A 12th Perigee's Eve Carol

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Summary

It is Twelfth Perigee's Eve on a Dickensian Skaia, and Dave Strider, being generally too cool and ungenerous, meets Perigee spirits show him who he was, is, and may be so that he learns to change his ways before it's too late.
Stave One: Pyrope's Ghost

Pyrope was dead: to begin with—barring shenanigans. But after four sweeps without receiving so much as one poorly drawn comic which used up half their stock of red ink, Strider was relatively certain that she was completely and irrevocably dead. But in all that time, he had never had her name removed from the sign above the office he still occupied. It still read "Strider & Pyrope," partly because Strider was too lackadaisical to get off his ass and fix it himself, partly because he was too parsimonious to pay some other idiot to do it, but mostly because it was ironic. Even when Pyrope was alive, he'd always done most of the work; the ironic sign merely proved it.

It had been years since anyone had seen Dave Strider's countenance form itself into an expression which could not be categorised as either neutral or displeased, and no-one at all could remember his having ever said anything that could be considered decent or better. And that was just how Strider liked it. He couldn't possibly care less if anyone thought he was "kindhearted" or "respectable"—he was too cool to care about their opinions of him. Whenever he was out and about, passers-by knew him immediately by his ironic shades and stone-cold expression and gave him a wide berth.

But there was one who refused to take the hint. As Strider sat at his desk, poring over a stack of papers, he heard the door open as his sister admitted herself.

Happy 12th Perigee's Eve, Nepeta.

Strider's clerk looked up from her work and smiled broadly.

happy 12th purrig33's eve, to you, too, rose!

Strider peered through the open door into his clerk's room.

bah humbug

Strider used this particular phrase often because it sounded like something a very uncool old man would use. And he recalled that, some years back, he had promised someone that he would bleat like a goat. The irony of those two words ran pretty deep. His sister raised an eyebrow at his turn of phrase.

I fail to understand how you can continue to wallow in your stagnant pond of gloom at such a joyous time.

no rose
look closer and you will see that this pond in which i am wallowing is the most joyous fucking pond
i am up to my eyeballs in this beautiful shit
my wallowing is so complete that behind these shades im weeping waterfalls of joy and fucking rainbows like you wouldnt even believe
my soul is full to bursting with all this happy rainbow shit

You're certainly full of something.
Rose sighed heavily and advanced through the open door into Strider's office. She held out a delicately calligraphed envelope. On it, his name, David Strider, was inscribed in jade ink in a beautiful hand.

nope

Strider returned to his prior occupation without taking the envelope.

And what would be your excuse for not attending Perigee’s Eve supper this year?

i dont need one
why celebrate its just some shitty troll custom
youre a human

Thank you for pointing out this elusive fact, Dave. You need not be a troll to celebrate with us. The holiday's origin is in troll culture, certainly, but it has grown to something beyond an archaic ritual. It should be a time to gather with friends and family and eat large quantities of meat in honour of a significantly less appealing old troll custom.

bah humbug

Stop saying that. You sound ridiculous.

bah
humbug

Rose dropped the envelope onto his desk amid his other papers.

At least take the invitation. Kanaya has insisted that you should join us though you have refused three sweeps running. I don't want to return home with yet another invitation you refused to even dignify with a brief perusal.

shit
fine
why did you marry her anyway

Because we fell in love. We're matesprits.

Strider scoffed derisively.

matesprits
if anythings more fucked up than 12th perigees eve thats it
thats really all there is to say on the matter

Very well. I have received your response quite clearly, as I generally do, although I do not usually like said responses. As always, if by some miracle, you choose to cease acting like a foolish, joy-loathing simpleton and change your mind, you are, more or less, still welcome to attend.

Good afternoon and a Happy 12th Perigee's Eve to you.
Rose turned on her heel and stalked off toward the door, exchanging a small sympathetic smile with Nepeta as she passed. As his sister departed, Strider grunted and returned, at last, to his work. But the senseless interruptions, of course, were not yet at their end.

Two trolls, bundled up against the cold, their cheeks and noses flushed with their noble blood colours from the icy wind, hurried inside as Rose departed. They stood, shivering, by the clerk's fire for a moment. One of them glanced nervously into the other room and whispered something to his compatriot. She, however, laughed lightly and sifted through the contents of her bag before approaching Strider's office. When she stood before his desk, he looked up begrudgingly, and she curtseyed politely before handing him her card, a charming smile on her face.

