Glad ya got the job."

Aranea smiled brightly at Meenah. She was glad that she got it as well. The Scorpio troll wouldn't admit it, but the anticipation of waiting for the acceptance letter was eating at her nerves. But, now that was all over. Her heart was skipping beats as excitement soared through her veins. This was going to be amazing!!

Suddenly, Meenah began to walk away. "Gon' get some water. Be right back."

"When you get back, let's start our homework." Aranea called back as she began to search for her history textbook in her fetch modus, completely forgetting about her job acceptance letter. "It's better to get it done and over with now instead of doing it and wasting our time-"

"Doin' it later, I know! Sheesh."

Aranea sent Meenah a look, and the seadweller counteracted by playfully sticking out her tongue. She began to head down the stairs, giving Mituna and Latula cursory glances in the living room
when she reached the last step. Porrim, however, wasn't in the recliner chair anymore. 'Probubbly went up to her room,' Meenah thought nonchalantly as she opened up the fridge and pulled out a water bottle.

Just then, she felt something warm press against her back. Her earfins lifted up slightly as she glanced behind her shoulder, "da fuck?"

"Whoops! Sorry about this, doll!"

Rufioh turned his head, and Meenah was grateful that she was low enough to avoid getting hit by one of his horns. She raised a brow curiously at him, "Yer gon' krill some fish with those bull horns of yours, Nitram."

Rufioh chuckled as he rubbed the back of his neck, "yeah... gotta be more careful." His cheeks were flushed slightly, making his freckles stand out a bit more. Beside him were Horuss and Damara, the two of them putting several snacks in their fetch modi. Meenah raised a brow at them as she opened up her water, "where you goin'?"

"The Anime club is hosting a meeting to make up for the one we lost during the meeting," Rufioh muttered, reaching into the fridge behind Meenah. The seadweller raised a brow, "ain't the blackout still goin' on?"

"It was, but now the power's back on." Horuss smiled at Meenah. "Thankfoally. It has been a while since I spent some time with Rufioh at his club."

He smiled brightly at his matesprit, and Rufioh gave Horuss and uncomfortable smile in return. Meenah grinned and tilted her head over, one of her horns poking the bronze troll right in his jugular. Rufioh coughed and backed up, a hand touching his neck as he stared at Meenah in shock. She moved away from him and showed off a sick grin as she stood in the hallway, "poke. Yer it, Nitram!"

"Oh, so that's how it's gonna be, Peixes?"

Rufioh grinned and began to run after her, but suddenly stopped abruptly. Damara facepalmed as Meenah erupted into howling laughter, doubling over as she clutched her already-aching gut. Horuss began to sweat when he saw his matesprit lying on the ground, his horns stuck between the doorway.

"HOLY FUCK, MY SIDES!!" Meenah screeched as several footsteps seemed to be approaching the kitchen. Apparently, Meenah's laughter caught Mituna and Latula's attention. Even Kurloz and Meulin seemed to be curious about what was going on.

"Damz..." Rufioh looked up at Damara pathetically, "Can you...?"

"[Text them and tell them that we're going to be late. I know what to do.]" Damara sighed as she pulled out her phone. She pulled up Matt's phone number, then paused as she stared at Rufioh as he struggled to get free. She sent Meenah a dark glare, and the seadweller smirked and flipped her off. That was a indirect one-up from earlier.

'Eat mah ass, Megido!'

Damara rolled her eyes at the seadweller, then pointed her phone at Rufioh, hitting the record button on her camera app. This was cruel. Like, crueler than eating the last chocolate bar in the fridge. Yet, she couldn't let an opportunity like this pass up. Nobody in the club was going to believe them unless she showed them proof. This video message was going to tell the whole story faster than she ever
"Did ya text them yet, Damz?"

"[Oh, yeah. They know all about this.]

**Horuss: Learn About Anime**

Thanks to Meenah's doorway trap on Rufioh, the trio did find themselves running late to the Anime club's makeup meeting. At first, they were almost certain that the blackout would have cancelled the meeting, but to their luck, the power came back on shortly after the afternoon classes had ended. Night classes were still going to be scheduled, so they had to be mindful of how loud they were going to be. Thankfully, they were only ten minutes late, and Matt was completely understanding of Rufioh's predicament. Unbeknownst to Rufioh, or Horuss, Damara had sent the video to everyone in the club. And after she sent the video, she received dozens of texts expressing how hilarious it was. One complained that they didn't get to see how he got stuck in the first place.

The trio were currently entering the Grand Huss building, heading up the stairs to the second floor. They were grateful that the club was situated in the Grand Huss building for today, specifically because Porrim informed them about the Bear Squad training in the basement later. They planned on meeting up with the rest of their friends after the Anime club ended its meeting. As they traveled up the stairs, they could already hear the rowdiness of the club from behind one of the classroom doors.

Horuss glanced at Rufioh as he led the way, Damara tailing behind him. This was his first time meeting up with the Anime club in quite a while. He normally spent most of his afternoons in the engineering building, tuning up any projects for some extra credit, but thanks to the blackout, that was a bust for today. Not that he minded. While he enjoyed working on mechanics and things of the sort, he enjoyed spending time with Rufioh much more. This would be a nice, and a well-needed, break.

They finally got to the classroom, and when they opened the door, Matt was there to greet them, "hey, glad you could make it! I heard you got stuck in the doorway in your kitchen?" Several members snickered at the deadpanning tone in their president's voice. Even Matt couldn't help but grin a bit at the thought of the bronze troll getting stuck in the middle of the doorway.

"It wasn't my fault!! My friend Meenah tricked me!" Rufioh's face burned a deep shade of bronze. Even his ears were flushed. "She poked my throat with her horns, and I wanted to get her back."

"Yeah, we saw."

Rufioh stopped. Saw? Matt pulled up his phone and opened up the video that Damara sent to him and everyone else. Rufioh's entire face went bronze as he turned towards Damara, nearly hitting Matt in the head with his horns, "Damara!! What the fuck?!"

"[They wouldn't have believed me if I didn't have proof.]

A few members in the back of the classroom laughed loudly, "Dude, holy shit! You should put this on Youtube!!"

"Yeah, man! This thing would get a million views!"

"Why didn't you look where you were going, Nitram?"

"[That's a good question.]" Damara raised a brow at Rufioh, and he rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "Spur of the moment...?"
Jack snickered beside Matt, "damn, Ruf, I'm surprised you don't have scratches on your horns! From what we just saw, you must've hit the doorway hard."

"That's actually thanks to Horuss." Rufioh turned to his matesprit and smiled a bit. "When we first moved in, he put some soluble stuff on the walls to protect my horns while he expanded them. As long as they don't get wet, they'll do their job."

Horuss smiled sheepishly and mimicked Rufioh by rubbing the back of his head. "Aneighthing for you, Rufioh. I had a feeling that some adjustments would need to be made. I couldn't allow the thought of your horns getting stuck in the hallways pass me by." The Void player flushed a bright shade of indigo under his mask. Several clubs members stared at his flushed complexion in awe; all of them still not used to the reality that trolls could blush in different colors.

Damara huffed, shaking her head bitterly at Horuss, '[Ass-kissing freak.]' But as she reached for her blunts, that's when she realized that she was completely out. The only thing left were her cigarette box, and her lighter. She cursed under her breath and shook her head, dropping in her head into one of her hands. Her fingers raked through her hair as she tried to think of a solution. There was no way she could make it through this meeting with Horuss if she didn't have anything to distract herself with.

"Need a smoke?"

Damara looked up, seeing another club member smiling down at her. They were holding a pack of half-empty cigarettes, a silver Marlboro brand. Good stuff. The club member had light tan skin, dyed red hair that was almost completely concealed by their hood on their black and red sweatshirt, wore large round glasses, and had black irises. Aside from their hoodie, they wore black jeans, and blue sneakers. They were pretty tall; possibly the tallest human in this room at exactly 6 ft. Damara's eyes dropped to their chest and waist; they had no bust or curves, and Damara felt slightly disappointed because they were kind of attractive.

The Time player smiled lightly and took the packet from the club member, nodding. "Thank you." She took a cigarette from the box and handed it back to them, but they smiled and shook their head. "Keep it. I don't smoke."

Damara nodded and took out her lighter to put it in her new cigarette box before tossing the old one. "What you name?" She asked as she watched the club member clean their glasses. "Nikki Suwba!"

She raised a brow. They had a slight speech impediment; they couldn't seem to pronounce the 'r' letter properly and it sounded more like a 'w'. Nevertheless, they smiled brightly, and Damara felt a stab of both irritation and sympathy. They seemed to be unaware of the cruelty the world has to offer. "Are you boy or girl?"

"I'm pangendew. You can use he/him/his, she/hew/hews, or they/them/theiws. I don't weally mind eithew one." Nikki pulled up a chair and brought it over, "mind if I sit with you?"

Damara shook her head, and Nikki took the spot next to her, watching as Horuss explained to Matt what he used in the walls at their frat house. Matt looked slightly interested, but his body language said that he just wanted to sit and relax instead of listening to the indigo troll ramble. Nikki glanced at Damara as she took a drag of the cigarette, "youw fwiend seems to weally like engineewing."

"I guess. It get annoying. He annoying too."

"You don't like each othew?"
Damara shrugged, "not as much like Rufioh." While she had no problem being kind to humans, she was careful not let them get too close to her. She didn't want a repeat of what happened in the game, and she certainly didn't want to give people the wrong idea about her, Rufioh, and Horuss. She and Rufioh got along fairly well; they cosplayed troll Sailor Moon together a few months after their breakup, and maintained companionship even in the afterlife. Playing Fiduspawn with him, Dave, and Karkat in the dream bubbles helped out a little too.

But her and Horuss? They were never really good team members to start, much less as friends. They simply tolerated each other to avoid making Rufioh uncomfortable. Though she wasn't above telling Rufioh to go through with his desire to break up with the highblood. He was the troll Rufioh cheated on her with, and his explicit casteism regarding her blood and dialect alone was enough to thoroughly piss her off. His obsession with horses and sweat creeped her out, and she never really understood his thoughts and feelings about being otherkin.

"Hey, Horuss, have you heard of this game called Uma Musume - Pretty Derby?" Matt suddenly piped up, desperately hoping that this would halt Horuss' train of thought. He was sweating like crazy, and the last thing Matt wanted was to clean up alien sweat off the floor. Thankfully, it worked. Horuss stopped talking and began to stare at Matt with genuine curiosity, "I hoof not! What is it?"

Damara's face fell, and she locked eyes with Rufioh. Rufioh looked absolutely terrified. "Uh, Matt, isn't that game... still in development?"

"Yeah, but they released a trailer today!"

"...What."

Matt pulled out his iPad and began to type in the name in the Youtube app search bar. Horuss leaned over his shoulder, watching Matt's fingers work as Rufioh began to scoot towards the door. Damara shook her head at the Taurus troll, releasing the smoke from her lungs before crushing the cigarette butt and tossing it out the window. "[Well, it looks like I have to save your sorry ass yet again.]

"Damz, this is not the time..."

Matt glanced at Horuss as he gave him the iPad, the video already clicked on and buffering. "The concept of the game seems to involve a mash-up of an idol-raising simulator with a horse-racing mechanic, except the idols and horses in question are moe, anthropomorphic horse girls."

"Anthropomorphic... horse girls?" Horuss watched the video, his eyes widening behind his goggles as the video progressed. The characters racing on the track made his heart skip a beat and he couldn't stop the growing smile on his face. "Oh... My good Lord..."

"Also, ice-skating somehow enters the picture. Don't ask me."

"[Irrelevant. I'm a Time player. I fucking own time and I will make it my bitch."

"Damz, no."

Matt stood beside Horuss, rewatching the trailer beside him. He saw the sweat begin to drip off of Horuss' grinning face and stepped back a bit, looking a bit uncomfortable. How much did this guy sweat? Damara raised a brow, and Nikki couldn't help but stare at Horuss. He even made the humans uncomfortable. "[This is new.]

Horuss glanced at Matt as the trailer began to end, "is this... an anime? For a game?"
"It's an iPad game, and this is an animated trailer." Matt took his iPad back from the highblood and began to wipe the sweat off with his jacket sleeves. "Gross, man..."

"Oh!" Horuss' hands shot up to his mouth as he began to sweat even more profusely. "My apologies, Matt!"

"Nah, it's alright." Matt looked at Rufioh, who looked beyond terrified at this point. Just as he was about to ask him why, Horuss rushed up to the bronze blood, grabbed his shoulders, and looked at him directly in the eyes. "Rufioh. We need to get that game. My life depends on it!"

"[God fucking damn it.]

"I thought you'd like it, Horuss." Matt smiled at the highblood, turning off his iPad. "I saw it and it reminded me of you since it has horses, and your horse cosplay is pretty awesome too."

Horuss looked at Matt, raising a brow behind his mask. "Cosplay?" While he knew what the word meant because of Rufioh, he never really understood the point of it. It was merely for dressing up because of anime and cartoons, right? Matt, nodded, still smiling. "Yeah! That wielders mask, the ponytail, and the horse puns are pretty convincing. I'm surprised you're not saving it for the convention."

"Why, you silly human, you!"

"Well, we still need to figure out exactly what we're doing for the convention." Rufioh muttered as he rubbed his head, trying to keep Horuss from going on off about anymore personal life shit. "We're actually supposed to meet with the three god tier girls who plan on guarding us later on tonight."

"For real?" Jack seemed shocked. "There aren't that many god tiers on campus. How did you find them?"

"Actually, my friend Porrim did on accident." Rufioh smiled at Jack, and Jack nodded at the jade troll's name. It seemed to ring a bell, so the Breath player continued, "she stumbled into the training ground in the basement here, and met them in person. Pretty chill dolls from what I heard from her and Latula!"

"Do you know who they are?" A female club member ask as she pulled out a small book, "because they technically have all the registered god tiers in the school handbook."

"Nah, Porrim just caught their nicknames. Dunno if that's in the book, though."

The member shook her head, putting away her handbook. Rufioh shrugged nonchalantly, "no big whoop! I'll be sure to tell you guys all about them when we meet them tonight!"

"Yeah! Please do!"

"I've never seen an actual god tier! I've only heard about them from the dean and from the meeting we had about the convention!"

"Me too! It must be so cool to be a god tier!"

"What do you think their classpects are?"

"Maybe a Witch of Hope! Or a Maid of Time!"

"What about the Bard class? Do you guys think Bards are cool?"
"I wanna know more about the Mage class!"

Rufioh began to smile brightly. Barely anyone here has heard or seen actual god tiers? He turned to Damara, and she gave him a light shrug. They could use this to their advantage. If these club members didn't know too much about god tiers, then chances were that other humans didn't know too much about them either. This could be a potential topic to talk about at the convention. Plus, he, Damara, and Horuss could surprise everyone by showing off their classpects and powers as well!

Excited, the bronze troll grinned and pulled out his phone, planning to start a new memo to let the others know about what he had just discovered. Horuss, however, wasn't really listening. In fact, he was still talking to Matt about his "cosplay". "What makes you think that this is a costume, Matt?"

Instantly, Rufioh froze. He had totally forgotten about Horuss' otherkin conversation with Matt. Damara facepalmed, annoyed that Rufioh had forgotten himself instead of making the highblood forget. "[Great. Now he's got him started on another topic.]

"Is that a bad thing?" Nikki asked, scratching their cheek in obvious confusion. "It does look like a weally good cosplay."

