The Longest Road

by Veluren

Summary

Brought back from the brink by a voice you've never heard, you reset one last time to struggle for the happy ending that was taken from you. However, something's different this time, the monsters are stronger, the puzzles are genuine(?), and things aren't quite happening as you remember them.

But you have to struggle on anyway, because this time, it's not just your own happy ending you're fighting for.

Technically a sequel series to my other fanfic, Onlooker, however the OC introduced in that story initiates the plot and then is relegated to cameo only, so you can ignore that if you want.

Notes

So, coming back after a good few months from writing this.

This is probably, at this point, my worst story which is a shame because it had so much potential. I left a lot of plot holes, very mediocre writing (Second person is not my forte) and just generally a poor job at abridging the game.

Nonetheless, this story is instrumental to the AU so I can't really do much about it, maybe
one day I'll come back give this a total conversion to third person (more comfortable writing in that anyway) and make it something I can be truly proud of. Nonetheless, enjoy.
“Heh, so much for the great king and his kid.” I said triumphantly as I stood over the shriveled and maimed flower, “Not even enough to nick my knife.”

I was done with this world and ready to move on the next, at least I thought I was, then he stepped in front of me.

“Hahah, look, it's the old book goat. The years haven't been kind to you, you're all crippled. Oh, I know, you came to me to be put down, well I'll be happy to oblige.” I started approaching him when he opened his mouth, probably another threat about what a monster I am, or the kind of horrors I've committed, par the course and nothing new. I watched as he breathed in and-

“FRISK!”

Th-the hell?

“I know you're in there Frisk! Don't let this thing control you, remember the kind of person you are!”

Hah, pathetic, he's not even going to try to fight? Just scream at me over this kid's body? Sorry to say old man, but that kid's long gon-

?!

Why... why can't I move my body? What is he doing, is that... is he preforming a reset?!

“Remember Toriel! You were like her child, she loved you as much as she did Chara and Asriel!”

I don't care about her, dammit, let me stab him already!

“Remember Asgore! You and him were like father and son once you bonded.”

You're not in control of me! Get out of this body, brat!

“Remember cooking with Papyrus, recoiling in horror as Toriel and Sans bounced puns off of you, remember Undyne's training sessions and how worn out they left you, how Alphys would always look on like she thought the training was about to kill you!”

I'm not this person, and I'm not nice! I'm going to get control back.

And I'm going to murder you

You reach out of the dark haze in your mind and grab Chara's arm!

“What?! This shouldn't be possible! I was in control!” They screamed they tried to fight your grip.
“You invited me here! You let this get this far! Don't act like you're some saint just because you're stopping me!” You shook your head thoroughly, they wouldn't stop thrashing no matter how much you held them.

“I didn't do this.” You said silently.

That one sentence caused them to stop struggling, “Oh? You didn't? Then tell me, who's responsible for all of this? Who's the one who cut down this entire society then?!” They started struggling again, hitting you in the side with the handle of their knife.

You didn't have the answer, “You showed me what it was like to come back, how much fun it was to kill, you're responsible for this!” You closed your eyes harder.

There was something else pulling at you, Chara stopped dead when they felt it, “What is...” They looked behind you and saw it.

Strings were coming off your body as you were desperately fighting against this fate, Chara seemed breathless, “What is this?!”

“Control.” You said quietly. They didn't know how to respond.

“Tell me something, Frisk, was it? What kind of ending do you want?”

“I want an ending where everyone's alive and happy, the ending I had!” Your emotions exploded as you reflected on the moments that brought you back to this world.

“Did you not reset, wanting to see what it was like to destroy everything?” You shook your head vigorously, you never wanted that.

Minutes passed in silence, that foreign willpower still tugging the strings on your body, telling Chara to get it over with, “Hey... you can let go of me.” They said calmly. You knew it was against your better instinct, you knew what they were capable of, but something told you it would be alright, you did it anyway.

They gripped the knife in their hand, looking at the strings attached to you, “So then, you're telling me this thing has been controlling you the whole time, every kill you've made, every reset you've done, this is the exact opposite of what you want?” They started laughing.

“How completely absurd!” They yelled as they slashed the air above you. their knife flung out some kind of energy, you weren't sure if it was actually them, or if it was because you were in your mental realm.

The strings broke away from you as they slashed at the unseen entity that had spent the past journey making you miserable and stealing your humanity from you.

You looked up to see Chara standing there, you were free to move on your own. “Tch... whatever.” They said as they turned to face you, “It's no fun if it's not your doing, have your crappy happy ending.” They said as he walked off, you felt their presence abandon your body entirely, just like that you were free, not just of them, but of the outside force that had its hands on you since you first woke up in the underground.
You realized you were truly free now.

You came back to reality realizing the kind of world you were left in. You looked up and saw the person who brought you back to reality standing in front of you, the world around him swirling in a reset. You didn't know what kind of monster he was, he was melting away and looked unrecognizable, the only distinct feature you could make out was that he was holding himself up on a single arm instead of two.

You closed your eyes, focusing hard on the start of your journey.

**Name the Fallen Child:** You heard that creature's voice echo in your mind one final time as the last echo of that timeline vanished, "Frisk!"

You would do it right this time, it wouldn't be ripped away from you, you were filled with determination.

You started tumbling back to the past, you'd felt this before, twice at this point. You'd had to reset after you killed a few monsters and Flowey suggested that you try to keep everyone alive at the end of your journey, you were ripped from your happy ending by the presence wanting to know what it would be like if you killed everyone. And now, you'd have to go through that journey again to get back to everyone.

Thinking of their smiling faces, those times you had together on the surface, you would make it.

You saw your destination, that yellow patch of flowers where you first landed in the underground, you closed your eyes as you readied for the shock of waking up.

...but nothing happened.

You opened your eyes in shock to see that your physical body was there, but your SOUL was still traveling back. You couldn't reset this far back, you thought, something else was happening.

You had no idea what was going on, but you were going far beyond when you came to the underground, to years back.

"Asriel!" You heard three voices scream out. You came to attention immediately and willed yourself to stop travelling through the reset. You took note of this place, it was part of the Ruins you hadn't seen before. You looked around and saw three Boss Monsters, two of them recognizable as Toriel and Asgore, and one that you hadn't seen before. You looked beyond them and saw something awful.

Asriel was laying on the ground and turning to dust.

You didn't know what was happening, but you moved your spiritual presence over there, time seemed to slow down as you did.

You had no idea what you were thinking, no idea what was about to happen, you saw the smaller, white inverted heart of Asriel's SOUL break off from the red, normal shaped heart of Chara. And you grabbed it before it could disappear.

"Who... are you?" A voice spoke in your mind, you remembered this voice.
“...A friend.” You responded, realizing the impact of what you had just done as you felt yourself being pulled away.

(Hey, hey, wake up!)

You woke up groggy and struggled to get to your feet, it felt like you had just had the worst night of your life. Standing up, you looked back and saw the golden bed of sunflowers that you landed in.

(Hello, can you hear me?)

You heard a voice again, “Hello?” you responded.

(You can hear me, thank goodness, you were unconscious for such a long time!)

Your senses finally returned in full, you realized whose voice was speaking in your head, and you fell to your knees, fighting the urge to cry.

(Hey... are you alright?)

You lifted your head and smiled, still trying to fight back tears.

You didn't leave the first room, not right away. Instead, you chose to sit on the bed of flowers and tell Asriel what you'd done, that somehow, some way, you'd gone back into the past at the moment of his death and absorbed his SOUL so it didn't depart.

(Wow, so... it does work both ways.

Well, golly, I'm rather grateful but, what happens now?)

You paused at that, you closed your eyes and thought about the implications of this... and then it hit you, the shock may as well have made you turn to stone, when you finally broke it, you couldn't stop smiling. You took in a breath and told Asriel that you've got a long journey ahead of you.

(A journey? What's at the end of it?)

You just smiled, and told him that it was a surprise.

(Hey, not fair!)

You chuckled at that as you stood up, then looked up at the sky. It was a surprise for him, but you knew exactly what was waiting at the end of your adventure this time. It wasn't just an ending with a family, friends, and love, there was something else waiting at the end now, someone you can help this time that you couldn't the first.

An empty shell who could use a SOUL.

Gathering your determination, you stood up and headed into the next room, it was time for your adventure to begin anew.

You walked up to the grass and saw that familiar- and unwanted- face staring at you.