"Was?"

four sweeps ago today was when she kicked the bucket pretty literally actually no weird troll jizz or spit or whatever you all have for the imperial drone no more pyrope and that's really all there is to say on the matter

OH NO!!
I'm so sorry to (ear t) (at!

The lady turned to the gentleman standing beside her.

See, Eridan! I told you (e would be sympat)(etic!

Her scarf-wearing compatriot narrowed his eyes at Strider, unconvinced. She turned back to the man behind the desk.

My name is Feferi Peixes, and t) (is is my bass-ociate, Eridan Ampora. We are members--flounders, really--of t) (e Culling and Remedying Party--or CARP, for s) (ort. really

Eridan, stop carping!
O) (. I see your point.

Any) (ow, we, w) (atever we are calling ourselves, support the redefinition of "Culling" to mean caring for t) (ose less fortunate. In particular, we ) (ope to rid Skaia of t) (e sole-less killing of t) (ose w) (o want to take t) (eir time filling t) (eir cod-rants.

So in t) (ese days of giving, would you, perch-ance, like to make a donation? W) (hat s) (ould I put you down for?
Feferi took up a pen, poised to record the sum he announced. But Strider could not immediately determine how to respond. Even as his stomach knotted itself as he recalled that day four sweeps ago, he intended to reply ironically. But master of cool though he was, he could not manage to keep his sentiments true to his apathetic visage. And so, presently lacking his capability for ironic statements, he resorted to his most common and readily available alternative: being a terrific asshole.

jack shit

Feferi looked up at him quizzically.

You want to donate under a pseudonym?

fuck you are such a dumbass
im saying im not giving you anything

But you have the c) ance to make sure w) at happened to your friend will never happen to anot) er troll!!

jegus she was my business partner not my friend
i could not possibly give less of a shit about a bunch of worthless trolls if i tried
it cant be that hard just find somebody you hate and somebody you dont and bam not dead
how hard is that shit to figure out

IT'S NOT T) AT SIMPL-----E!!

i told you he wwas a fuckin w waste of time fef
these humans are wworse than the fuckin landdwellers
but hes got the right idea wwe dont need to lowwer ourselves for these fuckin lowwbloods

Just because you don't want to ) elp people below you in t) e ) emospectrum doesn't mean you s)ould look for any opportunity to jump s) ip!

so you give less of a shit about this than me if thats possible
nice bro

fuck off im doin this for fef

or are you preparing for when the imperial drone comes for your charming ass and you have nothing but the tears resulting from four quadrants full of nothing but air to fill his pails
your priceless purple tears spilling over--

fuck you
im just more selectivve you fuckin dick
besides fef is my moirail right fef

Um, Eridan, we've been over t) (is...

wwhat

ahahahaha this is too perfect
now take your completely platonic squabble out of here
im trying to get shit done here

At least Eridan is trying! S) (ore, ) (e's not t) (e kindest, but you're just a sole-less--

bah humbug
and thats really all there is to say on the matter

Thoroughly exasperated, Feferi snatched her card off Strider's desk and all but dragged a distraught Eridan back out the way they came.

As the hours passed, a thick fog rolled in, and the air grew impossibly cold. As often as she dared, Nepeta retrieved coal from the coalbox in Strider's office for her own small fire. Outside could be heard the laughter and shouting of children sliding down the ice that had formed smooth sheets over the street.

At one point, a few children briefly postponed their skating to carol at Mr. Strider's door. As though expecting them, Strider rose from his desk upon the first note. They were not half a stanza into "Gog Rest Ye Merry Prospitians" before the door opened before them to reveal a very tall, very intimidating, and very cool Dave Strider. As he stood there, peering down at them through his shades, they went completely silent and backed away slowly. When they had dispersed, Strider shut the door silently and returned to his office, laughing. His laugh was a peculiar one, betraying none of its originator's emotions or thoughts and never directing the corners of his mouth upward or downward.