"Yeah, but..." Rufioh sighed, sat down beside Damara, and headdesked onto the table. "It's not a cosplay..."

"Wait, what?" Matt looked shocked. "You're not cosplaying?"

"Actually, it is quite the opposite." Horuss smiled brightly at Matt, "While I do not know exactly what this "cosplay" or "cosplaying" is aside from my knowledge with Rufioh, I feel that I must address this to you, and everyone here, now. I am actually a noble hoofbeast."

"What?"

"A what?"

"A hoofbeast. Or, a horse, as that's you humans call them. It turns out my body was merely the host to a highly intricate system of entities of any sort you could name, biological or mechanical, sentient or nonsentient, physical or metaphysical."

"Dude," Jack looked like he was nearly at a loss for words. "Are you fucking robo-kin or something?"

"My inner field of experience is shared by the souls of ancient legendary muscle-beasts, a range of devices such as hivehold appliances, a number of cosmological features such as planets, star systems, even several universes, and a variety of abstract concepts which sentient beings have not yet formed the language to express."

"Space-kin?"

"Muscle-beasts...?"

"Think of it as an assembling of a complex machine, I began to piece together a STRONG identity, which of course included discovering a passion for mechanics itself. Matt, I feel that I must inform you in the spirit of the upcoming convention and holiday, Halloween. When I am spooked, it only causes me to identify even more with the majestic hoofbeasts."

"...Holy shit, bro."
Porrim: Introduce the Bear Squad

It was around six at night, and the sun was almost completely gone beyond the horizon. The sky was dark slate of blue, and the half moon was beginning to rise up in the sun's place. The campus was illuminated by the buildings and streetlights, and any students taking night classes were rushing to their buildings to avoid being late.

Thankfully, none of the trolls were involved in night classes on Fridays, and they were heading to the Grand Huss building to meet up with Rufioh, Damara, and Horuss, then to officially meet the Bear Squad. The cooler night weather was nice; nice enough for people to use a hoodie without getting too hot or too cold.

Latula turned to Porrim, her hands stuffed inside her pockets with an arm linked with Mituna's. "Mary-games, you sure these guys are the real deal? What if they try to kill us something?"

"They won't kill us, Latula." Porrim looked at Latula incredulously. "You're just being anxious. Did you take your medication today?"

Latula blinked, surprised that Porrim would remember that. She scratched her cheek as she glanced away, mentally going over her day. Porrim smiled lightly when she saw the teal troll nod, "then just hang back, Radglare. Don't forget that I've met them before."

"I know, I know."

"Fuck, I'm just hopin' they ain't gon' be pike Megido like ya said, Maryam."

"Meenah!!" Aranea slapped Meenah's shoulder lightly as she glared at the seadweller. Latula snickered at Meenah as well, "you worried one of them is gonna steal your kismesis from ya, Paycheck?"

"Fuck no!!" Meenah snarled at Latula, baring her teeth like a wild animal. Her earfins stretched out threateningly as she tried to ignore the heat growing in her face. Mituna snickered beside his matesprit, clearly not fazed by the seadweller's anger, "HAHAHA!! YOU'RE BLACK FOR DAMARA AND IT'TH THO OBVIOUTH!!"

"Both of ya fuck off!!"

The two gamers laughed loudly. Kankri, who was at the back of the group with Cronus, shook his head disapprovingly. While he didn't care if his fellow trolls got into red or black relationships, he wished that they would discuss their feelings or vacillations within their private quarters. Cronus seemed to notice Kankri's less-than-stellar expression and put a hand to his moirail's shoulder. "Sorry, chief... Is this triggering you?"

"No." Kankri glanced up at Cronus. "You aren't triggering me, Cronus. You're quite possibly the only one here who doesn't trigger me."

'Fuck yeah, pale privwileges!' Cronus thought with a triumphant grin. His grin quickly toned down when Kankri looked away again. The Cancer troll was clearly annoyed. "Anywvay, wvhat's bugging you, chief? You havwen't been in a good mood since this morning."

"Nothing is "bugging" me, Cronus. I'm simply a little uncomfortable with all of this potential caliginous talk." Kankri glared at Meenah's form, almost tempted to repeat that louder so that she could hear him. But, there was one thing from stopping him.
The Scorpio troll was occasionally glancing back at him, her eyes glowing with anger. It was clear she was still peeved about his little comment about her earlier, and she didn't hesitate to show Kankri that she would have no problems letting Porrim know about his behavior.

While Kankri knew that Porrim was extremely jealous of Cronus being in his pale quadrant, it didn't stop the Virgo troll from being a mother figure/older sister figure towards him. And Kankri also knew that Cronus wouldn't stand a chance against a chainsaw-wielding rainbow drinker. It was a lose-lose situation for both Kankri and Cronus. Kankri felt infuriated that he couldn't express his opinion without putting his moirail in danger. He made a reminder to himself to lecture Porrim about this.

The group finally entered the Grand Huss building, noticing that Rufioh, Damara, and Horuss were sitting around in the lobby, waiting for them. Meulin smiled at her moirail and rushed to him, "HORUSS!!"

Horuss looked up, and had no time to react from Meulin's crushing tackle-pounce pale attack. The two hit the ground, sliding on the floor for a few feet before coming to a stop by the closed We Love Fine student store. Rufioh snickered as Horuss sat up; the indigo troll was dazed and dizzy from being caught off guard.

"Man, that was some greeting, doll!!"

"Indeed." Horuss finally shook off the dizziness and smiled at the olive troll sitting on his lap. "I didn't expect you to gallop over towards me with such STRONG force."

Meulin giggled at his horse puns and speech patterns. "WELL, YOU SHOULD EXPECT IT FURROM MEOW ON! YOU'RE MY MEOWRAIL, YOU KMEOW!" She lifted up his mask, revealing his indigo irises. Horuss squinted a bit in the light, still not used to the different brightness. Meulin pouted a bit, "MEW'RE NOT PRACTICING LIKE I TOLD MEW TO! HOW ARE YOUR EYES SUPPOSED TO BE LESS SENSITIVE UNLESS YOU TRY AND NOT WEAR THIS DUMB MASK ALL THE TIME?"

"My major requires that I keep a stable pair of optics around constantly. I may never know what kind of stirrup my major may throw at me." Horuss smiled awkwardly, sweat rolling down his face as he moved his mask back down to cover his eyes. "Besides, Meulin, if I had a different pair of optics to aid in my sensitivity, mew know that I would gladly canter to your pale gestures."

"..." Meulin's pout loosened up, and slowly, her regular cheerful smile came right back. "I'LL FURGIVE MEW THIS TIME. BUT ONLY BECAUSE MEW MADE A CAT PUN!"

Rufioh smiled at the two. While Horuss was a bit of a strange guy, and a bit of a clingy matesprit, he deserved to have someone that looked after him. He was glad that Meulin was trying to do just that. He was secretly relieved that Meulin was trying to get Horuss out of his comfort zone and help him branch out with his feelings and push his limits too.

Damara, however, looked like she couldn't care less. She sighed as her fingers twitched to try and open her fetch modus. She wanted to try and light another cigarette, but there was a security guard patrolling the area, much to her dismay. She really needed a smoke, but the Aries troll did have enough self-control to abide by the rules. She turned to Rufioh, not amused, "[are they done with their pale shitstorm or what?]

"Yeah, c'mon. I wvanna meet these chicks already!"
Cronus didn't even bother waiting for an answer. He stormed over to the door leading to training area and began to head down. Porrim groaned and rushed after him down the stairs, "Cronus! Can't you wait for five minutes?"

He ignored her. He was too busy looking around and making sure he didn't fall down the stairs in the low lighting. It was ridiculously dim in the basement, a drastic difference to what he expected from Porrim's rambling. However, his earfins began to twitch when he heard some form of shouting further down the stairs, and just when he was about to take another step further, something bumped into him, nearly making him lose his balance. "Hey!!"

"Cronus! Keep moving, will you?!"

He growled at Porrim as she took a step back. "Jesus Christ! Are you trying to kill me, Porrim?"

"No, but I don't think it wouldn't be a bad option either!" Porrim hissed back. She ducked under one of his arms and began to lead the way as her skin began to lighten up with her rainbow drinker glow. "That's why I said to wait. Listen the next time."

Cronus growled again, tempted to deck her right then and there, but a hand was placed on his shoulder. He turned around and saw Kankri, his eyes soft and comforting while he shook his head. Almost instantly, the anger died down in Cronus' chest, and the seadweller kept moving to avoid any more conflict. The shouting began to get louder, and Porrim could tell that the others were becoming either curious or concerned. She smiled to herself, already of aware of what the Bear Squad may be doing.

When Porrim reached the last step, she turned off her rainbow drinker glow and turned to the battlefields as the others began to join her. The Bear Squad was practicing again, and this time, all three of them were fighting. The trio were in a battlefield that seemed to keep shifting from a Derse-based environment, to Prospit, then back to Derse. On the top of the forcefield, there was a digital timer counting down to zero. It was currently one minute and fifty-four seconds.

Sparky snapped the neck of white Imp, and it dissolved into a small pile of chalk. Kankri's eyes widened at the brutality. How could she do that without even batting an eye? He looked at Porrim, who smiled smugly. She wasn't lying when she said that the Bear Squad were powerful, ruthless fighters. You had to be if you were going to survive in a doomed session.

Sparky's chalk began to collect in her grist cache while she stood up and dusted off her hands, sighing lightly. "Man, these imps aren't cutting it anymore, guys. We should have put some Ogres in. Or, maybe some Basilisks."

"Basilisks would have been cool, but they only appear in a windy arena." Roxy kicked another white imp to the ground and crushed its skull in, collecting the chalk shortly afterwards. "Besides, we might get caught up in fighting them, and I don't want that to happen when we have guests."

"Guests?" Sparky snickered as she punched another imp in its gut without even turning. "This isn't even our house and you're calling them guests?"

"True, they aren't technically guests, but we are going to be in charge of their safety," DFG said as she threw her strife specibi at the imp Sparky hit. The boxcutterkind weapon sliced its head off, and the imp turned into chalk. Surprise. She smiled at Sparky as she approached her while collecting the loot, "we did volunteer to do that, after all."

"I know, I know. I'm just saying."
A small horde of imps began to rush towards DFG and Sparky. They exchanged glances, unamused, and prepared to fight. But, Roxy loomed over them and jumped down, grinning. "I got this!!"

Roxy raised her hands above her head, and out of nowhere, a huge perfectly generic object right above the imp horde. It crashed down on top of them, turning them into chalk instantly. Sparky grinned while DFG clapped her hands, "nicely done!!"

"Show off!"

Roxy grinned, then turned and saw the last few imps rushing towards to avenge their colleagues. DFG grinned and crackled her knuckles, approaching the perfectly generic object and placed her hand on it. Purple wisps began to flow into the object, and within a few seconds, the object began to roll around. The Bear Squad jumped up to stay out of its path. The perfectly generic object rolled around the arena, crushing any leftover imps that tried to either attack or run away.

Eventually, the imps were completely gone, and Roxy snapped her fingers. The perfectly generic object stopped in its tracks, and then disappeared into nothing. Just as the trio landed on the battlefield and collected the rest of the grist, the timer on the top of the forcefield finally struck zero. The forcefield began to disintegrate and the battlefield began to turn back to normal.

The Bear Squad pulled their hoods down and let their hair out while they wiped their brows. The sound of clapping filled the arena, and the girls finally turned to the stairs and saw the Alpha trolls applauding them, clearly impressed. Instantly, the three girls flushed red as Porrim approached them, "that was nicely done. A bit more tame compared to the last time I saw you fight, but it was nice to see what the Sylph of Heart and Witch of Void could do too."

"You saw all of that?" DFG played with a strand of her hair bashfully. "We didn't mean to keep you all waiting."

"Oh, it was no big deal!" Aranea approached DFG with a smile on her face. "It was quite the sight to see! It's also so nice to meet another Sylph class here!"

"NOT TO MENTION MEETING ANOTHER MAGE! AND A HEART PLAYER TOO!" Meulin rushed up to Sparky and DFG, her eyes gleaming with admiration. Sparky grinned while DFG blushed a bit redder, both looking a bit amazed to meet another Mage class and another Heart player themselves. Porrim approached the Bear Squad and smiled, gesturing to the other trolls, "Sparky, DFG, Roxy, these are my friends and teammates."

The Bear Squad grinned at the Alpha trolls, waving and smiling politely. The Alpha trolls seemed to lighten up a bit, seeing that the girls were only violent when on battlefield. Porrim introduced her friends to the Bear Squad, and each troll told the girls their names and their god tier titles. The training room was only for god tiered students only, and DFG was hellbent on following the rules. When they were done, Sparky smiled at the trolls, "it's great to finally meet you guys in person. We've heard quite about your society and home world, and when we heard that there was an actual group going to school here, we made sure to jump in on guarding your panel."

"Well, it's nice to know that there are humans that are curious about how Beforus worked." Kankri nodded at Sparky. "I must say, when I heard that Porrim met our potential security guards, I had my doubts about your strength or fighting abilities. I'm glad that we witnessed your fighting first hand."

"No doubt." Cronus smirked and wiggled his eyebrows at Sparky. "I can already tell that you're the leader; you seem to take every one's breath away!"
Sparky gave the seadweller a blank look. From behind the Mage of Breath, DFG wrapped her arms around Sparky as she glared at Cronus, "if you anywhere near her, I will fucking kill you."

"I'm all for puns, but that was just sad." Sparky laughed as she intertwined her fingers together with DFG's. Cronus glared at the two, "howv the hell was I supposed to knowv you two vvere together?"

"You could've just asked." Roxy rolled her eyes. She muttered something about the Cronus being desperate under her breath. Cronus growled as he heard Mituna and Meenah snicker at his bad luck. Again. Damara stuck her tongue between her fingers and sent the Bear Squad a dirty look. Unamused, Sparky raised her arms around DFG's waist, giving Damara a lightly glare as if to say "if you go anywhere near her, I will fucking kill you". That feeling of them having a non-romantic relationship came right back to Porrim's gut, and it felt more powerful than ever. She glanced at Meulin and Aranea, hoping that they could decipher exactly what kind of emotion she was feeling. Aranea shrugged, looking just as confused, but Meulin's eyes were sparkling.

"SPARKY!!"

Mituna snickered. He already liked her. He could already tell Sparky gave no fucks. He and Porrim watched as Sparky wrapped her arms around DFG's waist, giving Damara a lightly glare as if to say "if you go anywhere near her, I will fucking kill you". That feeling of them having a non-romantic relationship came right back to Porrim's gut, and it felt more powerful than ever. She glanced at Meulin and Aranea, hoping that they could decipher exactly what kind of emotion she was feeling. Aranea shrugged, looking just as confused, but Meulin's eyes were sparkling.

"MOG!! MOG!! MEW TWO ARE SO CUTE!!"

Both DFG and Sparky smiled bashfully at Meulin, already aware that the Mage of Heart knew what they felt. "You know, you could just ask what kind of relationship we're in," DFG gave Porrim a bright smile, not minding the attention that she and Sparky were getting regarding their relationship. "We're used to the confusion."

"Then please explain because this is driving me crazy!!" Porrim snickered, slightly embarrassed at her own lack of knowledge. Meulin giggled up at the jade troll before turning to Sparky and DFG, "MEW TWO ARE IN A QUEERPLATONIC RELATIONSHIP, RIGHT?"

"That's right!"