“Golly! That was a close one, I almost thought I was a goner!” He said, smiling at you knowingly,
then left without tricking you into that 'tutorial' nonsense.

(Was that a talking flower? Weird)

The irony was like a ten-ton weight.

You sat there for a moment, staring up and getting ready, and you told Asriel to stay calm at what he was about to see.

(Calm? Why?)

On cue, Toriel came into the room to find you for the first time, “Do not be afraid, my child, I am Toriel, caretaker of these ruins.”

(Mom?!)  

You felt a bit of a twinge as you had to fight Asriel's urge to control you and run up and hug her. That's right, he can share control of your body like this if he really wanted to, he told you that's how it worked with him and Chara when you met in the ruins, it was a weird sensation.

“Are you okay, child? You look pale.” You didn't respond, just smiled, “Ah, very well then, please, follow me, and I shall instruct you in the operation of the ruins.”

(That... she's okay.)

You heard him start to cry in your head, before you could ask how that worked you saw tears coming from your eyes even though you weren't crying yourself. This was going to take a lot of getting used to.

You gave him a minute to calm down and focused your determination to make a SAVE right before you entered the ruins.

Toriel went about teaching you as normal, with the odd change that, for some reason, the lever puzzle in the second room wasn't marked. It wasn't a big deal because it was still a simple puzzle, but you started to wonder.

(She seemed really confused that the paint was gone, you seemed kind of confused too.)

You walked into the room with the spike trap that Toriel would guide you over when a froggit jumped out at you. You raised your arms to defend yourself, knowing that just speaking to them would hurt their will to fight... except this wasn't the froggits from the ruin, it was a final froggit, the kind you only saw in the Core.

Nonetheless, it was still terrified of Toriel and fled when she glared at it, but the fact that it was even here caught you off guard.

(That's my mom alright.)

He sounded somewhere between proud and understanding of what just happened, you kind of agreed, that glare is a good way to get you to do a lot of things.

She gave you a phone and told you to wait for her, of course, you weren't going to listen.
(Hey, she said we should wait.)

You informed Asriel that a dog steals her phone and she winds up never coming back until you catch up to her of your own accord.

(That seems... kind of far-fetched.)

If it's the same dog you're thinking of, it's really not.

Eventually you reached the room with Napstablook, probably one of the friendliest monsters you knew down here, but that might just be pity.

"Zzzzzzzzzzzz"

(Oh, he's sleeping, should we leave him be?)

You thought to yourself "Really?" as you prepared to move him by force.

Thankfully he hadn't changed any, your encouragement still helped pick up his mood and he befriended you after showing you the "dapperblook", something that made Asriel cheer in your head, which brought a bigger smile to your face than the first time you saw it.

You made your way into the room with the rocks. On cue, Toriel called your phone, “Hello! I was wondering, do you prefer cinnamon, or butterscotch?”

(Oh oh oh, Cinnamon!)

“Butterscotch.”

(Rude!)

You chuckled internally at that as Toriel called back to re-affirm that you at the very least don't have any issue with Cinnamon, then proceeded on your way.

Still, something was wrong, as you worked your way through the ruins you noticed the monsters were different, they were strong and their attacks were hard to avoid and when they hit you, they hit hard. You weren't expecting some of the attacks and were left hurting badly.

(Hey, are you okay uh... oh golly, what's your name?)

“Frisk.” You answered as you put some gold in a web, getting two spider donuts, one for now, one for later. Way later.

(Frisk... that's a nice name. Hey, thank you for saving me, I don't know why or how you came back but... I'm happy to be able to see mom again.)

You closed your eyes, thinking back to the previous happy ending, Toriel would read you bedtime stories, tuck you in, she'd always wake you up for school, you'd always go to bed on Friday excited because you knew you'd wake up to a fresh pie. You just smiled, “You won't just be able to see her.” You said reassuringly.

(I...huh?)
He sounded confused, you didn't bother clarifying, not yet.

You stepped around the tree trunk where Toriel meets you. She was stunned at how injured you were and seemed ready to go and destroy the monsters that hurt you. You were more than a little surprised, you hadn't seen that reaction before since you didn't get terribly hurt on the first time through.

She healed you, then walked you up to the house and you stopped for a minute before heading in.

“Asriel.” You broke your silence.

(Yeah?)

You closed your eyes as you thought of what to say, you knew what was going to come soon, “This next part will... be hard to watch, but please, let me stay in control.”

(I don't like the sound of that... but I trust you, Frisk.)

You focused your thoughts as you stared at Home, letting the knowledge that this will all be worth it in the end fill you with determination.

You were slightly deterred by the fact that the smell coming out of the house was most decidedly not butterscotch, cinnamon, or any combination of the two.

Chapter End Notes

Edit: Oh crap! I forgot Blook! I'll just uh, throw this in there, if you read the story and didn't see anything mentioning him go read it again.

Edit two: Oh double crap, I referred to Chara in the masculine, let's just fix that.
I feel like the fic should be prefaced with not every interaction is going to be right down to the last letter, even the ones that aren't changed by the timeline mumble jumble. It's impossible to memorize the entire script to a game as detail-oriented as Undertale, that said, I'll try my best.

“Welcome to your new home, my child. I wanted to surprise you and make you feel welcome in your new home, so I made some Snail Pie!” Toriel said as you walked in, your eyebrow twitched a little at that. That's definitely not what happened the last time.

Asriel certainly seemed excited as he started cheering in your head, that's good, you could give him control when you decided to eat it. You'd grown used to Toriel's snail-based recipes back in the last happy ending but you still counted your blessings when you took a break from them.

“Now, come this way, I have something very special to show you.” She took your hand and guided you towards the bedroom she intended to be your own, “A room of your own!” She stated proudly, then glanced up towards the smoke, “Do you smell burning? Oh dear, excuse me!” She quickly bolted off, leaving you to your own devices.

You walked into the bedroom and shook your head as you sat down on the bed.

(Frisk, you seem to know a lot about what to do already.)

You frowned a bit at that, then nodded. You explained SAVE and LOAD to him, about the fact you'd seen the end of this journey you're on before and lived in a happy life where Toriel adopted you, and you were surrounded by friends.

And you told him how some will that had been guiding you since you fell into the underground ripped it away from you and sent you on a different path, one that ran counter to everything you were.

You didn't mention that Chara was responsible, you didn't even know how responsible they actually were, really.

The second they realized that you weren't the one in control, burning the world for fun, they seemed... not penitent, but at the very least demotivated, and chose to free you from it and let you get back on track.

(That's... a scary thought, to have everything but have it stolen away from you like that, I... actually kind of know what you mean though.)

You felt more tears coming, you couldn't tell whose they were though, you were both in a pretty sour mood at the moment.
You changed position so you were laying down and dozed off remembering what comes next.

You'd wake up, you'd try to leave and Toriel would try to stop you.

You'd fight her for the right to continue and she would attack you, but she wouldn't kill you, all you had to do was refuse to fight back, but not run away.

Unpleasant images flashed in your head as dreams turned to nightmares, you remembered what happened on that loop where you wiped everyone out. You had more than enough LOVE to destroy Toriel in a single blow with your hatred, but no, the foreign will forcing you into this tormented you by acting like it was going to spare her, only to cut her down at the last moment, when she had dropped her guard.

You hope that one day you'll forget that broken face and bitter laughter she made as she turned to dust, the memories made you jump up screaming.

(Ah! Frisk, are you okay?! You scared me.)

Toriel charged into the room and turned the lights on, she looked horrifically worried “My child, are you okay? I heard screaming.”

You shook your head, “Nightmare.” You said, you couldn't bring yourself to look her in the eyes after having that dream.

(That timeline?)

You nodded as Toriel embraced you, “Poor dear, after what you went through I can understand having a bad dream. The pie is cooled down now, come, let's have a slice.” You shook those thoughts out of your head as you got up.

(Frisk, whatever happened... you said it's not you, please don't let those thoughts hurt you.)

You smiled a bit at Asriel's reassurance, it wasn't much, but it helped more than he could have possibly known.

You grabbed the piece of pie and looked at it, yep, that's snail alright.

(Can I have it?)

You just smiled as you headed back into the bedroom so Toriel couldn't hear you talking to yourself, “Have at it.” You said lowly.

The sensation of switching control over your body was beyond weird, it was like you and him were in a tiny box and in order to switch you had to squeeze and contort in all sorts of weird angles so he would be the one facing in front.