Some time later, closing time arrived. Nepeta put out her fire, neatened her desk, and donned her ragged coat. Playing with the tail attached to her coat, she waited silently for Strider to emerge from his office. When he finally did so, she looked at him with her best imitation of sad kitty eyes.

so you want tomorrow off right

yes! purrty please!

why
you want to get paid for sitting on your ass all day
that shit should not fly

its just one day all sw33p sir!

fuck
fine i guess i have to just bend over and take it
bend down and--

thank you mr. strider!

sure whatever
just be really fucking early the next morning

yes sir!
a happy 12th purrig33s eve to you!

bah humbug

Nepeta Leijon bounded out of the office and skated down the icy street toward home. Strider, however, made his way slowly to Jeff & Brothers' Tavern. After taking his supper there, he headed home in darkness. His chambers, having previously belonged to his deceased business partner, were
painted in garish hues of red and orange and scribbled upon with dozens of colours of chalk. Strider never gave enough of a shit to have it cleaned off and left it as an ironic statement to imply that he was somehow attached to the hideous facade.

It should be noted, once more, that Pyrope had been long dead. This fact, of course, will never be relevant again in any way. As he approached his door, Strider thought nothing of Pyrope or the bizarre exterior of his home which she had made so. After fishing his key out of his pocket and turning it in the lock, he happened to glance down and jumped a bit.

    oh shit oh fuck
    oh
    its just that creepy-ass doorknocker that tz had made of herself
    fuck

But as he looked at the knocker, it turned to look at him.

    H3H3H3H3H3H3H3H3H3H3

    what the fuck
    shit shit shit

Strider shoved the door open, entered the relative safety of his ironic abode, and slammed the door behind him. After leaning against the closed door for a moment, he collected himself, adjusted his shades, and lit the candle that stood in an unpolished silver candleholder on the table beside the door. He held up the candle and looked around the entryway, almost expecting Pyrope to have returned to reclaim her shitty chambers. But there were no sounds in all the house save for his own forcibly steady breathing. Though calm once again, as he began ascending the stairs, he continued listening for any noises besides his own footfalls.

The irony was not lost on him that, in a house which Pyrope, in her blindness, had needed to paint from top to bottom to smell her way around, he was also blind enough to need another sense since he was too cool to take off his shades in the dark and too much of a cheapass to buy enough candles for the whole damn house. If he had, however not been either so cool or such a cheapass, he would have seen a ghostly a ghostly hearse traversing the staircase before him. He would, then, have been significantly alarmed but calmed himself quickly, as cool guys are wont to do. But since he was who he was, he had no fucking clue there was a hearse on his stairs and got the whole way up the stairs none the wiser to the weird shit that yet awaited him that night.

Though he was still a bit shaken from his run-in with the cackling doorknocker, he was too lazy to do anything but go to his bedroom, put on his dressing gown, and sit before the fire. As he sat there, pondering the day's potential as material for one of his sick rhymes, the bell above the fireplace began to ring. For some ridiculous reason, this bell was connected to the highest floor in the building and had never once been rung since he had taken up occupancy of Pyrope's chambers. Though the ringing began quietly, it gradually grew deafening, and just as Strider was about to throw something at it, it stopped suddenly. Half a moment later, there came a scraping and clacking noise disturbingly specifically like a cane being pushed along the floor from the levels below.

    what the fuck
    is it just try to scare the piss out of dave strider but fail miserably because he is too
    fucking cool for this shit day or what
    no fuck this

As any reasonable, coolguy would do, he readjusted his shades and returned to contemplating the
fire as the scraping grew louder. The noise stopped just outside the door to his bedroom (which he had bolted shut for ironic purposes) and opened it. But Strider, ever the coolguy was prepared. He instantly drew a sword out from under his chair and vaulted toward whoever the dumbass was who decided to interrupt his contemplation of strict beats. His stroke fell--through the ghost and directly to the floor. A familiar troll stood before him, albeit rather more transparent--and, if possible, even creepier--than he remembered, her hands resting on her dragon-headed cane.

H3LLO, D4V3

tz
the fuck are you doing
youre dead

TH4NKS, D4V3
YOUR3 SM3LL1NG W3LL YOUR3LF

jegus fuck
let me just sit my ass down and wait for a fucking parade of dead people to walk through my door
all this happiness and excitement up in here
weve got the bright colors already
check

W1LL TH3R3 B3 C4NDY, D4V3?

fuck yes
throwing those fuckers are throwing a shit ton of candy and confetti and shit
look all the people are starting to file in
theres my bro
and theres--

W41T
NO
W3 DONT H4V3 T1M3 FOR YOUR 3XT3ND3D M3T4PHORS R1GHT NOW D4V3!
YOUR3 1N TROUBL3!