Both Bear Squad members looked pleasantly shocked and happy that someone finally understood what kind of relationship they were in. Meulin turned to the other Alpha trolls, noticing how they were all confused. She smiled pleasantly at her friends, "IT'S A RELATIONSHIP WHICH IS MORE INTENSE AND INTIMATE THAN WHAT'S CONSIDERED IN A COMMON OR NORMAL FURM OF "FURRIENDSHIP", BUT DOESN'T FIT THE TRADITIONAL SEXUAL-ROMANTIC COUPAWLE MODEL."

She turned back to DFG and Sparky, "IT'S CHARACTERIZED BY A STRONG BOND, LOVE, AND EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT, YET IT'S NOT PURRCEIVED BY THOSE INVOLVED AS "ROMANTIC". IT MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SEX OR ANYTHING SEXUAL, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTEPURR BECAUSE SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY ISN'T WHAT THE RELATIONSHIP IS ABOUT! IT'S DEFINED BY THE INTENSITY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION."

Meulin turned to her friends, smiling at their surprised expressions. "THE HUMANS INVOLVED DO NOT HAVE TO IDENTIFY AS "QUEER" EITHER! IT'S A TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP
"Shoal, it's kinda pike a pale matespritship?" Meenah looked totally not interested in this quadrant talk anymore. Sparky grinned at the seadweller, already able to tell she was a piece of work. "Yeah, in a way, I guess."

"What does "queer" mean, exactly?" Latula asked, looking confused. Both DFG and Roxy smiled at her. "It's a word that's used in the LGBTQA+ community! It's another way for us to define as non-heterosexual."

"That's right! You guys have many labels for different sexualities and romantic orientations!" Aranea smiled at DFG, "so I'm assuming that you three use the term?"

"Roxy and I do, but Sparky doesn't," DFG said as she and Roxy exchanged proud glances. DFG turned back to Aranea, "I'm a panromantic asexual, Roxy's aromantic bisexual, and Sparky's aromantic, but she's still sexually attracted to men."

"And aromantic means the inability to feel romantic attraction, right?" Aranea was beginning to look more and more excited as the conversation progressed. While she knew that humans used a bunch of different labels for their individual lives, unlike trolls altogether, it was a thrill for her to actually have her studies and assumptions on humans to be confirmed.

Sparky and Roxy nodded and smiled at her. "It also means that we don't have a desire to seek a romantic relationship." Roxy held up her hands, "so, if you have romantic attraction or interest in me, I ain't looking for anything!"

"But since Sparky wanted to be in a relationship, she and I did some digging around." DFG wrapped her arms around her platonic partner's waist with a loving smile. Sparky grinned and wrapped her arm around DFG's shoulders in return. "Queerplatonic relationships aren't that well known, but they're real. And so are we, despite our constant erasure."

Kankri rolled his eyes. He had just about enough of all this talk of romance, and he could tell Cronus' patience was running thin as well. He began to approach the Bear Squad. "Well, all this talk about romance is... nice and all, but," he turned to Roxy, already aware that she was responsible for the team's survival. "If Sparky is considered the team leader, then you must be the one who got the information from the Horrorterrors and denizens, correct?"

"You're sharp." Roxy smirked proudly at Kankri, "being a Void Witch, I can manipulate the void and anything from nothing to my advantage. That meant finding about healthy sessions while being stuck in our dead session, and then manipulating our void to merge with the other."

"Astounding." Horuss released some sweat from his sweat valves. His smile looked like it was about to take over his face. "You manipulated the aspect to mend your session perfectly! I can tell you have absolute majesty over it!"

"You think you guys were the only ones stuck in a dead session?" Roxy grinned coyly as she put a hand to her hip. "If I weren't a Witch of Void, the three of us would've been toast."

"It's true. We owe our lives to Roxy." DFG smiled up at the tallest Bear Squad member. Sparky did
too, and she gave Roxy a playful punch on the shoulder. Horuss smiled at Roxy, since he was a Void player himself. "It's so nice to meet another Void player. The only other Void player I know about is my dressagecestor, Equius!"

"Uh, thanks." Roxy looked slightly off-put by the highblood's sweating, but still smiled politely anyway. Meulin approached Sparky, her eyes still glimmering with admiration, "AND IT'S SO NICE TO MEET ANOTHER HAPPY MAGE! MY DANCESTOR'S TEAM MAGE IS SUCH A BIG GRUMP!"

Sparky snickered a bit. She could relate; Mages weren't considered the happiest god tier classes because of the negative effects their class brings. But, still, the knowledge that came with it was always a plus. Live and learn. Meulin suddenly paused, looked at Sparky's attire, and gave her a confused expression. "BUT, MEW'RE NOT WEARING THE SAME MAGE OUTFIT THAT I HAVE?"

Porrim blinked; they were wearing different outfits this time. They all had their classpects and corresponding palettes, but the entire god tier scheme was gone and turned into a much more urban theme.

Sparky wore a dodger blue blazer that had the Mage class hood attached to the folds, the sleeves rolled up to her elbows, and the coattails were stretching down to the back of her knees. She had white gloves on, an azure v-neck t-shirt with the Breath aspect symbol on her chest, navy blue jeans with the cuffs rolled up to her ankles, and yellow high-top Converse sneakers.

DFG wore a magenta pullover hoodie with the hood the same as the Sylph class hood, and the sleeves were rolled up to her elbows and the Heart aspect on her chest. She wore a dark magenta scarf was around her neck, and the joints went down to her thighs with a dark pink trim. She had cropped jeans that went down to her knees and were the same color as her hood and scarf, and magenta leggings. She had pink bracelets on her wrists, and green high-top Converse sneakers.

Roxy had a dark royal blue parka that had white fur lined around the hood and pockets on the bottom of the sides, the Witch class hood attached to the collar of the parka, and a royal blue strap around her left bicep. She wore a royal blue t-shirt with the Void aspect symbol on her chest, and matching cropped light blue denim jeans. She had the dark blue and royal blue striped leggings, and beige high-top Converse sneakers.

"What do you think, Porrim?" DFG asked, smiling as Porrim approached the three herself, examining the fabric on DFG's scarf. It was incredibly light and it seemed to breathe well, and the texture wasn't lacking. It was soft to the touch, and it resembled the felt on a pool table.

"Whoa." Latula lifted up her shades to get a better look at the outfits. She circled around Roxy, seeing that the Void Witch was proud of her work. Latula had to admit, they were pretty awesome looking. "How did you guys manage this?"

"Easy." Sparky smirked at the Knight while she stuffed her hands into her jeans pockets. She turned to Porrim, "Remember those mercury guys Roxy and I were fighting last time?"

"Yeah, quite vividly."

"Well, the mercury was the grist that we needed most to make these things, aside from zillium." Sparky took off her blazer and handed it to Porrim, allowing the jade troll to examine it up close and personal. Porrim tried it on, noticing that it stretched to fit her size perfectly. Sparky rubbed the back of her neck, "We didn't like our original outfits too much. We have a few bad memories because of them."
"So, we decided to alchemize a new style." Roxy huffed proudly as she crossed her arms. "They weren't easy to make because of how many failed attempts we've had, but now I think we got it on point!"

"How much did this all cost?" Porrim asked as she handed Sparky her blazer back. "These outfits in general, not the failed ones."

The Bear Squad were all too happy to explain. They seemed to be relieved to get this off their chests. Sparky's cost about one hundred pieces of chalk, one hundred pieces of gold, forty thousand pieces of cobalt, one million pieces of mercury, and five pieces of zillium. DFG's cost fifty pieces of marble, sixty pieces of amethyst, sixty pieces of shale, twenty pieces of ruby, ten pieces of uranium, one million pieces of mercury, and five pieces of zillium. Roxy's cost sixty thousand pieces of cobalt, thirty pieces of rust, fifteen pieces of diamond, ten pieces of tar, one million pieces of mercury, and five pieces of zillium. Regardless of the amount of grist it cost them, each outfit needed a sample of their original god tier outfits, and if wasn't for the failed attempts, there would be nothing but scraps left on the original outfits.

"Zillium and mercury are the grist that you need most, obviously." Roxy pulled out a piece of paper from thin and air and handed it to Porrim. The Space player took it and looked it over, Aranea, Latula, Meulin, and Meenah leaning over her shoulders to get a look themselves.

"What's the different between the normal outfits and the ones you alchemized?" Aranea asked as she examined one of Sparky's gloves. Sparky smiled and took one off and handed it to the cerulean troll, "how about I show you? Roll up your sleeve and put on my glove."

Aranea stared at Sparky for a few seconds, but decided to comply. She rolled up her sleeve up to her forearm, and put on the glove. It fit well, but it was a tad too tight on her. Just then, the seams began to loosen up, and the fabric began to expand. It went from being too tight to just right within seconds. Aranea's eyes widened in awe, "it fits!"

"And it doesn't just loosen up." DFG began to take off her hoodie, revealing a pink t-shirt. She handed it to Meulin, and the olive troll tried it on. It seemed to be a bit too big since she tugged at the collar a bit. Then, like before with Sparky's glove, DFG's hoodie tightened up at the seams, fitting just to Meulin's size. She gasped loudly, "MOG! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!"

"The mercury is normally used to help make weapons and computers, but we used it to keep the outfits stable and strong. These things are resistant to fire, water, and blood stains, shocks like bleach or lightning, and from being ripped to shreds."

To prove her point, Roxy borrowed DFG's boxcutterkind weapon and tried to slice open her shirt. The blade made contact with the fabric, but there wasn't a rip to be seen. She handed the weapon back to DFG before taking off her parka and hanging it up on a coat hanger. Sparky then lifted a hand and shot a lightning bolt at it. The lightning bolt made a direct hit, but the parka was completely untouched of stains or burns. Roxy took her parka and slipped it back on, clearly not affected by the massive energy shock the coat took. "See?"

"That's incredible!" Porrim examined Roxy's Witch hood, noticing that there wasn't even static clinging to the fur. "I don't even feel any static energy."

"That's zillium talking. While zillium is normally used to make legendary weapons, it can also be used to create alternate god tier clothes." DFG took off her scarf and showed her Sylph class hood attached to her hoodie. "It helps alternate the look while assisting the mercury and sealing it into the fabric. That's why we needed so much mercury and so little zillium making these things."
"If you'd like, we could make them for you guys too." Sparky turned to the other Alpha trolls with a smile. Mituna, Latula, and Meenah instantly jumped at the chance. "FUCK YETH!!"

"Hellz yeah!! Gimme a sweet pair of duds!"

"Anyfin is betta than that bullship Thief outfit!"

"Meenah, stop!"

"Guys, hold on!" Porrim and Aranea held them back whilst shaking their heads. "We can't ask them to do that for us. We've just met them, and it already took them a long time to make their own god tier outfits!"

"That's right! We can't ask them to do that for us!"

"Ack, whaaat?" Meenah huffed at Aranea and puffed out her cheeks. "It ain't a probubblem if they offerin', Serket!"

"Actually, we can make all of them fairly easily."

Sparky held up the slip of paper that Porrim was looking over earlier, and turned it around. It had a diagram of the basic adjustments and varieties of clothing for each class, and a color code guide for whatever aspect the class was based on. "We have plenty of failed attempts for a reason; to find out how much grist each class needed in order to function properly, excluding the mercury and zillium since we already know it."

"So, in retrospect, you guys can actually make them yourselves too since you're able to use the battlegrounds here," Roxy said as she gestured to the arenas. She smiled at Porrim, "and you saw us work the Phernalia, and we always train here, so it's not like it's impossible! The only thing you have to do is just register yourself in the Phernalia using your student ID."

"You could even do it for a cosplay!" DFG smiled brightly at Aranea and Meenah. "Conventions usually have plenty of cosplay contests and events! You guys would totally rock the urban look."

"Wvell, I think wve should do it." Cronus grinned at the idea. "I'm kind of digging the thought of getting rid of that dumb codpiece!"

"I thecond that!"

"I actually like it," Porrim said with a shrug. Damara nodded beside her, "[so do I.]

Rufioh, Latula, and Aranea stared at Porrim, absolutely appalled. Rufioh scratched his cheek, looking slightly uncomfortable. "You... dolls actually like that thing?"

Cronus smirked at Porrim. Seems like his charm was beginning to work his magic. He approached her and wiggled his eyebrows as he stuffed his hands into his pockets, "Porrim babe, you actually like the codpiece? If that's true, then I'll havwe to reconsider the offer of remaking my outfit."

"Of course I do." A grin began to appear on Porrim's face as she eyed Cronus with triumph. "It's a visual representation of your personality!"

Almost instantly, Latula and Meenah were on the floor, howling with laughter. Damara smirked at Porrim and gave her a high-five, which the jade troll gladly accepted. Aranea turned away to hide her smile, along with Rufioh and Horuss. Meulin was outright giggling, Kurloz was patting Mituna's head as his moirail snickered. The only ones who weren't laughing were Kankri and Cronus.
Obviously. Cronus glared at Porrim, his face flushed a bright violet color. Porrim, who simply smiled smugly, flipped her hair behind her shoulder.

"Porrim, while I am certainly not pleased by that insult to my moirail while he was right in front of me," Kankri growled, his arms crossed over his chest, "I would advise you to keep your hate-flirting to minimum. Or, at least, do it when I am not around."

"Kanny, calm down. We're not even a couple to begin with. I don't know where you're getting this information from."

"SPEAKING OF COUPLES..." Meulin rushed to DFG and Sparky, her cheeks flushed and eyes glimmering, "CAN I ADD MEW GUYS TO MY SHIPPING WALL? AND POSSIBLY WRITE FANFICTIONS OF MEW TWO? I SWEAR I WON'T SHOW A SOUL IF YOU LET ME!"

The two girls blinked at the Heart Mage. They both looked slightly uncomfortable, and Kurloz tapped Meulin on the shoulder. She turned to him and signed something to her, a light smile on his face. She flushed a bit before looking a bit embarrassed. She turned back to DFG and Sparky, waving her hands from side to side animatedly. "UM... NO PRESSURE!!"

"Tell that to him."

Roxy gestured to Cronus with her thumb as he leaned in towards her face. Both DFG and Sparky approached the seadweller and shoved him away. Cronus stumbled back, surprised by how strong the two shorter girls were, then took note of their dark glares.

"If she doesn't want to go out with you, don't harass her!"

"Don't fucking touch her without her consent either!!"

"Dam, Slampora." Meenah snickered at Cronus' flushed complexion. "Efin the most passive Heart player ain't takin' yer shit!"

"I feel I should jump in here at this moment, before this escalates any further, and we start throwing around hateful rhetorics that we can't take back. But fortunately, I know you all would never stoop as low as that."

Kankri got in between the Bear Squad and Cronus, his hands up to symbolize peace.

"While I understand that you two were looking after your possibly younger friend, I would advise you both to avoid touching Cronus without his consent since you both seem to be triggered by his own motives."

"Dude, what?" Sparky blinked at Kankri, already not liking where this was heading. "Are you saying you calling us hypocrites for trying to defend our friend?"

"Like how you're trying to defend your own friend here?" DFG gestured to Cronus. Kankri shrugged as he stood in front of his moirail to defend him. "I'm not suggesting anything, I'm just observing. You understandably have doubts about your feelings and probably downplay them as a defense mechanism, since so few are prepared to recognize the legitimacy of your type of quadrant-specific relationships, or lack of thereof. But I am, and I just wanted you to know that I'm here for you, and am prepared to lecture to you extensively, I mean, listen to you extensively, about your ultra-important problem."