He sunk his (your?) teeth into that pie like it was the best thing ever, even when you were used to them they still didn't taste as good as he was making it seem like.

(You know, I'm glad that I can still do this, I would have missed this stuff if I'd actually gone away.)
You just smiled, you wanted to pat him on the shoulder but, well, neither of you had shoulders, it was just metaphysical projections of the two of you in your mind.

(I don't know how many times I'll say thank you before it gets old, but thank you again, Frisk.)

You smiled wider as he let you have control back, his gratitude and kindness fills you with determination.

You had finished the plate and set it on the desk on the other side of the room, you took in a deep breath as you walked outside.

(Frisk, you're getting nervous, is this what you were warning me about?)

You nodded as you walked up to Toriel, “Oh, hello my child, I'm so glad that I finally have some company down here. I'm reading a book, 72 Fascinating Snail Facts, would you like to join me?” She looked so happy.

You clenched your fists, “How do I leave the underground?” You said quietly. You could feel a cold rush of air, even though the fire-warmed room, as you asked.

“Oh, oh, did you know that snails can-” You asked again.

“Pardon me, I have some business I need to take care of.” She stated before laying her book down and taking off towards the exit.

(Frisk... what's about to happen?)

You wanted to tell him, you knew you needed to tell him, but you just didn't have the heart. Every time you looked ahead at what you were expecting, those flashbacks would return, your will wanting to wither amid the memories of the world you had come from, “Asriel.” You said weakly, “Don't worry, just trust in me, we'll all be fine.”

(I... please, be careful.)

You walked into the basement, listening to Toriel's speech, you didn't realize until too late that there was one part of it you didn't want Asriel hearing.

“If you leave, they... Asgore... will kill you.”

(Dad will... why?)

You struggled to continue, but went on anyway, “That is why...” Toriel added, “I am going to destroy the exit to the ruins, so that nobody can leave.” You walked up.

“You still wish to leave, then prove it, prove to me that you are strong enough to survive outside!”

(Mom... what are you doing?)

The lights in the room dimmed.

(No... please...)
The room was almost plunged into blackness.

(This can't be how this happens!)

Your SOUL began to glow as the battle against Toriel began.

You could feel Asriel trying to tug at you, he didn't want this to happen, he didn't want to be involved in this. Tears started streaming down your face, his tears. You stood your ground though, you were filled with determination.

“Hm? Your SOUL is...” Toriel noted, causing you to snap to attention and look down at the projection of your SOUL lingering in front of you, Asriel's SOUL nested in yours was entirely visible, and Toriel could see that. “No, that is not possible. She dismissed before launching a massive blitz of fireballs at you. You had so little room to dodge that you got clipped by one and it burned hotter than it did any other time you fought her.

(Frisk, we don't need to do this!)

You stood up and looked at her, eyes burning with tears, but refused to lift a finger to harm her, every fireball you dodged caused those memories to flood back of the first timeline, where you desperately sought another way, and ultimately, could only defend yourself at the cost of her life. It wasn't going to be this way, not this time.

Another stream of fire came in an hourglass shape, you recognized this as an attack that Asgore used, but not one Toriel did, not to mention the fire lingered behind you so you couldn't hide near the back of the room. Another clip, another scream of pain.

(Frisk! Please! This is a happy enough ending, we can stop here!)

You stood shakily, throwing away the stick you used as a weapon as a sign of your refusal to do harm to her, “What are you doing? Attack or run away!” She stated as the next barrage started. Two hands appeared in the front and back of the room, summoning fireballs. You weaved between them expertly, but weren't expecting them to then bounce off of the walls and come back.

(Frisk! Why are you doing this?!) You were weak, impossibly weak now, but you refused. You stood up even though you were ready to pass out, tears still streaming down your face.

Toriel couldn't meet your gaze as you just stood there, showing her mercy. The next attack was one you knew though... despite the fact she was fighting twice as hard as she was in other loops, she wasn't going to kill you, the embers poured pathetically to either side of you.

(Mom...)

You just stood there, breathing heavily as Toriel's fire cascaded harmlessly around you, eventually she began to plead with you, but you didn't budge. Your SOUL hurt so much, not just yours either, Asriel's too.

“Hahah... pathetic, is it not? I cannot even save one child.”

“I know, you would not be happy down here. My fears... my reservations... for you, my child... I
shall put them aside.”

You were hurt, but you had done it, you had made it out of the Ruins without taking a life.

“Please, be careful out there, and... when you do leave. Please, do not come back.” Toriel said as she bent down and hugged you. You felt the jolt as Asriel took control of your body and hugged her back, hard enough to get a response from her that you hadn't heard before, “That is... odd, this hug feels so familiar.” You glanced up her, she was fighting back tears.

You wanted to start crying at that, but Asriel was already doing it hard enough for both of you. Toriel finally let go and walked away, you felt your body come back into your control.

(Frisk... I'm sorry, I know what you told me but I still didn't trust you enough, I should have listened.)

“Asriel, it's okay...” You frowned as you considered what you had just put him through, "I... should have told you, but every time I thought about it, I just... kept going back to that other, awful timeline, I just want to forget it happened." You added as you wiped away the tears. You gathered your determination and walked into the next room to meet with that ever unpleasant face.

“Clever, very clever.” The sunflower stated, his expression was less than impressed, “Tell me, do you really think that will make up for what you did though?” His expression shifted suddenly into that skull-like face, “You dusted everyone! Nothing could make up for that, you idiot!” You cringed at that accusation.

(He remembers that?)

Of course he would remember, he always does, because he has determination in him.

“And now here you are playing goody-two-shoes again, hoping that the blood on your hands will wash away just because you're suffering a bit more this time, HAH!” His face turned into that distinctly humanoid one, the one he makes when he's angry, “Don't make me laugh you stupid kid! If anyone remembers it's me, and I'll make you remember it too!” He gave that shrieking cackle of a laugh as he retreated into the ground.

(That was really creepy, I really don't like that guy.)

Forget a ten-ton weight, the irony felt like Undyne just suplexed you, and yes, that's worse.

But at the same time, you were encouraged that Flowey still existed because it meant that despite the funny business going on, he'd still probably try the same plan at the end of the adventure, one that would let you confront the reborn Asriel, and then, once he was subdued, let Asriel's SOUL and body re-combine when the barrier was destroyed.

You exited the ruins and heard them lock behind you. Taking a sigh you continued forward into the forest, what was going to come next was either going to be very re-assuring or absurdly terrifying.

(Did you just hear a twig snap?)

Your first meeting with Sans.

As you got to the end of the bridge, you heard the noise and felt that figure approaching behind you.
“DON'T YOU KNOW HOW TO GREET A NEW FRIEND?” You didn't wait for him to finish before turning around and shaking his hand, triggering the whoopee cushion he always tried to get you with.

(Really?)

Asriel sounded less than impressed.

“heh, well then, you've got a look your face like you know what's up” He responded. You couldn't help but notice he was staring at your chest, “hm, somethin' about that doesn't seem quite right” You shuddered. That last loop Sans was literally your worst nightmare, you lost count of how many times he killed you in Chara's unceasingly determined attempts to reach Asgore, and the fact he immediately singled out your SOUL made a chill run up your spine.

“pretty odd face to shoot a friend” He said it in his usual lazy accent, but there was that ever-so subtle inflection of knowing that just made it worse.

(You okay Frisk? You just got really clammy.)

“heh, hey, my big bro's coming, here, follow me, don't worry about this gate, just walk through it, my bro made the bars too big to catch anyone anyway.” He said as he continued, “quick, hide behind this conveniently shaped lamp” You obligingly hid behind the lamp as Papyrus showed up as usual and started chewing out his brother.

(These guys... are weird.)

You just chuckled, “They take some getting used to, but once we get to know them I wouldn't ever ask for better friends.”

“talkin to yourself there, kid?” Papyrus had left and Sans was there by the lamp listening to you speak. You immediately froze, “eh, i've seen monsters do stranger. hey, i don't really care about capturing humans, but my bro, he's a human hunting fanatic, do you think you could humor him? don't worry, he's harmless.”

You shuddered as Sans finished his spiel as usual and left. You shook your head and walked into the next room.

(He didn't seem that threatening, but you were really uncomfortable that entire time, what happened between the two of you in that last timeline, Frisk?)