well let me just fucking drop everything and tell all these sad kids to get their asses home because there is no fucking parade because we have serious fucking business to get to here

H3H3H3

now that all those assholes got themselves the fuck out of here whats this shit about

YOUR3 K1ND OF 4NSSHOL3, D4V3

oh shit pyrope
call those fuckers back in here we got some serious breaking news in here
we--

STOP TH4T, D4V3!
1M S3RIOUS!
She did indeed look more serious than he'd ever seen her before. She'd not even looked that concerned on that fateful day, the last time he'd ever seen her. Or seen her alive, at least.

yeah sure
did you want to sit down and chill by the fire as we talk about your serious business
can you even sit down

OF COURS3 1 C4N, D4V3
1M ONLY D34D

well why the fuck did i even ask

H3H3H3
OH, LOOK YOU 3V3N K3PT MY F4V0R1TE CH41R!
1TS SM3LL1NG 4 L1TTL3 MOR3 L1K3 4PR1COTS TH4N OR4NG3
CR34MS1CL3S, BUT TH4TS OK
1TS GOOD TO SM3LL TH1S PL4C3 4G41N
OH, R1GHT
S3RIOUS BUSINESS
YOUR3 1N TROUBL3, D4V3, BUT W3R3 GO1NG TO H3LP YOU OUT

we

Y3S, NOW HUSH
YOUV3 B33N 4 T3RR1F1C 4SSHOL3 FOR 4WH1L3 NOW, D4V3, 4ND 1TS T1M3 YOU STOPP3D

well shit is that all
so i just never act like a dick again
problem fucking solved

NO, 1TS NOT, D4V3
3V3N YOU C4N SM3LL TH4T

is this about what happened
you know i--

1 KNOW, D4V3, 4ND TH1S 1SNT 4BOUT M3
1TS 4BOUT YOU
1 TH1NK YOUR PROBL3M 1S TH4T YOUR3 4N 4SSHOL3 4ND YOU KNOW
1T 4ND TH1NK 1T M4K3S YOU 4 COOLGUY
BUT 4T TH3 S4M3 T1M3, YOU C4NT FORG1V3 B31NG 4ND S41D COOLGUY
SO YOU JUST K33P B31NG 4 D1CK TO 3V3R YON3 B3C4US3 YOUR3 CONFUS3D, 4ND TH3 CYCL3 R3P34TS

fuck you sound like my sister

TH3N YOUR S1ST3R 1S R1GHT!
C4NT YOU SM3LL TH4T TH1S 1S 4 PROBL3M, D4V3?

fuck no
im awesome and i know it
how is this a problem

YOU DONT B3L13V3 IT, D4V3

that still doesn't explain why the fuck you're here

TO H3LP YOU, OBVIOUSLY

i dont need help
besides you're dead
how the fuck are you going to help anything

W3LL, 1M NOT GO1NG TO DO 4NYTH1NG, SP3C1F1CALLY
1 W4S S3NT TO 1NFORM YOU OF WH4T W1LL H4PP3N SO YOU DONT
3X3CUT3 4N 4CROB4T1C FU4K1NG P1ROU3 TT3 OFF TH3 H4NDL3 4ND
F4LL ON YOUR F4C3 WH3N 1T 4LL H4PP3NS

oh yeah send me a dead chick to smooth shit over
seriously this shit is so fucking smooth right now
im sliding on it
its like fucking ice up in here
get those kids back in here and--

CONTROL YOUR M3T4PHORS, D4V3!

all right
heres me lassoing those fuckers
now they're in the corral being chill as fuck

H3H3H3
GOOD WORK, P4RTN3R
JUST L1K3 ON3 OF YOUR HUM4N COWBOYS

thanks pyrope

NO PROBL3M, MR STR1D3R
1 TH1NK MOST OF MY 3XPL4N4TION T1M3 W4S BLOWN ON YOUR
M3T4PHORS, BUT TH4TS OK
4LL YOU N33D TO KNOW 1S TH4T YOU W1LL B3 H4UNT3D BY THR33
SP1R1TS

the fuck--

NOT 4LL 4T ONC3, 4ND 1M NOT 1NCLUD3D 1N THOS3 THR33
TH3 Y W1LL CONV3Y TH1NGS YOU MUST SM3LL TO CH4NG3 4ND 4VO1D
TH3 F4T3 TH4T 4W41TS 4LL 4SSH0L3S 1F TH3 Y F41L TO CH4NG3