"Wait, are you being serious?"
"Dude, fuck you."

Kankri's eyes snapped open at the tone in Sparky's voice. Both she and DFG looked extremely pissed off; both glaring darkly at the Blood player with their arms crossed over their chests. Sparky snorted, clearly not amused by his false concern.

"Queerplatonic relationships are a real thing, Kankri. I’ve seen them. I’m IN one! Romantic attraction is a spectrum, just like a person or trolls' sexuality. It fluctuates and it’s different for each individual, just like sexual attraction or desire. Yet, there are beings in this world that don't feel romantic attraction, but can still desire a relationship. I would know; I AM ONE. And just because we don't have a specific relationship with Roxy doesn't mean it's any less valid or that we're confused or whatever!"

Sparky began to approach him, but Roxy put an arm in front of her to stop her from doing anything she regretted. "A queerplatonic relationship is the desire for emotional intimacy and security that goes beyond basic friendship. It’s the desire for the permanence and implied closeness of a romantic relationship, but lacking the romance. Also known as life partners/platonic partners. DFG and I would know; WE'RE IN A QUEERPLATONIC RELATIONSHIP!"

"Sparky, easy." Roxy looked like she was struggling to hold Sparky back. Sparky put a hand on Roxy's arm, clearly debating whether to hold back her violent instincts or just leap over to Kankri and rip his face off his skull. "And, to be perfectly honest, Kankri, I DO NOT appreciate this type of erasure because it’s invalidating me of both my aromanticism and my relationship! There are people that are in these types of relationships, and you just dumbing it down to something like basic friendship is insulting to the upteenth degree. So, again, fuck you."

The other Alpha trolls looked way past surprised. The cool, calm, and inviting aura of the Bear Squad was completely erased and replaced with anger and rage. Latula glanced up at Porrim, seeing that the jade troll couldn't take her eyes off Sparky. This was clearly news to her just as much as it was for the rest of them. It was clear that the Bear Squad was chill, but they obviously didn't take shit from anyone or anything.

Kankri, however, was having none of that. He huffed and stuck his nose up in the air at DFG and Sparky. Aranea glared at him, already able to feel his arrogant vibes all over again. 'He's going to give all of us a bad name in the span of five minutes!'"  

"Normally, I would advise you to tag your swearing because it can be extremely triggering to do it in public or around others, but I want to stay focused on the matter at hand. You and DFG have a different relationship from the ones we have. Your relationship appears to be much more turbulent, which is fueled presumably by romantic tension and pale and/or red vacillations. It's actually quite obvious about your major vacillation vibes from your situation. I feel that it's kind of unfortunate, but it makes me grateful that I never got to that point regarding my own pale relationship."

Kankri peeked out at the two girls, noting about how their infuriated body language became even more apparent. "I was simply offering a hand to help you both figure out exactly what quadrant you're in, instead of making up a new one and obscuring the quadrant system that we trolls have used since our existence."

"Wow! If you’re going to butt in just to add some bullshit rude and negative commentary, just hecking put it on your tumblr blog instead!" DFG looked especially pissed off now; almost as much as Sparky. "Like, wow, if you really disagree with me on something as personal as my relationship status, you could like, find another post that supports your ideology and leave us alone instead of assuming that we’re just trying to be some “special snowflakes” or something? Or better yet you
could just, y'know, keep your mouth shut and mind your own business. That works too."
"Kanny, you're pissing them off. Leave them alone." Porrim hissed, glaring at the Cancer troll. "You're giving us all a very bad first impression."

Roxy looked at Kankri as he began to argue with Porrim, then at her two friends. While she didn't have much of a problem holding back both her friends, she began to debate with herself if that would be the right thing to do. Both DFG and Sparky were committed to each other, and they clearly did not want their relationship or their sexualities/romantic orientations to be undermined or erased. Especially since she, like Sparky, was aromantic.

"Look, I'm just saying, it's a huge risk opening a can of dirt noodles, trying to educate people on that subject on top of everything else within the romantic spectrum regarding quadrants." Kankri said as he turned away from a fuming Porrim. "I just don't want to distract anyone from all the more glaring issues that desperately need the full attention of our peers if we are going to make any progress as a co-existing civilization. Friendships, or even moirallegiance, is better than any relationship out there."

He turned back to DFG and Sparky, ignoring their hateful glares. "And I would also advise you both to stop trying to be so "hipster". No one cares what relationship you are in or what it means. Flaunting about your romantic status can be triggering to single folks, and I would advise you both you simply keep it to yourself and try not to complain so much if someone comes to the conclusion that your relationship could be classified as romantic or simple as friends. You are making our human/troll co-existing society look weak."

"No one cares, huh? Then why are you currently bitching about how we classify our relationship status?"

"Plus, don't you think it's pretty triggering to label OUR relationship as romantic even though we already said it doesn't hold anything of the sort?"

That did it. Roxy backed away from her two friends, no more fucks given. Holding them back was not going to do justice this time.

"And you know what, Kankri?" Sparky snarled, finally able to walk up to the arrogant troll and stare him directly in the eyes. "You have an opinion, and that's good for you, but guess what? So do I, and I have every right to voice about how I feel about certain things. Just as much as you do. This isn’t a matter of being "hipster", or whatever the fuck you want to call me and DFG; it’s a matter of telling ignorant people and trolls like you that these relationships exist, and the people who are in these- rare -but real relationships are out there too."

She crossed her arms and backed up slightly, "plus, I’m making human and troll co-existence look weak? Wow, I’ve been enlightened. I didn’t know that me voicing my opinion on the matter makes our new society look weak. I didn’t know that I’m making everybody else look weak by voicing how strongly I feel about this and want to get my point of view out there." Her voice was dripping in sarcasm.

"God fucking forbid I don’t like seeing how something that I feel personally on get erased. I’m not going to keep it to myself. Especially if it’s something that I feel strongly about, and you can’t do a damn thing about it." She rolled her eyes, "and if you really do disagree with me that much about my relationship, then find another place supporting your ideology instead of being a prick and assuming we’re trying to be "hipster", or 'special snowflakes", or whatever the fuck. Just saying. Because I can."

She turned around and began to walk away. Porrim, however, walked up to Kankri, almost tempted
to slap his shoulder. She felt like she should since Cronus didn't do anything. Probably to get back at the girls for rejecting his creepy advances.

"Kanny, what is your problem?!"

"Porrim, I would advise you to not get involved since your quadrants are "well-greased revolving doors", and I fear that you may end up with one or all girls in bed and further confuse them in the quadrant struggles. The last thing they need is any more confusion if they can't even figure out what kind of quadrant they're in."

"Romance doesn't have to involve just quadrants. Humans and trolls have different forms of romance, and I think it's extremely triggering that you're butting into their business about what their relationship is or isn't."

Sparky then stopped in her tracks. DFG and Roxy both looked at their, taking in her expression. They both suddenly looked either horrified or concerned. Sparky looked like she wanted to kill, and the smirk on her face didn't make the feeling loosen up to any degree.

"Actually, I think I have a solution."

Both Kankri and Porrim turned to Sparky. There was something in her tone that made them both go silent instantly.

"Kankri, I have a suggestion for you." The Mage of Breath turned around, glaring so darkly, the room felt a few degrees cooler. Porrim blinked; was she imagining that, or was the Breath Mage fucking with the wind? Regardless, Sparky cracked her knuckles on both hands, looking directly into Kankri's eyes.

"How about you put your fists where your mouth is, and fight me?"

Chapter End Notes

Special thanks to derpy for allowing me to use their character, Nikki Surba! I really appreciate it! This won't be last time they appear; trust me.

To see the video Matt showed Horuss: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYrVKLBhitE

The new outfits the Bear Squad are wearing is based off of blackoutballade's Street-Tier AU! I highly suggest giving that a look because the outfits are astoundingly badass!!

I hope you guys enjoyed the update, guys! See you soon in chapter ten!
"Bangarang!!"

"Rufioh, you keep messing me up!"

The wind turbulence swept the imps and basilisks off their feet, and shortly after, a powerful beam from an Ahab's Crosshairs blasting the area where the underlings once were. Cronus growled and looked up at Rufioh, and the bronze troll sheepishly rubbed the back of his head.

"Um, sorry, Cronus... I'm still trying to get a hang of this wind thing..."
"Wvell, stop trying!! The other team is vwinning!"

"Cronus!" Kankri's shout pulled the seadweller back towards his objective. Kankri then turned to Rufioh, glaring, "Rufioh! I advise you to either control your gusts of wind, or avoid trying to help at all! Cronus is unable to concentrate and aim properly!"

Rufioh held his hands up at the Seer of Blood, sweating a bit. "Okay, okay! Sorry, dog!" He, Cronus, and Kankri were dressed in their god tier clothes, fighting against the Bear Squad in one of the battlegrounds. Both Cronus and Rufioh had their respective weapons out, the Ahab's Crosshairs and a jousting lance. Kankri lacked a strife specibi, but he didn't seem too worried. Mainly because he was focusing on beating the other team.

The fight was a team competition, and the objective was to slay as many underlings and gain as much grist as they could. The battleground was similar to Dave's planet, Land of Heat and Clockwork, but had volcanic pits and magma pools instead of a lava ocean, and rolling machine equipment instead of clock turntables and gears. The underlings involved were all shades of red and yellow, and they were all dropping grist of gold, ruby, sulfur, garnet, amber, and rust. It was a five minute timed battle, and the goal to winning was to work as a team and use each other's strengths to overpower and cover each other's weaknesses. It was the perfect place for players to get rid of any anger or hostility; which is exactly what Rufioh originally proposed to. The last thing he wanted to see was his friend and one of his newest friends beat the shit out of each other.

The rest of the trolls were watching from the outside of the forcefield, and Horuss was managing the podium with the controls. They were currently three minutes in, and while the Bear Squad was currently in the lead, the boys would able to catch up if they worked together. The Seer of Blood, Bard of Hope, and Rogue of Breath classpects were formidable opponents, but because of their lack of realized potential, it was clear to see who had the upper hand.

Cronus crouched back down behind the rolling gear part and aimed his rifle at the underlings Rufioh had messed with. He pulled the trigger and fired a powerful blast at the underlings, but then, three different types of slashes struck against the imps and basilisks, turning them into grist. The Bear Squad jumped onto the gear, grinning down at the three boys as they collected their grist and the beam headed towards their way.

Kankri and Cronus' eyes widened as Roxy jumped in front of the blast and held out her hands. A large perfectly generic object popped up and began to absorb the blast, but not even five seconds later, Sparky leaped over Roxy and pointed at Kankri, Cronus, and Rufioh. Her figure glowed dodger blue, and the turbulence Rufioh had created instantly blew towards the boys, adverting the rifle's beam and made it head straight towards the troll trio.

"Holy shit!!"

Cronus and Rufioh instantly ducked down to shield themselves from the blast, but Kankri, instead, narrowed his eyes. His eyes and body began to glow candy red, and he leaped in front of his two teammates. *'Problems and Privileges!'* He opened his mouth, and the words flowed out from his mouth like his lectures. The hashtags and trigger warnings were turned from sound into solid matter, bolded in candy red text and forming a word shield around Cronus, Rufioh, and himself. The shield absorbed the blow, and once the blast disintegrated into blue and white wisps, Kankri's eyes and body stopped glowing red and the words disintegrated shortly after.

But that didn't mean his lecture stopped.

"I further apologize if your orientation precludes the possibility, as a pale aromantic, panquadrant demiromantic, something in the gray palesexual department or such, and hopefully you are not
A boxcutterkind weapon hit him in the dead center of his forehead. The blade wasn't out so he didn't get cut, but the blunt end of the knife was hard enough to leave an obvious mark. From the outside, Mituna and Latula snickered to each other, both faintly remembering that Sollux had said something similar to Kankri a few weeks earlier.

"Chief!!" Cronus jumped out of his hiding spot and rushed to his moirail, kneeling down as Kankri sat up and rubbed his injured forehead. "You okay?"

"I believe so." Kankri rubbed his forehead before turning to glare at Sparky. "That was highly unnecessary! Your violent actions could be triggering to more passive-"

"My God, you're just like those Scratch Academy jerks! You never shut up about anything!"

"Sparky!!"

Rufioh, despite grinning himself, raised a hand at the Bear Squad. His hand glowed a light bronze, and the turbulence that Sparky manipulated began to blow towards the girls, but his control began to waver. The turbulence began to shift towards a different direction, sending a Ruby Giclopse flying into the forcefield and dissolving into grist.

Cronus growled at the lowblood, "Damn it, Rufioh!! Stop derping vvith the vvind!"

"Hey, this isn't as easy as it looks, dog!"

Sparky snickered at the Rogue. He had a long way to go before he could control wind speed and direction, much less turbulence. She jumped up into the air, letting the wind carry her as her friends jumped over the pits and magma pools. They were heading to the Garnet Giclopse that Rufioh blew away. While they did that, Kankri and Cronus got up and began killing imps and ogres while Rufioh tried to take out a nearby basilisk. The underlings mostly dropped garnet, ruby, rust, and amber, but there were the pieces of gold and sulfur dropped occasionally, which Rufioh eagerly picked up. Much to Cronus' displeasure.

"Let me get some gold too! I need it more than you!!"

"Hey, Cronus, how about you stop paying attention to what I do, and focus on what YOU need to do?!" Rufioh shouted, clearly getting irritated with the seadweller's constant bitching. To prove his point, Rufioh pointed to something behind Cronus, and when the seadweller turned around, he saw a trio of Rust, Ruby, and Garnet Giclopses rushing towards him, clearly pissed off.

"Shit!!"

Cronus tried to fly out of the way, but the Rust Giclopse swung its fist at him, knocking the seadweller over. The blow was so powerful, Cronus crashed into the forcefield and caused a heavy ripple effect to spread out. The other trolls on the outside backed away from the field a bit, astounded and unprepared at just how powerful the ripple effects alone were.

"Cronus!!" Kankri shouted, obviously concerned for his moirail's wellbeing. Outside, Porrim and Latula stood by Cronus as he craned his neck and cracked a few joints, hissing in obvious pain. Latula looked up from behind the seadweller, her eyes widening behind her shades. The Giclopses began to surround him, and she began to hit the forcefield. "Yo, Slampora!! Watch out!!"
Kankri, standing above the Giclopses on the rolling gears, jumped down and began to glow red again, but was suddenly hit with a strong gust of wind, blowing the Cancer troll off course. Kankri managed to regain his sense of direction and jump off the forcefield wall, landing on a nearby gear just above a magma pit. He looked up, seeing Rufioh swearing to himself when he fucked up on the windy thing again. "Shit!! Shit, shit, shit!"

"Rufioh! Stop screwing up and help Cronus!!"

The Giclopses kept circling in towards Cronus. The seadweller managed to get to his feet and pull out his rifle, but he knew he needed to make a diversion in order to get out of this tight spot. One blast won't be able to take out all three at once. Just then, a dark shadow began to appear in between him and the underlings. Cronus looked up, but didn't see anything. But when he looked down at his feet, a void portal was forming in the ground. The Giclopses began to back up, unsure of what to do.

"Death comes..."

Roxy suddenly appeared out of thin air, then spun around in a full circle. Her split Witch hood was like a pair of whips. One sliced the necks of the Giclopses, and then the other finished the job by chopping them off. Instantly, the Giclopses dissolved into grist, awarding Roxy with high amounts of their specific grist type. She smirked and pulled her hood back up, ignoring the bewildered expressions from the trolls inside and out of the battlefield.