You shook your head, not wanting to recall. Sans only broke his promise to Toriel when the world burned to the ground around him and he was the last one left. Despite the fact he was acting sketchier than usual, he still seemed to be keeping that promise and that filled you with determination.

Chapter End Notes

Hm, not much to say about this one, Sans gets to be creepy again and we start to understand just how much the timeline's changed. Next chapter is where the story
becomes more "Hard Mode" in presentation.

Edit: Holy crap I just realized what Sans meant when he said he doesn't care about capturing humans, wow that's dark.
Holy Christ I didn't realize how hard it would be to write the brothers' various tics.

You sighed internally as you walked forward from your last SAVE.

(You seem a bit winded.)

You chuckled a bit, “Papyrus... really likes puzzles. I think I'm going to be ready for a nice long nap when we reach the next town.” You were actually more so concerned about Sans than Papyrus, and what he might do if he decides you might have crossed a line, you weren't doing a good job at hiding the guilt that weighed on you.

You walked into the next room and saw the brothers standing there.

“So anyway, as I was saying about Undyne...” Papyrus stopped and looked at you, then at Sans, who also looked at you. The two looked back and forth until they were spinning like tops.

This was pretty much exactly what you remembered them being like.

“Oh my god Sans, what is that?!”

(Looks like we've been spotted.)

“I think that's a rock.” Sans responded

“Oh.”

(They're... not actually like this, right?)

“Hey, what's that in front of the rock?” Sans said.

“Oh my god!”... “Is that a human?” Papyrus asked, Sans just bluntly answered, “yes.”

(He's... very loud.)

“Loud is a good word.” You chuckled as Papyrus continued his speech, you were fairly sure he adressed you at some point, but you were kind of filtering him up to the point where he mentioned capturing you and taking you to the capital.

(Oh... he's our enemy.)

Asriel suddenly got very crestfallen at that revelation. You smiled as Papyrus walked off, “He won't
be for long.” You added in, eliciting a confused noise from your companion.

You walked over to Sans, “i think that went well, my brother looks happy.” You nodded, “you sure do like talking to yourself, don't you?” He added, causing you to cringe again, “well, if you'll excuse me, i've gotta go get my puzzles ready.” And at that, he walked off, leaving the two of you alone.

(I see what you mean, something tells me those two are going to be exhausting to deal with.)

Exhausting, that's a word you would use, though that wasn't bad. Your mind wandered back to those days again.

You'd meet up with Papyrus every few days and he'd drive you and any other number of your friends into the city for a day on the town. Everyone was shocked he managed to get a driver's license, apparently he wanted it so badly that he put aside his various oddities long enough to actually learn how to respect the rules of the road.

You and him would sit around and stare into the abyss as Toriel and Sans bounced puns off of you, and you'd eventually come to look forward to his spaghetti, he finally got proper lessons from Toriel and could actually make something you'd eat for the sake of eating, instead of eating to make him feel good about himself.

He was always so full of energy, but it balanced out his brother's complete lack of it, and you still appreciated him despite, or maybe even because, he always left you worn out.

(Friiiisk, Earth to Frisk, you in there?)

You snapped out of being lost in memories, “Sorry, just thinking.” You said as you readied to move onward. The recollection of that timeline filled you with determination.

Papyrus and his puzzles weren't much of a threat the first time through, even your eventual encounter, while catching you off guard, was very manageable.

But then you recalled the ruins, and Toriel, you felt like it wasn't going to be that easy.

You stopped dead in your tracks as you idly walked by Doggo's post, before you knew it he'd jumped you.

You were ready for an unpleasant surprise, but thankfully at least that was unchanged, Doggo threw what amounted to a typhoon of blades at you, but they were all colored blue and completely harmless. You reached over and pet him and watched as he absolutely lost it.

(I can't blame him, it must feel weird to have a sensation come from something you can't see.)

You bit your tongue, yeah, weird is a good word for it. You continued onwards.

You stepped into the next area and saw Sans standing in front of you, this was where he warned you about Papyrus' blue attack, at least you think it was.

“hey” He said, flagging you down. You looked up at him, expecting his speech to continue, “hold onto this for a minute, will you?” He handed you a clear glass ball, then walked off without another word.
(What is that, glass? It looks kinda... odd?)

You looked at it for a second, then shrugged as you continued on your way, well aware that something had changed. Of course it would, Sans is one of the few people besides you who knows what's up with the timestream, you remembered that clearly.

You continued forward to the first of Papyrus’ puzzles.

“You’re so lazy, you were napping all night!” You heard from around the bend as Papyrus started to chew out his brother.

“I think that’s called sleeping.” Sans responded, you shook your head as they spotted you.

“Ohoho, the human arrives!” He calls out, “My brother and I have created some puzzles, I think this next one you’ll find rather... electrifying!” You nodded at that as you listened to him explain the invisible electric maze, what should have come next was you’d take a step forward, Papyrus would be electrocuted because he had the orb that was required for it, then he’d more or less solve the puzzle for you.

“Uh, Sans?” Papyrus questioned, “Where is the orb?”

Orb... Sans?

(Oh.)

“Oh.” You and Asriel said in tandem as you realized what had just happened.

“The instructions said they gotta be holding it, so I snuck it onto them.” Sans shot you a glance, his smile wasn't any wider than normal but you could still feel the smug radiating off of him.

(I think we've been tricked, Frisk.)

“Really? Way to think ahead Bro!” Papyrus said, radiating pride towards his brother, “Now, human, try to cross this maze! Nyeh heh heh!”

You grimaced, okay, so Papyrus' puzzles were going to be a bit of an actual obstacle this time. You took in a breath and walked forward, trying to remember the patterns in the snow from the first loop.

A few steps forward, turn to the left, walk to the middle of the rise you were on, turn to the right... and then left?

Bzzzzzzzzt!

You screamed as electricity surged through you. It didn't seem to hurt Papyrus this much when it hit him, either that was because he was a skeleton or the wattage on this trap had been turned way up. You hit the ground, twitching and smoking, but still determined. Right, it wasn't left, it was right, you all but crawled forward to the end of the puzzle.

“Oh my god! Are you okay?!” Papyrus sounded worried, you just gave him a very weak thumbs up, “Oh, good, I was worried you were...” he stopped talking for a second, then cut himself off, “Not going to be able to do the rest of our puzzles,
NYEH HEH HEH!” He stated as he ran off to the next one

(I'm not even in control and I could feel that, are you sure you're okay, Frisk?)

“I'm... ohhhh.” You groaned as you stood, still twitching from the shock.

“that looked uh, really painful there, you okay kid?” Sans asked, you just shot him a dirty look, “what? a guy can't help out his big bro? don't worry, the next one doesn't involve any kind of pain.” With that, he walked off.

(That guy really doesn't seem to like you.)

You took in a few breathes as you started limping forward. Yeah, Sans probably read your expression well enough to tell that you'd done something bad before so he was making this way harder on you. You should have come clean from the start, maybe he'd have taken it easier if he knew you were doing this to fix what went wrong.

You managed to limp along just long enough to reach the Nice Cream Man and ordered a few wrappers. You opened it up and hastily devoured it, despite the cold, then looked at the wrapper.

(“Somebody out there likes you.” Aww.)

You gave a bittersweet sigh as you put the wrapper away and continued into the next area.

(Why the sigh? I like you, Frisk.)

That brought a smile back to your face, Asriel's words reminded you why you were going through this hell again to start with, you had to stay determined no matter how hard it got, it wasn't just for your sake.

You walked into the next area with Sans and PAPYRUS awaiting you.

“HUMAN! I HOPE YOU'RE READY FOR... SANS, WHERE'S THE PUZZLES?” You looked down on the ground, there was a crossword puzzles sitting there. There was no way it was this easy, you told yourself.

“it's right there, on the ground. trust me, there's no way they can get past this one.” You walked over to it and looked it over, it seemed like the same word search.

“SANS, WHAT IS THIS? THIS ISN'T A PUZZLE.” Papyrus seemed ready to pop his top.

“wait for it.” Sans added. A giant wall of spikes appeared at either side of you from the snow and started closing in, causing your mouth to open slightly in disbelief.

“so uh, you got about a minute to find three words, kid, have fun.” Sans said with a wink.

“WOW! THAT TRAP IS DASTARDLY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD IT IN YOU SANS!” Sans just shrugged at that.