what fate is that

1 DONT KNOW
1 W4SNT 4N 4SSH0L3
BUT 1TS SOM3TH1NG R34LLY B4D
1 H34R 1T 1NV0LV3S PLUSH-RUMP3D PUPP3TS

fuck no
send these fucking spirits at me

3XP3CT TH3 F1RST GHOST WH3N TH3 B3LL TOLLS ON3

aw shit
i wanted some fucking sleep for once in my gogdamn life

H3H3H3
TH3 WORK OF 4 COOLGUY 1S N3V3R DON3, 1S 1T, D4V3?

fucking nailed that one tz

H3H3H3

Pyrope rose from her chair, and Strider followed suit. He stepped toward her, a hand extended, but she held up her own, causing him to halt. She grinned at him sadly--how she could do that, he never knew--and he looked back at her, his expression unaffected.

it was good to see you tz
or smell you i guess

1T W4S GOOD TO SM3LL YOU, TOO D4V3

look
about what happened
i want to--

She held up her hand again, her sharp-toothed grin fading slightly into a small, sorrowful smile.

1TS 4LL R1GHT
YOU C4NT CH4NG3 WH4T H4PP3N3D
1T W4SNT R34LLY YOUR F4ULT
BUT 1 FORG1V3 YOU

thanks tz

They stood, looking at one another, for a few moments. But Pyrope knew her time was nearly spent, and she waved at him briefly before swooping out Strider's closed bedroom window. Strider sat back down in his chair before the fire, resolving to get his ass in bed as soon as he could manage it.

the fuck was that

And that time would undoubtedly be very soon. He was a coolguy. He was completely chill as fuck. As always.
Stave Two: Perigrees Past

Chapter Summary

It is Twelfth Perigee's Eve on a Dickensian Skaia, and Dave Strider, being generally too cool and ungenerous, meets Perigee spirits show him who he was, is, and may be so that he learns to change his ways before it's too late.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Shortly after Pyrope had departed through his window, Strider had managed to calm himself so completely that he fell asleep as soon as his head struck the pillow. But just over three hours later, he awoke to the chiming--and spastic flashing which shone even through his heavy bedcurtains--of his huge grandfather clock. That was why sensible people wore shades to bed. But before he could roll over to bury his face in his pillow, the clock had struck the hour--one o'clock--and ceased its seizure-inducing shenanigans. That was when he remembered Pyrope's ghost and her warning.

As soon as he began to wonder whether the events he recalled had truly occurred, there appeared another source of seizurific light from the other side of the room. this one flashed red and blue in turn, and this time, Strider managed to roll over and jam his pillow down over his head. He heard his bed curtains being drawn open and felt his pillow float out of his hands. The light had dimmed, so Strider ventured a glance.

  good morning 2un2hiine
  oh fuck you
  get up a22hole
  ii have thing2 two do
  who the fuck are you
  iim the gh02t of periigee2 pa2t
  why are you talking like a tool
  2hut up iit2 a condiitiion ii have
  haha you think i can take you seriously like this
  thii2 ii2 exactly why you need two take thii2 2eriou2ly
  otherwii2e you end up iin the plu2hrump piit
  fuck
  fine but taking whatever the fuck this is going to be up the ass better be more pleasurable than those fucking puppets
  shit what am i saying
compared to those plush-rumped fuckers literally anything else would seem fucking orgasmic

exactly 2o 2hut up and lii2ten
anyway liike ii 2aiid iim the gho2t of periigee pa2t

like how past
like way the fuck in the past like cavetrolls and dinobeasts

no dumba22 what good would that do you
iim going to 2how you your pa2t periigee2 eve2
iim about to jump out thii2 window ju2t follow me

oh yeah let me just go jump out this fucking window and fly like a bird
just like a fucking ostrich or whatever the fuck you trolls call them
right into the ground
and then youll have a--

ju2t 2top
pyrope warned me about your runaway metaphor2 iim not putting up wiith that 2hiit
ju2t grab my hand and youll be able to fly

oh yeah so much fucking love up in here
i didnt know our relationship had come so far in five fucking minutes that youre asking
for my hand already
well shit its getting so fucking matrimonial up in here
were--