"From the shadows!"

On the top of the rolling gear mountain, Sparky rolled her eyes down at Roxy. "Stop with the Reaper quotes!!"

"NEVER!!"

Cronus was amazed that she was able to do that. He grinned and leaned in towards her ear, his arms rising up to wrap around her waist. "Hey, thanks for the sawve, babe. Howv about I thank you- Gack!!"

Roxy was having none of it. Without even turning to face the seadweller, she raised her arm and elbowed him square in the gut. Cronus doubled over and clutched his stomach, trying to ignore Mituna's laugh from the other side of the forcefield.

"HAHAHA!! WHAT A LOTHER!!"

Cronus cracked open an eye to glare at the Witch of Void, but she leaped up and over some rolling gears to catch up to the rest of her team. DFG and Sparky were on the top of the gear heap, looking at the timer to see how much longer they had to endure this heat and loud grinding. A minute and a half. Even though the battlefield was a digital simulation, the environments were extremely close to real life, and that meant the sounds, smells, and temperatures had to be accurate to make it feel like the real thing. It was not only to promote variety with the enemies and matches, but to allow students to overcome their weaknesses and challenge themselves to become stronger.

Sparky lifted her hood up after wiping her brow. She was clearly winded, and looked like she was yearning to get out of the boiling heat as soon as humanly possible. DFG wasn't that far off, but she made sure to look around to ensure they weren't going to be sneaked up on. In the corner of her eye, she saw something slither towards Sparky, and then begin to loom over her.

"Sparky, watch out!!" DFG suddenly shoved Sparky out of the way, protecting her from a Sulfur Basilisks' attack. Its jaws clamped shut, biting down on a piece of machinery instead on its target.
DFG growled and did a quick front flip in the air, her hood barreling down on the basilisk and cleanly slicing it in half through its gut. It dropped pieces of sulfur on the ground that DFG gladly awarded herself to.

"Thanks, DFG! Saved me a lot of damage back there!" Sparky grinned at her platonic partner and gave the Sylph a kiss on the cheek, not caring about the bystanders watching them. Including Roxy. The Witch of Void groaned at facepalmed at the two. "Oh God, you two! Either get a room or pay attention!!"

"NEVER!!"

Roxy playfully flipped the Mage of Breath off, and Sparky gladly returned the favor. Both girls snickered at each other while DFG rolled her eyes in a joking manner. Roxy leaped back up to the rolling gear and wrapped her arms around Sparky from behind, lifting her up into the air effortlessly. "SURPRISE SUPLEX!"

"Oh my God, Roxy!!"

"No!! Anything but that!!" Sparky cried as she struggled in Roxy's grip. She smirked and dissolved into wisps of air, reemerging in front of the other two Bear Squad members. Roxy huffed and crossed her arms, "cheap tactic."

"Mage knowledge is a power within itself."

Out of nowhere, a blast from Cronus' rifle flew right between the group, narrowly missing them by mere inches. It missed its target, a horde of ruby imps, and exploded against the forcefield. "Damn!!" The trio turned back to the troll boys where Cronus was rushing around the gears, trying to jump over the magma pools and volcano pits.

Roxy growled and summoned a perfectly generic object and tossed it at Cronus with brute force. "Watch where you're shooting, you idiot!!" The Bard of Hope ducked down and the generic object missed him by a few inches. He grinned and stood back up, proud. "Haha! You missed me!!"

Sparky snapped her fingers. The wind began to pick up, and within seconds, the object was picked up and heaved straight at Cronus. Kankri saw this happen and was about to warn Cronus, but he was too slow. The object hit the seadweller square in the back of the head, knocking him off his balance with ease. Cronus fell over, and when he hit the ground, the sound of something breaking could be heard.

"Oh no!!" Cronus yelled at the top of his lungs. Kankri's eyes widened, fearing that the highblood had broken a bone or something and kneeled down to Cronus, "Cronus!! Are you alright?"

"No, I'm not, chief!!"

"What's wrong? What broke?!"

Cronus sat up, holding up the rifle in his arms. It was broken by the barrel, useless at firing now. There were tears in his eyes, "my gun! They made me break my freaking gun!!"

"Oh, suck it up!!"

"Yeah, you can easily make another one in these battlefields."

The Bear Squad huffed as they watched Cronus pathetically mourn over his broken weapon. Rufioh scratched his head, unsure of what to do. He turned towards Horuss and Damara, shrugging, as if to
say "what the fuck do I do?". Horuss shrugged too, and Damara seemed to be grinning at Cronus’ misery. Rufioh realized that they would be no help whatsoever. He turned to Porrim, and was hiding her head in her hands. She was either totally embarrassed because that was her potential kismesis, or totally exasperated because she knew he would not shut up about this until next week.

Kankri, however, looked furious. He stood back up and glared at the Bear Squad, "you know, that was fucking uncalled for! Cronus had emotional ties with that rifle, and for you to break it is extremely selfish and triggering of you and your attitude to just suddenly destroy something of value to him!!"

"Efin betta 'cause I broke it too!"

"How the fuck was I supposed to know it meant something to him?" Sparky answered bluntly as she leaned against Roxy as an armrest. "And it's not like it can't be remade. Did you see the grist falling out from the underlings we killed or are you that blinded by your social "justice" brigade?"

"That isn't the point and you know it! My point is that you destroyed something that was close to someone else, and your lack of empathy towards the situation is extremely triggering!"

"Not my problem."

"Actually, I believe it is! You're the one who broke his rifle, so I'm going to give you the benefit of a doubt that you aren't some trigger-happy Mage and remake it for him!"

"You'd lose that argument." Sparky wasn't even looking at him. "If he didn't shoot at us, or at least gave us a fair warning that he was going to fire in our direction, then maybe things would be a little different."

"Besides, even if she were to remake it, she won't have time." DFG pointed to the timer. It was just past thirty seconds. "By the time this match is over, it'll be time for us to leave the building. We won't be able to make anything until tomorrow morning."

Sparky turned away from Kankri, "your hypocrisy disgust me. You have the nerve to call out others for being "triggering", but then it's alright for you to do so? Or your friends, at least?" She peeked out at him, "you're a failure as a Seer of Blood."

"Whoa, guys, let's just chill out and be cool!" Rufioh flew up between them, his hands spread out and a slightly uncomfortable smile on his face. "What happened was a freak accident, that's all. Let's just... stop arguing and make up."

He looked down at Cronus, seeing that the rifle was broken by the laser barrel. It was snapped off in an awkward direction, but it wasn't completely dethatched from the weapon itself. It could easily be repaired. "Aw, dude, that broken thing ain't nothing! Horuss can easily fix that in his tech class."

"Indeed." Horuss kept looming over his teammates shoulders, trying to get a good look at Cronus' broken gun. By the time he found a suitable spot, the timer struck zero, and the battlefield and forcefield dissolved away. The grist caches on both teams were completely filled with the spoils they collected during the grudge match. Horuss squeezed past Rufioh and took a look at Cronus' gun, rubbing his chin thoughtfully as the Bear Squad casually walked away while changing back into the casual clothes.

"Wvell?" Cronus asked, his eyes free of tears. Porrim shook her head at the seadweller. He was so pathetic, it was infuriating. Infuriating to the point where she'd wipe those tears off herself.

"Rufioh's right. This is easily repairable." Horuss took the gun from Cronus' hands and put it in his
syladex, saving it for his class tomorrow. He gave the seadweller a light smile, "do not fret, Ampora. You will more than likely have it back tomorrow."

Cronus let out a light sigh of relief, and Kankri placed a hand on his shoulder to help comfort him a bit more. The seadweller gave his moirail a light smile before they both stood back up. They changed back into their regular clothes, and Cronus glared at the Bear Squad as they made casual conversation among themselves.

"You know, I'm not afraid to hit girls! If that happens again, I'll break your skull, Sparky!!"

"Then what's stopping you from doing it right now?" She smirked and leered into his eyes, daring him to live up to his threat. "From what I just saw, your Bard of Hope powers are destructive towards yourself and your teammates. You jump into situations without thinking what your friends are doing, and you soon lose the chance of winning. You can't expect to win against me when you have little hope of knowing what direction I'll take."

Cronus glowered at her. He clenched his fists so hard, his knuckles turned white. "That's a load of bullshit and you know it! I can beat you into the ground at any time! It's a known fact that humans are way weaker than trolls!"

"You barely got a chance to punch the imps, let alone shoot them. What makes you think you can even lay a hand on me?"

Cronus growled and began to step towards Sparky, but Kankri immediately grabbed onto his shoulder. "Cronus, stop. The fight's over." Kankri approached the seadweller and shook his head, "if they want to antagonize you with bullshit hateful rhetoric, that's their problem. But as your moirail, I won't allow you to stoop down to their level."

"Takes one to know one," Roxy muttered under her breath, earning a snicker from Sparky. DFG rolled her eyes at Kankri, "it's not like Sparky and Roxy broke his weapon on purpose. Plus, Horuss just said it was easily repairable. This topic should be dropped so we can focus on the convention panels."

"DFG has a point. We didn't come here to start ridiculous grudge matches or get on each other's nerves." Porrim pushed past Cronus and Kankri, sending them both a glare. "We came here so I could show you who wants to guard our panel. You had doubts about their strength and legitimacy, but now you witnessed firsthand that they're the real thing."

Porrim turned to the Bear Squad, a smile on her face. "I think they'll be the perfect security. If they can handle a dead session, they can handle guarding a convention panel for a few hours."

The Bear Squad smiled back at Porrim, nodding in gratitude that she came to their defense. Roxy huffed and stuffed her hands into her jacket pockets, a wry smile on her face, "alright, well, at least we got the approval."

"For real." Sparky grinned and flipped her hair behind her shoulder, "that's one thing for the convention settled. The next is when we're going to have to do our job."

"Well, that's easy since we plan on taking the longest day," Horuss piped up as he examined Cronus' broken gun. "We have all come to the conclusion that we were going to take the longest day since humans don't know very much about Beforus."

"That's understandable. It'll be good chance for everyone to know how you're all different compared to your dancestors."
"We said the same thing," Aranea said, suddenly looking annoyed. "But, information was withheld. The decision wasn't made unanimously."

"It was decided fer everymoby else instead of doin' some process shit." Meenah grumbled under her breath. "Or, made it without runnin' it by us girls first."

The Bear Squad raised their brows in confusion. "Who's the genius who thought that was a good idea?"

Instantly, everyone but Cronus turned towards Kankri, dull expressions on their faces and body language that told him he was still on thin ice. Kankri huffed and crossed his arms defensively, rolling his eyes. While he wasn't thrilled about being thrown under the bus by everyone but his moirail, he knew that if he was going to rant about this now, things would turn into hell back at the frat house. Getting humiliated again was not on his to do list for the day.

The Bear Squad exchanged dull glances. They clearly weren't surprised either. DFG cleared her throat, thinking quick to get off this tense topic. "Well, alright. The longest day it is. Now we just need to figure out what other events to fill in for the rest of the convention."

"What?"

The Alpha trolls seemed surprised. There was more? Now the Bear Squad seemed shocked that they didn't know. Sparky glanced at Roxy, who shrugged and shook her head. If there was any kind of information being withheld from them, Roxy would be the one to find out about instantly. But then again, peeking into the dean's personal files would possibly terminate their enrollment at BU. As infuriating as their dean was, it was just the better decision to leave Hussie's plans a secret. DFG glanced at Sparky, "this is probably their first convention. They might not know about how it all works out."

"That's true. We might as well explain."

"Explain what? Everything about the panel?" Latula asked as she raised a brow at Sparky and DFG. "We got the slip in the mail earlier today."

"Yeah, so did we. But that's the rough draft. It just tells everyone what's going to be there, but not what's going to be scheduled." Sparky pulled up a PDF file of the 2015 New York Comic Con Events on her phone. It showed a color coded schedule of all the panels that happened when and where during the four days. "This is what the final schedule will look like when the weekend of the convention comes up. It's up to us to find out what we're going to do besides the panel."

"And does that include what we're going to do?" Porrim asked, referring to her and the rest of the Alpha trolls. Roxy shook her head, "more than likely not. We're only supposed to guard your ask panel, not be your entourage."

"Unless you pay us."

"But if not, you can choose what you want to do before and after the panel." DFG said as Sparky put her phone away. She smiled at the trolls, "don't be intimidated. Conventions are a lot of fun! Do some digging around and I'm sure you'll all find something to do."

"I highly recommend cosplaying." Roxy smirked brightly at the trolls. "It gives everyone a chance to see just how creative you can be, and it gives you an excuse to dress up."

"FUCK YEAH! I WANNA COTHPLAY!!" Mituna cried, throwing his fists up in the air. Latula grinned and slapped Mituna on the shoulder, "let's pair up with Solcalibur and Tez-Pez and be troll
"I CALL THE THIRTLETHTH COP! Or the thirtlethth bad guy!"

"And I'll be the sexy cop to handcuff you!"

"ATH LONG ATH YOU DO IT TO ME IN BED TOO HAHAHAHA!"

"Oh my God." Porrim facepalmed. Rufioh stared at Roxy, amazed that she looked surprised at Mituna and Latula's eagerness. "You've created a monster."

Kankri shook his head, already aware that they won't stop talking about this for a few hours. He turned to the Bear Squad, narrowing his eyes slightly at Sparky. She smirked back at him, flipping her hair over her shoulder confidently. His inside boiled. He wanted nothing more than to just wipe that smile off her face. She was convinced that she had won that battle without much of a fight.

While that might have been true considering statistics, Kankri knew that she was wrong about him being a failed Seer of Blood. He had taken countless hours to find and study problems in society and willingly point them out to people and trolls alike. Not only that, but he provided an insight of her and DFG's relationship and pointed out that they could very well improve of how they demonstrate their love for each other. What else could the Seer of Blood do aside from seeing the problems in societies and relations?

A clap pulled him out of his trance. He turned towards Porrim as she looked at the PDF schedule that Sparky had shown Latula. While they knew what they were going to do for the first day, and the longest scheduled day (whenever that was), they did need to fill in the blanks for the rest of convention while keeping in touch with their dancestors and their friends.

"I guess we'll have to think of a few things." She handed the phone back to Sparky. "Do you think you can keep us updated with the events that could happen?"

"Yeah, that's no problem." Sparky smiled and nodded at Porrim, stuffing her phone back into her pocket. DFG and Roxy were already on their way up the stairs, ready to call it a night. It was close to closing time anyway. "We gotta get going, but it was awesome to finally meet you all."

"Likewise!"

The Alpha trolls (aside from Kankri and Cronus) all smiled back at the Bear Squad. Roxy gave Damara a wink, "if you ever want to talk to us online, we gave Porrim our pesterchums, so feel free to hit us up whenever!"

Damara smirked at Roxy, and after the two groups exchanged a few more pleasantries, the Bear Squad headed out to finally go home for the night. When the trio finally left, the Alpha trolls found themselves alone in the battle room. A whole room dedicated to fighting and solving problems, yet, they couldn't figure out how to get this convention panel over and done with.

Ironic, wasn't it.

Latula sighed and sat down, resting her head into her hands. This was bullshit. "Man. And here we are, thinking we had this in the bag."

"Technically we still do, we just don't have a complete schedule." Kankri sat down beside her, shrugging lightly. "If anything, we could try and create a plan when the convention is upon us. I think the only thing we have to do now is let the dean know we've decided on who's to guard us and which day we plan on taking, even if it is a pain in the ass."
"But we don't even know what that day is." Rufioh rubbed the back of his neck. "For all we know, it could be the day we arrive to the convention."