(Oh! I love crosswords, I used to be really good at these.)

You blinked at that, then basically threw him into control.
(That wasn't an invitation! I don't work well under pressure!)

Despite his protests he sat down and started looking it over.

(Hey... something's not right here...)

You frowned at that, uh oh, what did Sans do to the puzzle?

You had thirty seconds.

(Can't... quite place it.)

“Any time now, Asriel.” You said, noticing the spike walls started shaking.

(Wait! I know what's wrong.)

"...Really?" You said as Asriel told you.

You took control back and looked up at the brothers, “well, give up?” Sans asked.

“I can't solve this.” You answered as the spike walls stopped shaking.

“that hard, huh?” Sans responded, looking proud of himself.

“No, it's not that... I don't have a writing utensil to mark the answers.” You responded.

The howl of the wind was the only sound that was made between the four of you for a good half a minute.

Sans blinked, “…ah, gotcha, well we can't be having a rigged trap, can we?” He said as the spiked walls receded.

Papyrus stomped his foot, “BAH, YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO HAVING A GOOD PUZZLE SANS, IF YOU'UD USED A JUNIOR JUMBLE I BET IT WOULD HAVE WORKED!” He belted out, eliciting a sigh of relief from you, something a bit more on pace with what had already happened.

“What are you talking about? everyone knows crosswords are harder.” Sans responded.

(That was... frightening.)

You nodded in agreement as Sans and Papyrus argued back and forth over which form of child's puzzle was worse, until they asked you to break the stalemate. You responded junior jumble to appease Papyrus, even though that was easily the most intense crossword you've ever done.

“hey, kid.” Sans said as Papyrus stormed off to the next one, “you don't seem like a bad kid, haven't hurt anyone, humoring us like this, even lying to appease my bro.” He closed his eyes, then opened them, they were empty, “B U T Y O U D I S O M E T H I N G D I D N ' T Y O U?” Asriel screamed in your head, he hadn't seen that glare before, and you kind of wanted to scream too even though you had.
“heh, y'know what, forget about it, see ya later on.” He added as he walked off.

(What was THAT?!)

“Sans is... he's not what he seems, I learned that the hard way.” You were desperately trying to not flash back to that battle.

(Something about that glare gave me the worst sensation, I can't place it.)

You knew exactly what he meant, the sensation of your sins crawling on your back, something that, if you were a worse person in this timeline, would turn into a slow poison that would devour you from the inside out.

Thankfully, you hadn't and it wasn't, it was just an unpleasant sensation and nothing more.

As you walked into the next area you saw a plate of spaghetti laying there.

(Ohh, that looks good, can we try a bite?)

You didn't want to, you really didn't. You reached over and gave it a light tap, it dinged like stone, it was completely frozen.

(Aw, I wanted some.)

"Once we're finished with this adventure you can pester him for spaghetti anytime, he loves making the stuff.” You said reassuringly, though you couldn't help but feel like you had just played a mean prank on him by telling him that.

You walked into the next area and were jumped by Lesser Dog, he seemed... more armored than normal, he was wearing a helmet. You looked at him for a second before reaching out to pet him, and being dejected by a dull clunk, the helmet and chestpiece were attached, oh dear.

You dodged his sword swipe as he panted at you, thinking of what you were going to do about this mess. Then you tilted your head, just maybe... “Belly rub?” You asked and the dog immediately froze, dropped his weapon and fell on his back.

(Aw, he's cute, can we keep him?)

You shook your head as you vigorously scratched his armored stomach, apparently it could feel them through the armor, or at least thought it could. It eventually began to shake violently before its head shot straight out of the armor, peeling the helmet like a can, and just kept extending with so much force it went through a tree.

(That... is a really excitable dog.)

You cringed and looked at him for a second before hearing a distant bark and seeing his tail was still wagging, he was thankfully unharmed, you stood and went on your way before he pulled his head out of that tree.

The Dogi weren't too much trouble to deal with, one of the blessings you were learning to count was that even if the attacks were much harder to dodge and a lot more painful, the method of making something tame were more or less the same as ever, with a few exceptions.
You arrived at the next set of puzzles, the first one thankfully hadn't changed any, the second one though...

“HUMAN! YOU ARRIVED JUST IN TIME, FOR I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, HAVE JUST FINISHED IMPROVING THIS PUZZLE! FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS PUZZLE THAT LOOKS JUST LIKE ME!” You pursed your lips at that; it... actually looked like him this time.

Thankfully that change didn't make it any harder, unlike the rest of the puzzles this one was a breather and bares almost no mention.

“WOW, YOU SOLVED IT! AND YOU DID IT ALL WITHOUT MY HELP! INCREDIBLE, I'M IMPRESSED, YOU MUST CARE ABOUT PUZZLES AS MUCH AS I DO! WELL, I'M SURE YOU'LL LOVE THE NEXT PUZZLE TOO! IT MIGHT EVEN BE TOO EASY FOR YOU! NYEH HEH HEH.” He said as he ran off.

Next... puzzle?

Oh no, you remembered what that puzzle was.

(Frisk? You look like you're ready to hit something.)

Just stay calm, surely it couldn't be that bad.

It was that bad. Papyrus' randomly generated incredibly hard puzzle worked correctly and sent you running back and forth, being nipped at by piranhas who liked the smell of lemons, zapped by electric panels and bounced back and forth by purple.

Eventually you somehow managed to solve it, but you were one hundred and one percent done with puzzles.

“NYEH HEH HEH! INCREDIBLE! BUT WAIT! YOU STEPPED ON A GREEN TILE, SO NOW YOU HAVE TO FACE A MONSTER! WHO IS OUR LUCKY CONTESTANT?”

Jerry appears.

(Who's that guy?)

“OH NO! NOT HIM! QUICKLY, HUMAN, SANS, LET US PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES AND FLEE!” Papyrus didn't even wait for the two of you before running off, you ran after him.

Well, not after him so much as away from Jerry.

You didn't realize that you completely ran past the snow poff Greater Dog was hiding in, oh well.

By the time you had come to a halt, you were on the rope bridge just before Snowdin Town.

Papyrus was standing on the other side.

“HUMAN, THIS IS YOUR FINAL AND MOST DANGEROUS CHALLENGE! BEHOLD THE BRIDGE OF DEADLY TERROR!” The traps revealed themselves, a bunch of genuine, and
very dangerous, weapons. “SOON THIS TRAP WILL ACTIVATE, BLADES WILL SWING, CANNONS WILL FIRE, DANGEROUS WEAPONS UP AND DOWN IN EVERY DIRECTION! ARE YOU READY?” He didn't activate it the first time because he thought it would be an easy victory. You really hoped he didn't this time either.

“BECAUSE I AM ABOUT TO DO IT!”

... The traps, thankfully, didn't turn on. You waited for Papyrus to have his crisis of morality and walk off.

“WAIT! HUMAN! WATCH OUT, DOOOOOOG!”

(Frisk, in front of you!)

The dog hanging from the rope that was part of the trap had apparently activated itself, it came flying towards you. A high pitched bark and white blur was the last thing you remember seeing before blacking out.

Chapter End Notes

Well, as far as ways to lose a fight goes I guess you could ask for a worse fate than "knocked out by poofy white dog".

Well, maybe not if you're trying to keep your ego intact.
A Bonetrousled Premonition

Chapter Notes

So we've gone from chapters named after one in-game song to chapters named after two.

I am bad with names, it's just going to get worse.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“hey... my brother, he really wants to see a human, so for his sake, can i ask you... to pretend like you are one?”

You remember coming out of the ruins and hearing the wind rush from the empty, dead city as the door stayed open, Toriel had fallen.

Papyrus and Sans were the next ones to stand in your way, you ignored their puzzles and refused to play along with their games, you dusted the dogs that jumped you, delighting in how Doggo could sense your hatred even though you were standing still.

You arrived in Snowdin Town, it was a barren wasteland, everyone had evacuated because they were terrified of you and what you were capable of doing. Finally, you confronted Papyrus.

He told you he saw your dust covered hands, he believed you were just scared, alone, he believed that all you needed was a friend, and he offered to spare you from the get go. You laughed, balled your fists... and swung.

“Papyrus!” You screamed as you woke from your nightmare, sweaty and shivering. You couldn't shake that dreadful memory no matter how badly you wanted to. The thoughts just kept replaying themselves in your head.