2hut up and take my hand iif you dont want to end up a 2tupiid human puddle on the
ground

well when you put it like that still fucking no

iit2 thii2 or all tho2e plu2h rump2 dave

fuck fine

Strider reluctantly took the spirit's ghostly hand, and they leapt through the closed window. Just as they should have crashed through the glass, Strider felt himself fall face-first into a snowbank.

heheheh

thut up ghotht boy

When Strider picked himself up and dusted himself off, he looked around. It was a bright winter day, and he recognised the building before him as the school he had attended in his youth. Children were scattering in every direction, running to their families who had come to retrieve them for the holidays. Suddenly, one little boy plowed straight into Strider--and straight through him.

the2e are the 2hadows of the pa2t they dont 2ee u2

yeah so whats the point of this
the schools about to be as empty as a--
The spirit walked through the wall of the main building, and Strider followed him. They stood in a nearly deserted classroom.

\begin{quote}
do you recognize them
\end{quote}

Sitting side-by-side on a desk were younger versions of himself and his sister.

\begin{quote}
hell yeah little me
look how awesome i was even back then
man i forgot rose and i didn't always argue back then
those were good times when she didn't bitch at me all the time

why couldn't you go back two being that way

dunno we both just kind of hate each other now
it just kind of happened
\end{quote}

Strider fell silent to listen to his younger self and his sister talking.

\begin{quote}
so bro isn't coming
we just have to stay here for the holidays
this is going to be so shitty just like it always is
no one else is even staying there's going to be nothing to do here

It'll be all right, Dave. At least we'll be here together.

yeah i guess

I'm sure we'll be able to get up to some shenanigans on our own.
You can show me some of these "sick rhymes" you've been painstakingly crafting and bragging about.

oh yeah almost forgot about those
maybe the holidays won't be so bad
might even be pretty sweet
want to go to the boys dormitory so i can show you some of the epic new shit i've been working on

That sounds lovely, Dave.
\end{quote}

The younger versions of Strider and his sister bolted from the classroom, chattering animatedly about what exciting things they could do over the holidays with presence of only minimal adult supervision.

\begin{quote}
rose used to be so fucking cool
wonder what happened

maybe you're maybe the one who changed the mode
\end{quote}
The ghost then turned and walked through a different wall, and Strider followed suit. He found himself on lamp-lit street before a familiar door.

you know thii2 place riight

oh fuck yeah
tz and i were apprenticed here
man those were some good fucking times

Walking through the door, Strider saw his former employer casting about for something.

HeY lltlIE mOtHeRFuCKeRs.
cAn YoU bE aLi CoMiN iN hErE aNd ShIt?

Younger versions of Strider and Pyrope hurried into the room several moments later.

HeY tHeRe LiTtLe BrOs. hOwS iT mOtHeR FuCkiNg?

ok
GR34T!

They all paused for a moment.

YOU C4LL3D US?

Oh YeAh. YoU bE rlgHt My LiTtLe SiStEr.
iT's BeIn ThE tlmE tO gEt ReAdY fOr ThE pArTy, My LiTtLe MoThErFuCkErS!
ClEaR tHaT wOrK sHiT aLl OuDtA tHe WaY. dOn'T nEeD tHaT sHiT tOnIgHt. Am I rlgHt?

sure

Y34H! H3H3H3

The corner of Strider's mouth twitched upward as he watched Pyrope and his younger self pushing desks covered in brightly coloured papers out of the way and hauling piles of horns into an adjoining room.

makara was the weirdest fucker ive ever met
he was such a shitty boss i dont know how he didnt end up up to his fucking vacant eyeballs in debt
and then he kept throwing these ridiculous perigees eve parties
i dont know how but he just kept treading water and shit and kept his ass afloat

waxiing poetic are we
nah he was just a fucking awesome dude
and thats really all there is to say on the matter

The spirit's eyes flashed, and some hours passed in a blink. There was then a vast crowd dancing and laughing in the suddenly cleared room. Perigee's Eve decorations were hung on the walls and doors and rafters, and musicians were playing a spritely reel.

who2 that youre danciing wiith

oh shit man you didnt just bring me to that night

what were 2eeiing ii2 your problem not miine

Strider walked around the edge of the room to get a better look at his younger self and his partner. It was just as he'd feared. The woman with whom he danced had long black hair, green eyes, and wore huge, round glasses. However, out of any part of her countenance, it was her ecstatic smile that drew the most of Strider's attention. It was not until the ghost touched him on the shoulder that he looked at his younger self. He, too, was grinning—a great, stupid grin that overwhelmed his whole countenance.