"I doubt that," Aranea rubbed her chin. "Our dean may be spontaneous, but that doesn't mean he doesn't think things out. It must have took him a lot of convincing to make a convention, that normally runs in the spring, take place in fall. I don't see how he wouldn't plan ahead for our arrival and which days our three groups plan on individually using."

The twelve trolls went silent. They all either exchanged glances, all either looking like they were void of any ideas, or just totally exhausted. Porrim let out a sigh and ran a hand through her hair, "Let's sleep on it. I'm sure our dancestors are probably wondering the same thing."

"Agreed. Lets contact them tomorrow and see what they have in mind."

**Aranea: Get Hyped**

"Meenah."

Nothing. Not even a twitch from her earfin.

"Meenah, wake up. I need your opinion."

The seadweller groaned. She cracked open her groggy eyes, lifting the pillow from her face as she turned around to face her friend. Aranea took her arm off Meenah's shoulder, glad that she was finally awake. It took her nearly eight minutes to wake the ex-heiress up from her deep slumber.

Meenah glanced at her digital clock on her phone, seeing that it was only 8:15 AM. It was waaay too early to even be standing. "Cod dammit, Serket, it ain't efin ten AM!! What'chu doin' bein' up so damn early?"

"My job training starts today!" Aranea piped up brightly, her expression displaying her unwavering excitement. "But I need your kelp deciding somefin for me!"

The Pisces troll let out a deep sigh as she rolled over onto her back and sat down, trying to fight down a grin. Damn fish puns. Damn them for being her weakness, and damn Aranea using them to make her bend to her will. She ran a hand through her unruly locks as Aranea held up an outfit on a hanger. It was cobalt blue blazer with a white frilled dress shirt, a waist high black skirt, and a pair of red high heels. Aranea glanced at the clothes, "do you think that I should wear this outfit?"

Meenah raised a brow incredulously. "Why? Ain't yer regular clothes fine? I thought this place don't require a dress code."

"It doesn't, but I don't want to make a bad first impression." Aranea studied herself in Meenah's mirror, trying to see which outfit suited her best. Her casual clothes, or the business outfit. "Plus, libraries are a business, so it does make sense to wear business attire."

"Do ya wanna wear the fancy-ass outfit?"

"A bit. It does give a positive first impression."

"But if ya go in dressed up pike that, don't'cha think that you'd be overdoin' it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Ain't everymoby else gon' be dressed in their usual shit?"
Aranea paused. She looked at Meenah, and she smirked back at the cerulean troll, "if ya show up in dat outfit, you'd look pike yer more experienced than they are."

"I am experienced."

"Yea, but not in a human library." Meenah stretched her stiff limbs as she tried to get comfortable in her bed again. "If ya go in pike that, they'd expect more from ya. And yer just as new to this place as everymoby eelse in this shithole school."

"Meenah." Aranea sent her best friend a look. "Don't be like that. If it wasn't for this school, you'd probably wind up in a whole heap of trouble and be exiled from the city."

"And if you didn't have this place, you'd try to be controllin' of Vriska and talkin' her ears off."

"I am not controlling! I'm just... aggressively helpful." Aranea put her hands on her hips as Meenah raised a brow at her, giving her a 'really?' expression. A grin spread across the seaweller's face. "Yea, right. And I'mma harmless goldfish."

The spider troll huffed, adjusting the fuchsia scarf around her neck. Meenah rolled her eyes at Aranea and sat up again, "c'mon, Serks, don't be pike that. We both know ya pike bein' in control of things."

"I do not." Aranea turned her back towards Meenah, holding the outfit at arm's length. She knew Meenah was still staring at her, and she could feel the seadweller's emotions roll over her like the ocean waves.

"Aranea."

The Scorpio troll stopped. Meenah's tone was different than before. It was soft, and almost gentle. She placed outfit down on her desk chair and glanced back at her friend, expressing confusion about her sudden change in demeanor. Meenah was completely upright now, full blown staring at her from her bed.

"I know ya betta than anymoby else in this hive, Serket. Ya can't reely hide anyfin from me."

Aranea fought down the temptation to roll her eyes. There were times like this where she'd wish Meenah would just drop the fish puns. Just to give her a bit more confirmation that the seadweller could take a few things seriously in her life.

"You and I both know ya ain't one ta get rid of control. Ya don't wanna appear weak."

"That's not true."

"Thassa load of bullship and you know it."

Aranea opened her mouth to speak, but found that she couldn't counter Meenah's statement. The seadweller stared at the Scorpio troll, her eyes settled on Aranea's and silently telling her that denying this would be fruitless. The cerulean troll snarled lightly at Meenah, and the seadweller rolled her eyes to counteract. Aranea turned away from Meenah, arms crossed over her chest.

"Why do ya worry aboat their opinions shoal much?"

Aranea didn't answer.

"I ain't a crime ta be you. You do yer thang and they'll do theirs. If they don't pike it, tough shit."
Again, Aranea didn't answer, but her body language seemed to loosen up ever so slightly.

"Ya ain't grotta worry aboot those suckas and what they think aboat'cha. Their opinion ain't shit."

"I understand that. But..."

The Scorpio troll sighed, trailing off so she could find the right words. She glanced at Meenah through the corner of her eye, feeling her friend's emotions. It was a rare moment where Aranea felt patience, concern, and a very slight twinge of sadness. Even after all those years of being brash, rude, and greedy, Meenah could never fully conceal her genuine concern for her friends. Something that was directed towards Aranea specifically most of the time.

Aranea smiled lightly and sadly, "...I just don't want people to think ill of me. Everything that I do is my way of trying to make things better, whether for an individual or a group. I tend to meddle for a reason, and with the way I see it, the more I try to fix, the better things could turn out."

"Yea, but that's what'chu thought when ya took the ring and ran off and made a mess of everyfin too."

"I know..." Aranea looked down at her floor even though she was facing away from Meenah. Meenah watched as Aranea took off her glasses and began to clean them even though they weren't dirty. A nervous habit the Scorpio troll had ever since they were wrigglers. "But, that's why I want to make a good first impression. So that I can try to not make the same mistakes. I don't want to appear like I'm the villain, so I'm trying to possibly... better my image."

Meenah smirked softly at Aranea. She got out of bed and swaggered over to her, giving the spider troll a light punch on the shoulder. "Ya don't grotta dress up pike a high an' mighty business fish ta give a good first impression. Peeps ain't gon' respect ya if they don't know the reel you." She then suddenly swiped Aranea's glasses from the latter's hands.

Aranea glared at Meenah as she tried to snatch them back, "Meenah, give my glasses back! I need them!"

"Whale, ya grotta stop fidgetin' with 'em first." The seadweller held up and out of her reach. Aranea scowled. She hated that a mere inch difference in height gave Meenah a big advantage. "They ain't dirty, Serket, and neither are you. Ya recognize yer mistakes and ya wanna learn from 'em. That's reely the best thing you can do."

Meenah looked at Aranea dead in the eye. "Peeps ain't gon' respect ya if ya create a facade or persona. Ya just grotta be you, just pike how you did when we sailed with Vriska back in the dream bubbles."

"That's something that I'd rather not being up." Aranea grumbled as she gave Meenah a dirty look. She still hadn't forgotten when Meenah and Vriska laughed at her behind her back. Meenah puffed out her cheeks childishly. Slowly, a smile began to crack on the spider troll's face. Good.

"Whale, what I mean is, ya came outta yer shell. Ya didn't let shit get to ya as easily, and ya just did yer own thing. Ya talked our earfins off about yer space lizard porn story, and ya looked so dam happy."

"And if people dislike what I have to say?"

"Nebber stopped ya beshore." Meenah smiled at Aranea, and it was a genuine smile. "Shell, probs be best ta ask 'em what they wanna hear aboat. Don't change yershelf over one mishap. Ship happens, and sometimes, there are things that we can't reely control."
She finally put her arm down and handed Aranea's glasses back to their rightful owner. "Just do yer storytellin' gig and be yershelf. There's only one you, Aranea."

Aranea took her glasses and slid them back on. She stared at Meenah as the seadweller crossed her arms over her chest, jutting out a hip sassily. The Scorpio processed over what Meenah had said, and let out a low sigh. She was right; what was the point of being someone else? It's not like she stopped telling stories before. Hell, she knew that her patrons were only in it for the boonbucks, but at the times where they did listen, it did make a difference for her.

A small appeared on Aranea's face. "I'd like to think that I have control over most things."

"I don't doubt ya. But, yanno. Some shit can't be controlled."

"I am aware of that. Believe me."

The two girls smiled at each other. The spider troll placed a hand on Meenah's shoulder and gave it a light squeeze, a relieved smile on her face. "Thank you for talking some sense into me, Meenah. I appreciate it."

"Yea, yea, don't write home about it, Serket," she groaned as she stretched, a few joints cracking. She looked at the time and let out a massive grunt of disappointment. "Cod dammit, I wanted ta sleep 'til fuckin' eleven! Why you grotta wake me up all fer naught?"

Aranea looked at the time now, and the clock read 8:34 AM. She had to go soon. While the walk to the library wasn't very far, it took a good ten minutes to get there. She looked back at Meenah and gave her a slap on the shoulder for good measure. "Stop your bitching. It's not like you're exempt from doing homework this weekend anyway."

The seadweller growled and puffed out her cheeks. "That dun mean I don't wanna get up beshore the sun's up."

"The sun is up."

"It's below the tree line."

"No, it's not."

To prove her point, Aranea walked over to the window, removed the blinds, and the sunlight poured straight into their room. It touched Meenah's feet, and the seadweller backed into the shadows, hissing softly. "It burns!"

"Oh, stop it."

Aranea gave Meenah another light slap on the shoulder, prompting a snicker from the seadweller. All in good fun. The Scorpio troll playfully rolled her eyes and disconnected her phone from her charger. It was at a full battery; which was good considering that she wasn't sure how long she would be at the library. As she put her phone away, Meenah began to salvage her drawers for something clean to wear. Or, at least that's what Aranea thought.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm gonna take a shower," Meenah held up a shirt that seemed cleanish up to her eyelevel. "Probs the only thing that'll wake mah sleep deprived ass up."

"Alright." Aranea began to sort some things out in her sylladex. Her phone, her phone charger, some
money, food and water for later. Basic things. "But when you're done, make sure to get the rest of
your homework done. I know that you still have unfinished marine biology homework to do."

'What're ya? My morayeel?'

"Meenah?"

"Yeah, yeah. I heard ya..."

Yawning, Meenah grabbed her questionably clean clothes and headed to their shared bathroom,
Aranea following behind. The Scorpio troll left their bedroom door open to help circulate the air, and
to let everyone else know that one of them was home. Meenah walked to the bathroom and closed
and locked the door, clearly not wanting to be disturbed.

Normally, Aranea didn't like that Meenah locked the doors when she showered, but this time, she
didn't mind. The reality that she would be working in a library was beginning to settle in again, and
the giddiness was slowly becoming apparent. She walked into the kitchen to grab something quick to
eat, almost bumping into Porrim as the jade troll made her daily cup of coffee.

"Aranea?"

"Excuse me, Porrim." Aranea sent Porrim a bright smile as she maneuvered herself around her friend
and grabbed her breakfast. Porrim smiled at Aranea's apparent excitement, "you seem perky this
morning. Excited for the new job?" She took a quick sip of her coffee.

"Excited is possibly an understatement!" Aranea beamed at Porrim as she put her breakfast in her
sylladex. It would probably be best to eat it on the way. She rushed to the door, noticing that the time
was now 8:42 AM. "I'll be home later!"

"Have a good day!"

When she closed the door, Aranea rushed off towards the Topatoco Building with a grin on her face.
By the time she was halfway down the street, a rather strong gust of wind forced her to stop.
Normally, wind wasn't a problem for her, but the chill was to blame. The cool, morning temperature
was enough to burn the tips of her ears, and Aranea rubbed them to keep the circulation going. These
next few months were going to be annoying. She began to slow her pace, and made sure to stay in
the sunlight. Sunlight was warmth.

As she walked along the street to the campus, Aranea's eyes began to wander around. The weather
was astounding. The trees displayed the fall colors in their peak; red, yellow, orange, and brown
leaves littered the lawns and streets, and the colors only popped even more as the sunlight doused
them relentlessly. A gust of wind blew through her hair, picking up leaves in their turbulence and
flying past her as she walked. With the combination of the cool wind and warm sunlight, the
conditions were just right for her caste.

Even from where she walked, Aranea could see how the fall weather affected the campus. The oak
tree in the middle of the quad was completely covered in colored leaves with a nice amount spread
across its roots. Students that were out were wearing hoodies, cardigans, or sweaters, and their hands
were stuffed protectively inside their pockets. Several students made a pile of leaves in the quad and
proceeded to jump into it, provoking an angered carapacian holding a leaf blower to start chasing
them away. Aranea giggled to herself. She could already picture Mituna and Latula doing that back
at the frat house.

When she started heading towards the library, Aranea noticed that, despite the students she saw
earlier, it wasn't as active compared to a weekday. Far less students were out, but she could see a group of friends getting together before heading towards the parking lot. She couldn't help but wonder where they were going to this early. But, the thoughts left the instant she arrived at the library. She quickly checked the time, and saw it was 8:55 AM. Right on time with minutes to spare.

Aranea walked inside, already feeling the warmth from the heat on her fingertips. A human secretary was at the check-out desk, and when she saw Aranea, she smiled. "Welcome to the library. How may I assist you?"

The secretary was possibly in her late forties with a tall and slender body frame, dark brown skin, green eyes, strawberry blonde hair that was pulled into a braid, and jade lipstick on her face. She wore a basic business outfit; black blazer, black skirt, white dress shirt, and black heels. Above her left breast was a nametag that read Jenny. "Miss?"

"Oh!" Aranea pulled herself out of her light trance before walking over towards the woman. She approached the desk and glanced down at the woman's hands; they were painted a dark shade of green. The Scorpio troll couldn't help but wonder if this woman had met Porrim. The vibes that she felt radiating off of her resembled the ones she felt around Porrim. Regardless, she looked back at Jenny, "I'm one of the new work study employees. Where should I go?"

"Right over there."

The woman pointed towards the double doors on the wall past Aranea. They were closed, but it was apparent that there were occupants. The sound of shoes shuffling and people talking was apparent. Aranea smiled and thanked the secretary before walking to the doors.

She could feel her heart pound with a mixture of excitement and anxiety. While she knew that more students would have undoubtedly applied for this job, Aranea always felt slightly anxious about meeting new people. Especially with her empathetic powers. Aranea let out a soft sigh before she straightened out her skirt and fixed her sweater, then reached for the door handle and opened it up.

She stepped inside and looked around. The room was about the size of a basic business office meeting room. On the left wall were the windows where sunlight poured in with a full view of the college campus. Hanging in the middle of the windows was a cobalt blue college banner with a black outline, and in the middle was the Tumor symbol with the words in a big, black, college font: Beforus University Tumors. In the middle of the room was a long, mahogany wooden table, twelve black swivel office chairs, a projector hanging from the ceiling that was facing the whiteboard, and a mahogany podium with a laptop plugged in off in the corner. Seated around the table were eight humans and two trolls, and in front of them were clipboards holding up some paper.

"Hello there, young lady!"