(Another nightmare, Frisk?)

You nodded, “I'm not going to let it happen like that.” You said bitterly as you stood up. You looked around the area you were in, you'd never seen this room before, where are you? You noticed that there was a doghouse, a dog bed, and a bowl full of kibble and you raised your eyebrow.

You took note of... a note, that was on a table, “DEAR HUMAN! I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS... AM SORRY, THAT MUTT ACCIDENTALLY TRIGGERED THE TRAP! PLEASE DO NOT BE ANGRY, YOU SHALL ONLY BE IN HERE UNTIL UNDYNE ARRIVES TO TAKE YOU TO THE CAPITAL.”

You looked towards the door, it was locked... from the inside, you undid the lock and walked out.

(Did he think we're a dog and we'd just be stuck in here?)
You wondered that yourself as you stepped outside and saw that the room was that little garden shed right beside the brother's house, you'd always wondered what it look like in there, but you never got the chance to see it before your journey ended.

Either way, you were in Snowdin Town now, you stepped into the tunnel and went back to the entrance. You spent a while wandering around town chatting up everyone, to your relief nothing was different in the town itself. You spent some time shopping, recalling how useful bicycles were you made sure to load up on them for later.

You gave a sigh as you started walking towards where you'd fight Papyrus when your phone went off. Odd, Toriel would lose her phone again until the end of the journey, and you didn't have anyone else's number yet. You picked up.

“Uh, h-hello, I'd like an cheese pizza a-and uh... oh no! I called the w-wrong number!”

Click.

You blinked twice, was that Alphys?

You shook your head as you continued on, the snow grew blinding and you knew who was waiting at the point where it was thickest.

“HUMAN! I AM GLAD YOU ARE OKAY! WHEN THAT DOG HIT YOU I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T WAKE UP!” At least he was concerned for you.

“HUMAN... THE JOY OF FINDING ANOTHER PASTA LOVER... OF SOMEONE WHO ENJOYS PUZZLES AS MUCH AS YOU DO... I REALIZE IT MUST BE QUITE THE SHOCK FOR YOU TO MEET SOMEONE LIKE ME... AND THAT IS WHY I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, WILL BE YOUR... NO, NO, I CANNOT, I HAVE TO CAPTURE YOU!” Your SOUL lit up with a red light, a smaller white light shining from Asriel's SOUL nestled within your own. Papyrus stood there, blocking the way.

You took in a deep breath, “Papyrus, I actually think you're... kind of attractive.”

(...What.)

“Roll with it.” You told Asriel lowly.

“AAAHH! FLIRTING! FINALLY, YOU REVEAL YOUR ULTIMATE FEELINGS! WELL, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I'M A SKELETON WITH VERY HIGH STANDARDS.”

“I can make spaghetti.” You responded, eliciting a snicker from Asriel.

Papyrus slammed his hands against his head in shock, “OH NO, YOU'RE MEETING ALL MY STANDARDS! W-WELL, WE CAN DATE LATER, A-AFTER I CAPTURE YOU.” Papyrus said as he launched the first official attack of the battle. This one should be easy because you weren't blue yet, just a wave of bones behind you that you could harmlessly pass by staying put.

Except of course it wouldn't happen that way.

A second row of bones came from the top of the field, forcing you to dodge through a narrow
passage between both rows. You could already predict what was about to happen next, and you weren't looking forward to it.

But you dropped your arms and focused on your SOUL, refusing to fight back.

“YOU WON’T FIGHT BACK? VERY WELL, HAVE A TASTE OF MY FABLED BLUE ATTACK!”

You stood there watching patiently as blue bones passed over you, then when the last one passed, you felt your SOUL turn blue and a weight hit you, enforcing gravity on it.

“YOU’RE BLUE NOW, THAT’S MY ATTACK.”

The next few parts of the battle were much the same, with the addition that every attack had a mirrored row come from the top, meaning you couldn’t jump too high in addition to having to jump the low attacks, and the attacks that had them come from the ceiling to start with in the original fight were now so narrow that you just barely had space to squeeze through them, your jumps needed to be timed perfectly.

Papyrus wasn’t even focusing on the battle, he was too distracted about your “date” to be putting his all into it, and he already had you on the ropes.

(Frisk, are you okay?)

You nodded as you pulled out another nice cream and ate it quickly, shrugging off the brainfreeze it gave and discarding the “You’re a special person” wrapper, you were ready for more.

At least you thought you were, Papyrus wasn’t letting up, you understood fully why he could be considered for the royal guard on strength alone, having - and for the most failing- to withstand blitz after blitz of narrow, rushing corridors and leaps you could just barely make.

One of them hit you dead on and sent you rolling.

(Frisk! Oh no, I think they're unconscious!)

You weren’t knocked out, but you were barely there, when suddenly you felt a jolt as Asriel took control of you.

(I’ve started getting stronger since we came to Snowdin, Frisk, get your strength back while I handle this.)

A heartbeat ran through your SOUL as control of your body shifted, not only was Asriel now in control of your body, it was your SOUL nested within his now, any attack that did damage would damage him instead.

Papyrus had been talking the entire time, getting ready for his special attack, one that would be stolen by a dog.

“Asriel.” You said as you felt your strength returning, “Be extremely careful.” The pattern was easy enough to discern, odds are good that the dog wouldn't steal his special attack this time and you’d actually have to endure it.
“NOW BEHOLD! MY SPECIAL ATTACK!”

The arena widened, you stood there for a second at the ready, and then...

Suddenly you felt your SOUL go flying into a wall and your eyes widened, “Jump!” You screamed, he listened, pushing off the side of the invisible box just in time to avoid a wall of bones raising out of it.

Then the next slam came down, throwing your SOULs to the bottom of the arena onto another bed of bones. Thankfully, Asriel was able to dodge that one too.

This wasn't Papyrus' attack, at least you didn't know it as such, this was...

“Oh crap.”

You suddenly had a very good idea of who put that dog in a position to steal the special attack, and fully understand where it went after it was stolen.

Asriel wasn't ready for the next one, your body was put on a small platform against a literal flood of bones and dropped, you skipped against it like a wheel rolling down a hill and could feel Asriel's SOUL being battered around your own.

You heard him screaming as you forced yourself back into control before he became too injured to continue, your SOUL returning to sheltering his.

Your body crashed on the ground, but you had somehow survived it, you struggled to stand and looked at Papyrus, knowing that passing out would mean defeat.

“WELL.” He huffed, “SINCE YOU ENDURED MY SPECIAL ATTACK.” He huffed again, it looks like it wore him out, it must have taken a lot of magic. “I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, ELECT TO SPARE YOU, NOW IS THE TIME TO ACCEPT MY MERCY.”

You gave a loud sigh of relief as you let battle end.

(We...ooooooh, we did it.)

“WOWIE, I'M A FAILURE, I COULDN'T EVEN CAPTURE A SINGLE HUMAN, I WON'T BECOME POPULAR AND MY FRIEND COUNTER WILL REMAIN AT ZERO.”

He sounded distraught, but you picked yourself up and looked at him, “Papyrus, aren't I your friend?” You said with a smile.

“WOWIE, WE HAVEN'T EVEN HAD OUR FIRST DATE AND I'M ALREADY IN THE FRIEND ZONE.” There was a bit of a pause, “HUMAN, IF YOU CONTINUE ON THIS WAY YOU'LL REACH WATERFALL, CONTINUE ON THROUGH THERE AND YOU'LL EVENTUALLY REACH THE CAPITAL OF NEW HOME.” You nodded, you had heard this before.

“TO GET THROUGH THE BARRIER, THE ONE TRAPPING US ALL DOWN HERE, YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE THRONE ROOM AND MEET THE KING.”
“THE KING IS... A BIG FUZZY PUSHOVER, I'M SURE IF YOU SAY, “EXCUSE ME MR. DREAMURR, I' D LIKE TO LEAVE", HE'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY HIMSELF.” You grimaced, you already knew what would happen when you meet Asgore, you didn't want to think about it this far in advance.

“WELL, IF YOU WANT TO HAVE THAT DATE, I'LL BE IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE.” Papyrus said as he proceeded to run in the air right over you and head home.

(Still want that nap? I think I do.)

You nodded, “We'l... go forward a bit more, then double back.” You said as you continued walking out of the snow and into the cool but humid depths of Waterfall. You looked over and saw Sans sitting at his guard post.