you 2eem two have liiked her

no shit
harley was pretty much the sweetest person i ever met
yeah man i liked her a lot

there wa2 another periigee2 eve wiith her

fuck no
im calling this shit off right here
im stopping this train wreck right here
these mashed up cars are--

Before he could finish yet another ridiculously drawn-out metaphor, Strider found himself being dragged by the spirit through the nearest wall. He found himself in a dimly lit, but familiar room. He once again saw himself from the past, but he was clearly some years older than he had been during the scene he had just observed. This version of himself and Harley seemed to be in the midst of a heated discussion.

im telling you youve changed dave!!
you used to be so sweet and fun and now i dont know what to think of you!!!
now everything you do has to be ironic!
you cant just be dave anymore!!
and i loved that dave...

i cant get out of being dave
im just trying to be a less shitty dave
whys that so hard to understand

that shitty dave was my friend!!!!
that shitty dave even loved me and i dont know what this less shitty dave thinks......
i dont know if he can even feel anything anymore....
who are you trying to impress dave??

no one
the real world is just fucking cold as balls jade
if i dont act the same way those balls are going to swing my way and knock me right the
fuck away from everything i have
including you

youve already done that for yourself dave!!!
it's not like you care about me anymore im just a liability

no youre not
im doing this for you for both of us

then tell me you still love me

you should fucking know i do

but i dont because you never say anything!!!!
shitty dave would have beaten around the bush but he would have said it....
this dave i dont know what he thinks.....
im sorry but i just dont know this dave.......

please dont leave

im sorry dave....

Strider watched as Harley opened the door and strode out of his chambers. What hurt the most was
that she'd not even seemed angry--just sad. It wasn't until he saw the ghost offering him a
handkerchief that he realised there were tears on his cheeks.

shit
no
no fucking more of this

But the ghost silently took his hand and led him through a wall. Strider tried to protest but could not
summon the words to do so. They arrived in his and Pyrope's office to see the partners sitting and
talking quietly.

do you remember thii2

fuck

That was one day Strider wished he never had to think of again, but he did. Frequently.

nah tz youll be fine
youre a fucking legislacerator they cant do anything to you

1 DONT KNOW, D4V3

were just too fucking good for that shit
matesprit kismesis you dont fucking need those tz
you're better off without anyone else getting all up in your shit
people have gotten out of collections before right
they know you work for the most awesome firm in skaia they won't fucking touch you

H3H3H3 W3 4R3 PR3TTY 4W3SOM3, 4R3NT W3 D4V3?

we are so fucking awesome they need a better word for us
but they cant come up with one awesome enough for how fucking cool we are

H3H3H3H3
1M ST1LL W0RR13D TH0U3H
1 D0NT KNOW 1F 1 C4N B3 4S CO0L 4B0UT 1T 4S Y0U W0U4L D 1B3

fuck it sure you can
when the imperial drone comes just open that fucking door say fuck you and slam it in
his face
fucking easiest thing ever

1 GU3SS 1 D0NT H4V3 MUC H C01C3 4T TH1S P01NT

do you need me to give you a sicknasty motivational rap

H3H3H3
NO, 1LL B3 OK D4V3, TH4NKS
1 GU3SS 1 SH0ULD G3T GO1NG
1 W4NT TO B3 R3ST3D UP FOR 4LL TH4T COOLGUY D00RSL4MM1NG 1M
GO1NG TO B3 DO1NG TOM0M0RROW

fuck yeah

SH0ULD W3 P4RT4K3 1N A BRO B3N, JU4ST 1N C4S3?

sure tz

R41LS B34R3 P41LS, R1GH T M R STR1D3R?

nailed that one pyrope
right on the fucking head
that shit is so fucking legit nailed in there its never coming apart

TH4NKS, D4V3

As they bro b<>nped, Dave realised that he had covered his mouth with his hand to avoid choking
on his own breath.

that2 enough ii think
i'll 2end you back now dave

Dave nodded, and in a moment, found himself back in his bedroom. He collapsed onto his bed and
pressed his fingertips to his eyes, trying to forget everything once more.

Chapter End Notes
My laptop is currently being repaired, so the fic is kind of stalled for a bit. Sorry 'bout that!

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