Aranea stopped and was immediately greeted by a middle-aged man. He appeared to be in his mid-fifties with an oval body frame, fair skin, icy blue eyes, combed blonde hair that was beginning to gray, and a thin moustache. He wore an orange sweater over a black dress shirt, a nametag on his left breast that had the name Stan, black dress pants, and brown shoes. He smiled brightly at Aranea. His left canine was gold, and that would have reminded Aranea of pirates if it weren't for his kind and non-rugged apparel. "What can I do for you?"

"Hello, sir." Aranea smiled back at him, already able to feel the comforting and welcoming vibes from him. If he was going to be her boss, she was already more than okay with that. "I'm one of the new student workers, Aranea Serket."

"Ah, yes! I knew there was another troll joining our team!" He held out his hand to Aranea, still
smiling brightly. "If you haven't read the nametag already, my name is Stan Wesley!"

Aranea gladly shook his hand, smiling just as brightly at him. "A pleasure to meet you, sir!"

"Please! Call me Stan!" He gestured to the table, letting her walk past him without much trouble. "We're just about to start! Sit anywhere you'd like!"

The Scorpio troll nodded and looked around. The only seats left open was the one at the very end of the table, and the other was beside one of the humans who opted to sit by himself. Aranea could already understand why. People and trolls that were in a new environment tend to keep to themselves until they either got more acquainted, or found someone familiar to be with. The boy had blonde hair, wore square purple wire-rimmed glasses, had grayish green eyes, and slightly tanned pale skin. Aranea watched as he stood up and stretched his arms. He was taller than her by an inch or two; about 5'10", had a black shirt with a picture of a golden Eastern dragon printed on it, black jeans, and a red zipper-hoodie.

Aranea walked over to the him as he sat back down. She smiled pleasantly as he glanced up at her. She could tell he was a tad curious about her vision eightfold, but had friendly vibes overall. She decided to break the silence by gesturing to the empty seat, "Is this seat taken?"

"No," He smiled at her, shaking his head. "Go ahead."

"Thank you."

She sat down beside him and took a look at the clipboard. The paperwork was for the new employees to fill out with their information with some slight modifications for trolls. The papers were for the employee info, FICA papers, I-9 Eligibility papers, direct deposit papers, and W-4 papers. Aranea rubbed her chin, trying to remember what the W-4 papers were for exactly.

"W-4s are for our employers."

The boy's voice would have startled her if she hadn't glanced at him from the corner of her eye. Aranea turned towards him fully as he showed her his already filled out forms. "This is just to show them how much they're going to tax us when we're supposed get paid. It might be a little different for trolls."

"Oh." Aranea blinked and quickly scanned over the W-4 papers, seeing that he was right. Hers was modified. In fact, several things on each slip of paper was modified, specifically for her species alone. She turned to the direct deposit paper and rubbed her chin. While having the check deposited into your checking or saving account every paycheck would save someone a trip to the bank, there was always that satisfactory feeling of holding said paycheck on payday. Plus, Aranea just felt more secure doing it manually. She didn't want another place holding her information. The student loan businesses were enough.

"Direct deposit doesn't need the social security number, but the bank route."

Aranea raised a brow suspiciously at him. "You seem to know a lot about this. You have direct deposit?" She smiled playfully at him, and the boy chuckled a bit. He adjusted his glasses slightly, "nah. It's just common sense."

He leaned back in his chair, sighing, "But I could tell why you'd be up for debate about it. The government already has enough of our info."

"It's almost like living back on Beforus," Aranea muttered. "But instead of our manual services, they just want money."
"Money makes the world go around. Everyone needs student loans for college unless you're filthy rich."

The Scorpio troll rolled her eyes. Four of her team members had the pleasure of not experiencing the weight on their shoulders. "I understand what you mean. Four of my friends are like that. Must be nice to be rich."

"Agreed. But..." He grinned. He suddenly opened his fetch modus and switched his hoodie for a black fedora, placing it atop his head with a cheesy grin to boot. "It's not like they can't be dealt with if the odds are in our favor!"

Aranea couldn't help but laugh a little. She had to admit, even though he had some light arrogant vibes, it didn't take away the fact that he was optimistic and friendly. The boy smiled and held out his hand, which she gladly shook.

"Carl Wilson, at your service!"

"Aranea Serket. Nice to meet you."

"Likewise."

"Good morning, everyone!!"

Stan's voice rang out in the room. Everyone turned to the whiteboard, seeing a presentation for their new job. Stan was behind the podium, monitoring his laptop and switching off the lights. He smiled brightly at the student workers, "it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Beforus University library staff! Just from looking at you all, I can tell that you're hardworking students. That's exactly what we need here."

The student workers exchanged proud glances at each other. Stan flicked to the next slide, presenting the job that were available. Or rather, once available. "The positions filled out were for shelvers, a secretary, library assistants, two assistant archivists, clerks, and an assistant director. Based on each of your resumes and interviews we've had with you all, we've hopefully managed to find your targeted field. You'll all find out which one you'll be given when we're done."

He gestured to the next slides. It showed the responsibilities and job requirements for them, regardless of what position they were in. The list started from the basic administrator and academic analyzer to gathering statistical data and evaluation systems. The last few slides were information about tutoring, events that were hopefully going to be hosted in the near future, contact information, and the last slide had a tacky Welcome to the Team! slide.

Stan turned the lights back on and cleared his throat. "Now, I'd like you all to fill in the paperwork on the clipboard, and I need any god tier students to raise their hand and transform."

Instantly, Stan saw Aranea and Carl's hands up in the air. The two exchanged surprised glances as Stan walked over. When they took the papers, a bright light filled the room. The students turned towards Aranea and Carl, both of them in their god tier clothes. Aranea's wings fluttered elegantly, and when she turned to Carl, her eyes went wide.

Carl was dressed in the Mage of Light outfit, and he had black ram-like horns on his head, indigo dragon wings, and a purple scaled dragon tail. He seemed surprised to see her god tier outfit as well.

"A Mage of Light!"

"You're a Sylph of Light?"
It was clear neither of them expected the other to be a Light player. Stan smiled at the two, "it seems Light players will be a common sight in the library this year." He handed them an extra sheet of paper. It was a waiver form and a document that prevented them from using god tier powers while on shift. Unless it was absolutely necessary.

"Please fill this out, and you can both go back to normal when you're finished." He turned to the other students, "everyone else who completed the paperwork can step outside."

As the other students began to file out of the room, all meeting Jenny within the library lobby. Stan smiled and turned to Carl and Aranea, adjusting his sweater a bit, "now, I understand that students like you two have more privileges than those who haven't ascended to god tier. And I know it's tempting to use your powers in order to make life a little easier."

He smiled at the two Light players. "Life is unfair. There are things that don't go according to plan and some things are out of our control. But I swear..." His voice trailed off to a whisper. Aranea and Carl exchanged confused glances. They were able to hear him mutter something, but it was low enough to the point where it couldn't be properly deciphered.

"Rules are here for a reason." He looked back up at the two Light players, his eyes now dark and serious and his body glowing a dark green color. Reminiscent of the Doom aspect. "If I find out that you've been bending the rules to your advantage, your employment will be terminated, and I will not hesitate to report it back to the dean."

Both Aranea and Carl froze as they stared at the man, almost afraid to move because they could feel his power from just his glow alone. "I am the librarian for a reason. I hold bits and pieces of all the knowledge a library and a librarian needs. I will find out if you've tampered with the natural order in this establishment."

The Lord of Doom's dark green aura died down in a split second, and he returned to his perky old self. "Don't dally now! We don't want to keep everyone else waiting."

With that, he exited the room, and both Light players sighed, not realizing that they were holding their breath. They had both witnessed a Lord of Doom in the flesh, and the power that Stan had radiating off of him felt like an explosion. Aranea got her heart rate down and Carl ran a hand through his hair.

"Shit... Even I didn't see that one coming!"

-2 Hours Later-

It was around late morning, and the library had opened its door not too long ago. Patrons were walking to and fro, checking books out and looking up information on the computers. The student workers were receiving training while helping customers, learning things in the moment and understanding how everything operated. From the technology to the shelving, the whole library was like a well thought out plan. One thing would be held up or completely null if another wasn't completed, but both Jenny and Stan were more than willing to help out.

Jenny had also made sure to give the same warning Stan had to everyone else. A Muse of Life was another title to be extremely worried about if she was against you. But, thankfully, both librarians weren't against the employees. It would have defeated the purpose of a work study job to begin with.

Stan and Jenny were specific about the students being assigned to more than one job during their time working in the library, but nobody really seemed to mind. Especially since they would be spending most of their time with the job they applied for anyway. Plus, getting to move around and
mix things up on the job was much more beneficial to the employees. Aranea and Carl were in the back of the library, sorting out the archives. That was their job for the day.

The archives wasn't a daunting task since Beforus University was relatively new, and both Aranea and Carl knew enough tidbits of history without overwhelming themselves. Organizing everything was a cinch, and the two passed the time by getting to know each other better. By the time they had noticed two hours had gone by, they were almost done sorting out the archives and were now either eating at the table or checking things off.

Aranea blew some dust off a document before slipping it into its designated box before watching Carl shelve the last few boxes. He had much more energy compared to earlier, and Aranea came to realize it was because he was more introverted while she was more extroverted. She didn't mind; it was nice to finally get to know another fellow Light player. One that wasn't her dancstor.

She learned that he was in a healthy Sburb session and ascended when he was out doing things on his own accord. Aranea already knew that Mages were a knowledgeable class alone, but to have Light as his aspect only made his god tier much more interesting and informational. Carl knew extensive knowledge through plenty of periods of history, particularly those when luck and superstitions were used in daily life and folklore. She could tell he was a bit suspicious of her since she was also a Light player, but again, she didn't mind. People tended to be more on guard when getting to know new individuals, and she made sure to tell him of her empathetic powers.

That sparked some curiosity.

"So you're able to read minds?"

"To an extent on humans, but they're obviously much more powerful towards my own species."

Aranea put the lid on the box and handed it to Carl. He took it from her and shelved it with the other documents labeled in the 1850s. She watched him step down from the ladder and back onto solid ground. He took off his fedora and fanned himself with it, clearly a bit winded and warm. The archives were located right where the heating was, making the whole place much warmer than the entire library. The heat was currently on, making the room a bit stuffy, but bearable.

A smile appeared on Aranea's face as Carl wandered back over to her. He saw her grinning and raised a brow, "what?"

"You know, a teammate of mine would go nuts if she met you."

"Why is that?"

"You're half-dragon, right?"

"Only when I'm in my god tier." Carl pointed to his head, which clearly lacked horns. "My dreamself was prototyped with my sprite, which I used a dragon statue on."

"Well, if you showed her that you're part dragon, she'd drag you around to ask you what it's like."

"She likes dragons?"

"Her lusus was a dragon, but she never really got to meet her since she was in an egg before we entered the game."

Aranea got up and did a quick roll call to see if everything was organized properly. Carl followed her close behind, just to make sure himself. The last thing he wanted was a pissed off Lord of Doom or
Muse of Life on their shoulders. He watched the cobalt troll check things off and flip through pages as she explained, "Despite being in an egg, her lusus managed to teach her new methods of smell since she lost her ability to smell pre-game."

"They communicated through their minds."

"It wouldn't surprise me. She is a Mind player."

"I'm surprised you don't know." Carl smiled at Aranea. The heating system turned off, and the cool air immediately wafted into the room. Carl switched his fedora for his hoodie as Aranea smiled back, raising a brow coyly. "Are you now? I can tell that you're lying, Carl."

"Damn! Forgot about that!"

The two shared a quick laugh. Aranea checked one thing off the list before putting it back on the table and sitting down, crossing her arms. Carl took the seat across from her, leaning back and crossing his arms across his chest. Something inside Aranea jumped for joy; people that mimed their storyteller's body language (or, those who at least crossed their arms while listening) were clearly interested in what was going on! She sat up straight in her chair and made eye contact with the Mage of Light.

"She has a connection with dragons because of her lusus and how she helped her learn to "smell" again, so, I think it would pretty interesting if you both met and discussed your interest in them."

"Well, I like the superstition that's in their history," Carl unzipped his hoodie and stretched his shirt out. "But, I know that their actual value to any given situation is fairly low."

"I think it's a nice topic to research." Aranea gave him a genuine smile. "I enjoy researching a species' mating rituals."

"Huh. Kinky."

"Not like that!!"

The Scorpio troll flushed bright blue as she started to babble incoherently while Carl couldn't help but grin at how quickly she lost her cool. Apparently this topic wasn't brought up very often. Aranea tugged at her scarf, trying to hide her flushed complexion by pulling the fabric over her nose.

"It's a-about the history! It's just an interesting topic to see how other species live on and continue to exist for eons and live through the vastness of space and-"

She stopped. The Sylph of Light saw the grin on the boy's face and glared at him. Carl couldn't help but laugh a bit, but that just made eight paper balls smack him dead in the face. One actually knocked his glasses off.

"Hey!"

"Serves you right!"

Aranea couldn't help but grin as the Mage of Light picked up his glasses from the floor. He gave her a coy smile as he adjusted his glasses, "but here's a quick tip for storytelling: take breaks."

She blinked, obviously confused. Carl smiled and leaned towards her, moving his hands for emphasis. "People tend to learn best within a 20-minute period! If you keep going on after this, they'll lose concentration and info." He gave her a grin, "be sure to break things up, and don't be
afraid to tell events like a story."

The Scorpio troll's eyes went wide after he said that.

"People tend to process information better if it resembles a story format. So, if you want to study for a test or remember something important about someone, turn the info into a story."

"I knew it!!" Aranea stood up in a rush, pointing at Carl as if he accused her of a crime. "I knew that there was a catch to that!!"

Carl gave her a smile, silently telling her to explain. Aranea was all too happy to.

"All my life, people have been telling me that it's wrong to recall events like a story!" She got up from her seat and paced around the room; clearly bothered by this. "Someone even had the gall to tell me that I was a horrible person simply because I described my friends as if they were in a story! It's not like I can help how I explain things; it's just how I operate!"

"Right. And it's not possible to explain it better if that's your best method of explaining to begin with."

"Exactly!!"

A creak made them both stop and turn towards the door. One of their coworkers was in the doorway, smiling at them. "Sorry if I'm interrupting something, but Stan and Jenny want you guys to give a status report."

"Oh, sure!"

Their coworker left and both Light players exited the archives, making sure to bring the clipboard along. As they stepped out of the room, the cool air was the first thing that hit them. Aranea couldn't help but shiver a tad, but quickly got used to it since they were all moving pretty fast. Stan and Jenny were at the front desk, helping the two troll student workers understand how to use the computers and check-out system.

Stan looked up for a moment, then smiled when he saw Carl and Aranea walking towards him with their coworker. "Ah, there you two are! How did you manage the archives?"

"Very well! We managed a complete roll call and organized everything by year!" Aranea handed Stan the clipboard, clearly proud of their accomplishment. Stan took a look at the clipboard and nodded his head, showing Jenny when she loomed over his shoulder. She smiled at the two Light players, impressed.

"Nicely done. Though, I wouldn't expect any less from Light players. You're known for having a vastness of knowledge."

Carl and Aranea exchanged proud glances. They certainly weren't going to deny that.

Stan handed Jenny the clipboard and walked around the desk, standing in front of them now. "Well, now that the archives are sorted out for the time being, you both can start working out here. We need another secretary to monitor the desk, and the non-fiction history books need to be reshelved on the second floor. Are you both up for it?"