(Oh no, what's he want this time?)

“hey, i'm on break, you want to come to grillby's and grab a bite with me?” He said it like he hadn't just been improving his brother's traps to make things harder on you, you sighed and nodded, “alright, then follow me, i know a shortcut.” He said as he led you farther into Waterfall, but somehow you ended up at Grillby's.

(Golly, what... just happened, how'd we get back here so fast?)

You accidentally bumped into someone on your way in, you turned around to apologize but they weren't anywhere in sight, you just tilted your head at that as Sans walked up to the counter.

(Was that... nah, couldn't have been.)

Asriel seemed to recognize whoever you bumped, but apparently didn't consider it important enough to tell you to get his attention. You walked up to join Sans at the counter.

“What'll it be, kid?” You felt your stomach grumble at that, you were really hungry and still hurt from the fight with Papyrus.

“Burger.” You mumbled, trying to be at least somewhat polite and not slam your head on the counter, “sounds good, hey grillby, double order of the burg.” He said, the fire monster nodded and headed into the back.

A few seconds passed in silence, “so what do you think of my bro, he's pretty cool, huh?” You gave a weary thumbs up, “yeah, the coolest.” He let some more silence pass as your food was brought out, “ketch-” by the time he looked over, you had already eaten half the burger like a rabid dog.

(Wow Frisk.)

Sans was just staring at you as you destroyed your food, eventually you realized you were being stared at and muffled a sorry, “heh, that's okay, i would be hungry too after what you went through.” He said as he proceeded to chug the bottle of ketchup.

“So listen.” Sans said, “sorry about rewiring my bros traps to actually be dangerous, i just had to
make sure. listen, kid, you're not new down here, you've done this before, so you know your SOUL shouldn't look like that.” He looked up at the ceiling, “at first, i thought maybe it was the old lady in the ruins, but when i knock-knocked, she still answered me.” You frowned at that, “and you act like i was your worst nightmare in another world.”

Sans looked straight at you, closing his eyes, here it comes.

…

He opened them again, his eyes were still lit, “i'm a judge for a reason, kid, if you need to confess, you can confide in me.”

You felt a shiver go through you, but he wasn't wrong. You looked at the empty plate, “Can we... go somewhere else?” You said.

(Frisk...)

Sans nodded, standing up, “hey grillby, you can add both our orders to my tab, we gotta be places.”
He said as he stood up, you did so and followed him to the northernmost edge of town, the river person would be here after you dealt with Undyne later on.

“well kid.” Sans asked, “tell me as much as you want to.”

It started simple, you admitted that the timelines were messed up because of you, how you'd started and stopped your journey a few times. You told Sans about the alien presence that started to control you like a puppet on a string once you fell, how at first it guided you towards an ending where the barrier broke, and where you all lived happily on the surface with monsters and humans having made peace. That in particular made Sans' eyes dim, as if he was reflecting on the emotions he felt.

And then.

Your emotions spiked, you fell to your knees in front of Sans and told him about how that presence had reset and started to kill everyone, even if you tried to struggle you couldn't win out, and eventually someone else took control of your body and your mind was thrown into a haze.

You knew who it was, but for Asriel's sake you didn't say his name. You told him how your journey ended with a genocide, how Sans himself was your final true obstacle and what happened next.

You confessed that you cut down Asgore and the second presence, the one you knew but didn't name, prepared to do next. And how someone else stepped in the way and started to reset. You don't remember his face, or his features, you just know that he remembered the happy ending too.

He called your name and you struggled against the darkness, and it brought you back, you won back control, with Chara themselves destroying the presence's control over you for reasons you didn't truly understand, and how you reset one last time.

You were on your hands and knees, having the most ugly cry you'd ever had as you let all your emotions, all your regret spill out.

You felt a hand on your back, and then a warm presence in your heart.

(Frisk... it's okay, I'm here for you, and soon your friends will be here for you too.)
Sans looked at you, his eyes closed, “kid... i ain't gonna say you're not responsible, because i can't know if you're actually telling me the truth about that timeline.” You didn't move at that.

“but.”

He pat you on the back, “i can tell for a fact that you really do want this. animals and demons are the only ones who can kill without regret. if you did it because you weren't in control, or did it just because and lost your nerve, the fact you're doing it all over again, the fact you persevered even though i went out of my way to hurt you and make your life hell... kid...”

You looked up at Sans, seeing that friendly smile still on his face, “don't let that past haunt you, i forgive you.”

Those nine words made everything stop for you.

(Frisk, he's right, I don't think you did those things intentionally but you can't just keep being haunted by it forever, you're making amends enough with what you're doing... not just going back there, but taking me with you too.)

You were trying hard to not cry, it was liberating to know that you had Sans' support as well as Asriel's, even though they now knew explicitly what happened.

“still though.” Sans added, “you uh, kinda dodged my question about your SOUL.” You blinked at that and started to answer when he cut you off, “you know what? ill ask later, i think ive grilled you enough for now, take care of yourself kid.” He started walking away, then stopped, “well, okay, one more question, what'd you say the guy looked like? the one that brought you back from that darkness?”

You pursed your lips and told him he was melting from what you figured was determination, all you could make out was a brown robe, and it looked like it only had one arm.

Sans just chuckled at that, “gotcha.” He continued walking without anything else, leaving you alone in the snow.

(Frisk, are you sure you're going to be alright to continue onwards?)

You just nodded, Sans' forgiveness had started to lift the cloud looming over you since the reset, over what happened in the past loop. You would let that pain sit in you so that you wouldn't forget what you're fighting to get back, but you weren't going to let it slow you down anymore.

You made your way to the Snowed Inn and flopped down for an actual full night's sleep, finally having a pleasant dream for the first time since the reset.

You could do this, you WOULD do this.

You were filled with determination.

---

Sans walked behind his house and into the well hidden room. He locked it behind him, then walked
over towards a table, “back from the brink huh? well kid... good luck, i'm not gonna mess with you anymore, but this still won't be easy. still, if anybody can, something tells me you can, kid.” Sans said as he looked at a framed picture, one of him alongside Frisk, Toriel, Asgore, Papyrus, Undyne and Alphys.

...

“get us back our happy ending, frisk.”

Chapter End Notes

A bit more feelsy than normal, the bit with Sans at the end was fun to write.

These chapters keep getting longer and longer, I feel like by the end of the story this fic will be large enough to be a paperback.

Few subtle nods towards Onlooker, hopefully they were subtle enough that I kept my promise of not shilling that story’s OC besides cameos.
The shortest chapter so far, a bit of a more emotional one that's not directly attached to the "hard mode AU" and more about the "Frisk and Asriel together" one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

You started dreaming about that timeline again, wading through fields of dust in a dark place you couldn't see the end of, cackling to yourself about what you've done as you looked at that razor-edged knife.

No, this wasn't how it was going to end up being, not this time.

Suddenly the dust blew away, revealing a beautiful field of flowers, you dropped the knife as the dark skies cleared, you saw all of your friends standing there within walking distance smiling at you. Toriel and Asgore were side by side, arms on Asriel's shoulders. You smiled as you walked towards them.

You woke up to the sound of the people in the next room over snoring, you were so exhausted that you didn't even hear them until you'd rested off your injuries.

Smiling at the dream you had, you put your hand over your heart and closed your eyes.

(Good morning, you slept pretty long, I'm kind of amazed, those other guys are snoring loud enough to shake the building.)

You chuckled a bit at that before leaving, the kindly innkeeper didn't bother to give you back your money since you'd actually slept a full night this time, and you didn't really bother to force the issue, she had a point.

(So then, to Waterfall, right?)

“Not yet.” You said as you walked up to the brothers' house.

“GREETINGS HUMAN! ARE YOU READY FOR THAT DATE?” Papyrus all but screamed, you just nodded at that, “EXCELLENT, WELL, I KNOW THE PERFECT PLACE TO HAVE IT, FOLLOW ME.” You chuckled as he led you down to Grillbys, then right back to his place, “MY HOUSE! COME, LET US GO INSIDE AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE TOUR!”

Their house hadn't changed any, there was still the post-it notes, the mess with the dog happened the same, with the addition that you actually tried this time. You weren't expecting the dog to somehow attach itself to the ceiling and escape that way, though Papyrus seemed to consider that normal, but then again, that may just be him being him.
You finally got the stuff with the quantum physics and joke book, and you knew what the TV meant when it said a new MTT show was going to premiere... you really knew what the TV meant by that.