The two smiled and nodded, the both of them still full of excitement and energy. Another Light player trait. Stan smiled towards Jenny and the secretary pulled out two ID tags attached to thin black lanyards. The tag had the word **STAFF** written on it with their name written under a blue dividing
bar. Jenny handed one to both Aranea and Carl, and they both eagerly put them on.

Stan then wheeled over a book trolley to Carl and gave him a smile. "Well, let's get to it! Students need their books!"

"Sure thing, boss!"

Carl walked over to the trolley with Stan and they both headed up to the second level. Aranea watched them walk off for a bit before turning to Jenny. She was still helping the other two trolls with the computers, "Aranea, I'm still training these guys about our system. Would you mind directing new patrons whenever they come in and check for any book damages?"

"Not at all!" Aranea gave her superior a bright smile before she walked over to a table with some scattered books. She picked up one of them and made sure there wasn't any rips or tears. She then heard the library doors open, and Aranea confidently turned and faced the group of new library patrons.

"Welcome to the library! How may I assist you?"

**Meulin: Play Cupid**

arsenicCatnip started trolling arsenicCattail

AC: :33 < *ac pitter patters up into her dancestors trollian*

AC: :33 < *she stares at the older lioness from her crouching position waiting for the purrfect moment to strike!*

AC: (=´•`=) < !!!

AC: (=^•ω•^=) < *THE OLDER LIONESS CANNOT HEAR HER DANCESTOR FOR SHE IS DEAF, BUT SHE EAGERLY AWAITS HER INEVITABLE POUNCE.*

AC: (=ω´=) < *SHE WONDERS WHAT THE ROGUE OF HEART HAS TO SHOW HER!* 

AC: ~(=^. .^)= < *SHE SHIFTS HER HEAD, TRYING TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HER DANCESTOR IN ACTION...*

AC: :33 < *ac s33s her dancestor turn her head and she quickly ducks behind a nearby rock to purrserve her stealthiness*

AC: :33 < *she continues to pawnder towards the mage of heart*

AC: (=^..^=) < *MEWLIN THINKS SHE S33S NEPETA APUROACHING HER, BUT IS PURROBABLY JUST S33ING THINGS.*

AC: (=ω´=) < NOT!!!

AC: (=^•^=) < *MEWLIN SUDDENLY TURNS AROUND, CATCHING HER DANCESTOR IN THE MIDDLE OF HER ANTICIPATED POUNCE!* 

AC: :33 < *ac suddenly spurrings up and purrsents mewlin with the website code that she asked pawllux for beclaws she n33ds for her school purroject*

AC: :33 < shazam!!!
AC: :33 < i mean
AC: :33 < *she jumps up from her hiding spot and shouts shazam!!!*
AC: :33 < :33
AC: (^•o•^) < *MEWLIN SPURRINGS UP FROM HER SPOT AND TACKLES HER DANCESTOR!* 
AC: (=^ω^=) < *SHE RELENTLESSLY CUDDLES HER AND LICKS HER AS A LOVING THANK MEW!* 
AC: :33 < *ac purrs and apurreciates her dancestors grooming* 
AC: :33 < *she also has a message for her*
AC: (=^•I•^=) < A MESSAGE?
AC: :33 < *from pawlux she says*
AC: :33 < he said he just took the code from a basic html website
AC: :33 < anyone with a husktop could get that code and that this request was just wigglers play
AC: :33 < barely a challenge at all
AC: :XX < his words not mine
AC: (^-Λ^-) < ...
AC: (=^ω^-=) < TELL THE DOOM PAWTROL THAT NOT EFURRYONE IS A MASTER CODE HACKER LIKE HE IS.
AC: (=^ω^=) < BUT I APURRECIATE HIS HELP REGARDLESS. EVEN THOUGH HE'S A BIG GRUMP.
AC: :33 < he was worse before he became half blind
AC: :33 < waaay more moody and less okay with efurrything
AC: :33 < but ill be sure to pass your message onto him
AC: :33 < whats this for again?
AC: (=T I T=) < I'M MAKING A SCHOOL MATCHMAKING WEBSITE! SINCE I'M CONSTANTLY IN CLASS OR DOING HOMEWORK, I HAVEN'T B33N ABLE TO WORK ON MY SHIPS!
AC: (=^•I•^=) < SO, AS A MAGE OF HEART AND A FUTURE MATCHMAKER, I'VE TAKEN IT UPON MYSELF TO MAKE A BEFORUS UNIVERSITY DATING WEBSITE!!!
AC: (=^ω^=) < THAT WAY, I CAN K33P UP WITH ALL MY PURRECIOUS SHIPPING BABIES AND HELP OUT WITH ROMANTIC TROUBLES! IT'S A WIN-WIN!
AC: :33 <*ac wishes her dancestor good luck with that*
AC: :33 < but i know you wanted to have customizable colors and codes bcclaws of your furriend
kurloz

AC: (^._.^) < THAT WAS A COINCIDENCE.

AC: :33 < bluh! like hell it is!

AC: :33 < its totally obvious that youre flush crushing on your old matespurrit again

AC: (^o///o^) < NO IT'S NOT!!

AC: (^)////(\^) < MEW DON'T KNOW WHAT MEW'RE TALKING ABOUT!!

AC: :33 < sure i do! im a rogue of heart i know heart just as much as you do

AC: (= ; ;x ; =) < THIS IS DIFFERENT... IT'S...

AC: (^-Λ-^) < IT'S JUST COMPLICATED, OKAY?

AC: :33 < *ac thinks mewlin is just too shy to admit it*

AC: :33 < *but ac knows better and so does efurrybody else because its obvious despite her
dancestors denial*

AC: (=^>_<^=) < I'M NOT IN DENIAL!

AC: :33 < yes you are

AC: (=^>_<^=) < NO I'M NOT!

AC: :33 < yes

AC: (^-Λ-^) < NO.

AC: :33 < yes

AC: (^-Λ-^) < NO.

AC: :33 < yes

AC: (^-Λ-^) < NO.

AC: :33 < yes

AC: (^-Λ-^) < NO. THIS CONVERSATION IS OVER.

AC: :33 < well i guess i can leave since this conversation is over and you probably dont want the
code

AC: (=^•I•^=) < NO, I N33D THAT!

AC: :33 < thought so

AC: :33 < admit it! admit that youre flush crushing on kurloz again!

AC: (^)////(\^) < ...

AC: (=^-ω^-=) < FINE!
AC: (=^•.^=) < BUT ONLY IF MEW TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FLUSH CRUSH TOO!
AC: :33 < what flush crush?
AC: (^•ω•^) < MEW KNOW WHICH ONE.
AC: (=^•^=) < THE ONE ON KANKRI'S CUTE LITTLE DANCESTOR.
AC: :33 < oh yeah
AC: :33 < its been complicated with karkat but
AC: (^•o•^) < BUT???????
AC: :33 < efurr since i found out that he and dave were in a matespritship we havent talked much before we started school
AC: :33 < but when we realized we had a few classes together we finally got to spend some time and catch up
AC: :33 < he was really happy to s33 me and i dont think i can remember the last time i saw him so at ease
AC: :33 < he told me how much he missed me after gamz33 killed me and equius and he regretted not being able to stop it from happening
AC: :33 < and i think he still does
AC: :33 < he honestly couldnt stop apologizing for an entire w33k
AC: (^._.^) < WHAT DID MEW SAY TO HIM?
AC: :33 < i told him it wasnt his fault and those things happened fur a reason
AC: :33 < if equius or i didnt die davepetasprite and arquiusprite wouldn't exist
AC: :33 < im glad that they do exist
AC: :33 < davepetasprite is a great furriend to talk and hang out with and equius likes hanging out with arquiusprite too
AC: :33 < and i nefurr would have become a fully realized rogue of heart if i didnt die so theres that too
AC: :33 < i told him a lot of good things happened beclaws we died but im still glad to be alive again
AC: :33 < and if im being honest i dont mind just talking to him or just being furriends
AC: :33 < i can tell hes really happy and im glad that he and dave are working out
AC: :33 < he deserves someone who will treat him well and im glad that its dave since hes a good furriend
AC: :33 < either way its just nice to finally have a great conversation with a good furriend after being dead for a while
AC: (= ; I ; =) < AWWWW!!!
NEPETA, THAT'S SO SW33T!!

I THINK I MIGHT CRY BECLAWS OF ALL THESE F33LS MEW'RE GIVING ME!!

im sure youll have to explain that to horuss

PURROBABLY.

but still its b33n nice to just talk to him

if im being completely honest here id rather just be furriends

hes in a happy matespritship and im in a very happy moirallegiance

id rather just spend some good quality time with equius for now

and if i m33t someone that i become flushed for then ill just let things happen

333333333333!!!!!!!!

I CAN'T WAIT FUR THAT DAY!!

I'LL MAKE FANFICS AND BE YOUR DATING MANAGER!!

you n33d serious help mewlin

h33h33

H33H33H333!

okay now spill it

HUH?

i told you and about me and karkat

now whats going on betw33n you and kurloz

UM...

ACTUALLY, I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING!

DON'T MEW HAVE HISTORY HOMEWORK TO COMPLETE?

no

YES, YOU DO! GET TO IT!

i dont have any history homework

YES MEW DO.

MEW ALWAYS DO YOUR HOMEWORK AT FIVE.

IT'S FIVE NOW SO I WOULD GET TO IT, KITTY.
Meulin sighed and sat back in her seat, making sure to put her trollian on offline to avoid getting messages of "encouragement". Her heart was still pounding a mile a minute and her face felt like it was on fire. Sometimes she kind of hated that her dancestor was a Rogue. Even if it did make them fit into their roles perfectly.

It was if Nepeta took some of Meulin's happiness with her shipping talk and used it to give it to Karkat, and making herself feel embarrassed about Kurloz being brought up in the conversation. As a Mage, Meulin suffered from the Heart aspect, and Nepeta stole Heart to give to her teammates. Meulin smiled fondly at the thought. She didn't mind. With negative knowledge comes extensive learning. Mages learn from the negative effects their aspect gives, thus giving them a better insight of what to do and what not to do when it comes to using their gained knowledge.

It was just a part of the role.

Her eyes shifted to the door to see Rufioh walking past, his hands digging through his pockets for some reason. She tilted her head curiously at him and got up, greeting him with a smile. "HI, RUFIOH! WHAT ARE MEW DOING?"

"Hey, doll!" Rufioh sent her a smile. He pulled out one of his hands to give her a wave. "I'm just trying to look for a coin."
"A COIN? FUR WHAT?"

"Aranea needs it."

He pointed down the hall and Meulin turned her head, seeing Aranea standing by the bathroom that she and Meenah shared. The door was apparently locked, and the genuinely surprised Meulin. Was Meenah still in there after all this time? Apparently so because Aranea did not look happy.

The Scorpion troll turned back to the Rufioh, arms crossed over her chest and a foot tapping impatiently. "Do you have anything, Rufioh?"

"I think so, doll!"

Then, the bronze troll pulled out a nickel from his back pocket. He flipped it towards Aranea, who caught it swiftly. She muttered a quick thanks before turning her attention to the door lock. Both Rufioh and Meulin wandered over to the bathroom door, watching Aranea pick the lock. The locks in the doors (aside from the front door) were easy to unlock, even if someone was on the opposite side.

The door was locked by a simple switch on the handle. If the switch was horizontal, then it would be unlocked, and if someone wanted to lock up, the switch would need to be vertical. However, because of a fault in design, there was a small indent on the handle where the lock was. It was small and thin, but big enough for a coin to be inserted and used to unlock the door from the other side. Which is why Aranea needed a coin instead of a key.

With a simple turn of her wrist, the nickel unlocked the bathroom door from inside the dent, and a click was heard. Aranea turned back to Rufioh and gave him his nickel back before storming into the bathroom, hands on her hips.

"Meenah!! Get out of the tub!!"

Curious, Meulin stepped inside the bathroom too, wondering what exactly Meenah was doing. The bathroom itself felt slightly humid and the mirrors were fogged up a bit, evidence that a certain someone probably used, or was still using, all the hot water. Meulin turned to the tub, noticing Aranea's glaring daggers at Meenah. Meenah was in there all right. But she wasn't taking a shower like she said she was. It was quite the opposite.

The water was at the bathtub's edges, the tap was still running at a low speed with the temperature turned to all the way to its hottest, and Meenah was lying down at the bottom, fast asleep. Her braids and clothes were floating lazily in the water. She was still dressed in her pajamas, and her questionably clean clothes were seated messily by the toilet.

"Meenah!!" Aranea rolled up her sleeve and began to shake the seadweller, splashing the water slightly. "Meenah, get up!"

Meulin backed up slightly, not keen on getting wet. She backed up into Rufioh, who put his hands on her shoulders. She looked up at him, meeting his friendly smile. "Hey, doll!"

"HI, RUFIOH."

"Meenah, wake the fuck up!!"

The water got a bit more rough, but finally, Aranea pulled her hand out of the water as Meenah sat up, yawning and stretching. She clearly looked a bit more refreshed from the extra hours of sleep. She cracked her neck and rubbed her eyes, seeing Meulin and Rufioh in the bathroom along with
Aranea.

"S'up, Nitram? Leijon?"

"Uh... hey, Peixes."

"HI, MEENAH!"

"THIS is what you've been doing all day?!" Aranea shouted as she dried her hand. "You took a ten hour nap in here and used all the hot water in the frat house while I was at work?!"

Just as she said that, Aranea turned off the water that was still running. Meenah raised a brow curtly before a big grin appeared on her face, "fuck yeah!! I was still tired from wakin' up at eight AM, shoal I thought it'd be badass ta take a nap underwater! Haven't been in the water fer weeks, shoal I needed mah fix."

She turned to Meulin and Rufioh, "if ya had gills, you'd sea mah point."

"I'M A CAT," Meulin said as she awkwardly played with her hands. "I DON'T LIKE GETTING WET, MEENAH."

"Yeah, doll, if my wings got soaked, flying would be out of the question." Rufioh added sheepishly, a bead of sweat rolling down his cheek for added measure. He tapped Meulin on the shoulders again, tilting his head towards the door when she looked up at him curiously. They both began to walk out, making sure to close the bathroom door behind them. They had a feeling both girls would be in there for quite a while.

"Sheesh, Aranea is pretty steamed..." Rufioh rubbed the back of his neck nervously. He turned to Meulin, "think Peixes will be alright?"

"I WOULDN'T DOUBT IT! ARANEA MIGHT BE MAD MEOW, BUT SHE'S ALWAYS COOLS OFF IN THE END. IT'S JUST HOW SHE IS."

The sound of arguing made Rufioh turn his head towards the bathroom door again. And just by looking at his expression, Meulin could tell that this was going to be a bit of a long argument for both the Scorpio and Pisces trolls.

"BESIDES, I DON'T THINK THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN AGAIN. NOT AFTER THIS ARGUMENT."

"You think so?"

"WELL, WHAT'S MEENAH GOING TO DO? SNEAK INTO THE SCHOOL POOL AND SWIM THERE?"

Chapter End Notes

I'd like to thank Critical Warrior for letting me use his character, Carl Wilson! Like I said about Nikki, this won't be the last time he appears! Trust me. HE'S SO MUCH FUN TO WRITE.

Just a quick heads up for you guys, school starts for me soon. Updates may or may not
be on monthly basis because school just eats up all my time. I may update during the breaks, but I'll have to get a feel for my new schedule before I promise anything. I hope you all don't mind waiting a bit longer for updates.

Either way, I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! See you in the next one!

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