When it came time for the date things proceeded as normal, the flirting, the compliments, finding Papyrus' hidden spaghetti.

(Oh, oh, can I try it?)

You didn't even fight it as Asriel took control and took a bite of Papyrus' cooking. You felt control thrown back to you as Asriel started screaming in your head like someone had just tricked him into drinking acid, you kind of felt bad about it, but part of you wanted to laugh.

(I'm dying! Aaaaaahah~)

It wasn't THAT bad.

You kept going until you got friendzoned and Papyrus gave you his number and headed out.

(Well, that was... ugh, that was interesting, I see why you like him as a friend though, hopefully he can be my friend too.)

“Don't worry, the two of you will get along great.” You said to yourself as you were leaving the house, you looked up and saw Sans looking down at you, he just gave a thumbs up and walked back into his room, causing you to smile.

You walked into Waterfall, into the patch of tall grass and put yourself against the wall, “GREETINGS UNDYNE!” You heard Papyrus' voice, “HM, THE HUMAN, NO... I FAILED. BUT LISTEN UNDYNE, WE DON’T NEED TO CAPTURE THE HUMAN DO WE- YES, YES I UNDERSTAND.”

Papyrus walked off and you heard a rustling coming from behind you that attracted Undyne. A few tense seconds passed before she disappeared and you came out of the bushes, followed shortly after by the monster kid.

“That... was AWESOME, I'm so jealous! Dude, did you see that look she gave you? What did you do to get her attention like that? C'mon, let's go watch her beat up the bad guys.” He said as he sped forward, you just kind of shrugged. The two of you walked for a bit before being separated.

You started reading the paintings on the walls, the one detailing monster history.

(I still don’t really understand why Humans did it, I know fear and sadness makes you do crazy things, I know that so well at this point, but still...)

You didn't answer, who knew what people thought back then? Differently from today was all you knew, because human and monster living together was a non-issue when the barrier broke.

You came up to the carving of how a monster could absorb a human SOUL.

(We're taught this pretty young, the reason the war happened was because humans learned that it was possible. And then I... for their sake, I...)

“You cared about them a lot, didn't you?” You said, remembering how coldly Chara cut down
Flowey, even when he made it clear that he remembered being Asriel, and even used that face to try to get sympathy.

(According to them, more than anybody else in the world did.)

You couldn't help but call back to that moment when they saved you from the presence's grasp, you still didn't understand, why did they do that?

The plants that blossomed into platforms had altered slightly, the gap was all twisty and weird and you had to angle even the first part in a bizarre way to be able to pass, but it wasn't much worse than it was. Papyrus called, you told him you weren't wearing a bandage, even though you were, you knew it wouldn't really matter in the long run.

Aaron jumped you, you flexed off with him and he flexed back, though the muscles that assaulted your SOUL barely gave you enough time to move. Thankfully he flexed himself out of your presence before you would be too hurt. Woshua too sent a typhoon at you when you requested to be cleaned, but you hit the green wave and he was willing to back off at that.

You were chased down by Undyne through the narrow passage, her spears were coming at you like rain this time, and were about as hard to dodge, but you somehow made it long enough to hit the tall grass and watch as she accidentally grabbed the kid and walked off.

“Yo! Did you see that? Undyne... touched me! Dude, I'm never washing my face again!” He said as he sprinted off.

(You seem to know him, what's his name?)

“Kid.” You responded flatly.

(Wait, really? What kind of parent names their kid that?)

You shrugged as you continued onwards.

You solved the telescope maze and fell victim to Sans' prank, even though you really should have known better. You walked down and got the call from Papyrus about his well intentioned attempted to deflect Undyne that always backfired spectacularly, and listened to Onionsan try his best to keep his happy face on as he talked to you.

You hummed with Shyren until her confidence was restored and looked at the plaque on the walls.

(A human absorbing a Boss Monster's soul, they say it never happened but I know someone else who did it, you and me makes two.)

As you went into the next room, you felt yourself coming to a stop at that particular statue.

(Why does looking at this statue... make me feel so sad?)

You frowned at that, “It's...”

You said lowly as you walked into the next room and got an umbrella, as you placed it in the statue's hands, the music box began to play. You started feeling something damp on your face, it was tears.
(This song is... it's...)

When I was born, a monster who was really good with music wrote this song for us, my mom told me it was the first thing that made me stop crying, and she'd always hum it to me, or play it on a music box when nothing else worked... Frisk, this is my memorial, isn't it?

Frisk, I know I haven't asked but... just how many years has it been since I died?)

You didn't actually know, you just knew it was a while, “Long.” You stated, trying to wipe away the tears. Asriel had been dull to the journey, you figured, this was the first reminder he actually had that he'd been dead for what might have been decades, and he only continued living because you saved him from passing on.

...

(Frisk... why did you come back and save me even though I died? Was it because you heard from my parents about me, or from someone else? I'm trying to figure out, why would someone who never met me try so hard to keep me around?)

You took a seat and looked up at the statue as the music box played in the background, “Asriel... at the end of this journey, your body comes back to life as a hateful, empty shell who wants to destroy everything.” You said, eliciting a gasp from him, “I call your memories and your conscience back into you and make you remember who you were, the kind person you actually are, you break the barrier, but you still don't have a SOUL, you go away again.”

(Frisk...)

“I'm taking you to the end no matter how hard it gets, because if your body meets your soul then... then... maybe you won't go away again, maybe I can actually save everyone this time!” You started crying your own tears and Asriel joined in, you had never cried so hard in your life.

“But this isn't about just saving you for the sake of saving you... Asgore and Toriel... mom and dad, I want them to be happy too, and I want you to live the life you deserved to have before you lost it, that's why I'm doing this.”

(I...I... Frisk...)

You sat in the cave, listening to the song play for a good minute before the tears dried and Asriel spoke again.

(Thank you, I'm good, let's get going.)

You nodded and headed on, grabbing an umbrella and meeting up with Kid again as you walked through the “rainy” hallways. “There it is.” You said as you looked over the shining city in the background, it looked so far away, “New Home.”

(That's where it always ends?)

“Always.” You said as Kid ran on past you, you followed behind shortly. You knew what came next when Kid boosted you up that tall ledge that led into a boardwalk, Undyne would start attacking you again.
The spears shooting up through the planks took a while the first time around, more than enough to dodge them safely. This time though, they primed for only half a second, if that, before shooting up through the ground, forcing you run like a madman to avoid them, and even then that wasn't enough. Spear after spear ran through your SOUL, leaving you in pain and weak.

You managed to make it to the end of the boardwalk and turned around to see Undyne destroy what you were standing on. You fell again and blacked out.

“Frisk! Hey, mom said school's starting soon, you need to wake up, sleepyhead!” You gave a dismissive wave as Asriel tried to shake you out of bed, “Don't forget she's the principal, we'll be in big trouble if we blow off school, not to mention it makes her look bad.”

“Come on Frisk, wake up already!”

“Wake up!”

Before anyone says anything, apparently Toby himself said Monster Kid's name is actually Kid? I dunno, I haven't been able to find that quote, but I'm running with it.

Next chapter will be about the length of the rest, the initial exploration of Waterfall isn't very big on puzzles to begin with, it's moreso about the story.
This still wound up being a bit shorter than I figured it would, but oh well, what can you do?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

(Wake up, Frisk, wake up!)

You were roused from your dreams by Asriel calling to you, you groaned a bit as you got your bearings. Right, Undyne knocked you out, you should be in the dump now.

(Morning, you seemed like you were having a good dream.)

You shook your head, “Pretty decent.” You stated, principal Toriel wasn't your favorite mode to think of your adopted mother in, her child or not she never did you any special favors and probably worked you a lot harder so you’d set a good example.

(Huh, so this is where all the garbage goes to, I think I remember Alphys saying stuff from the surface would occasionally fall down here too.)

You closed your eyes and looked down at the sunflowers that had broken your fall, then propped yourself up and started wading through the trash. You idly thought about later in your adventure as you did, you'd bring Alphys here for a “date” and then immediately head off to the true labs, it would be your final destination before the end of the trip.

As you waded, you took the time to dig through one of the pieces of trash for some astronaut food, then passed by the mad dummy.

You didn't even remember what you did to his cousin in this loop, but he never really needed an excuse to attack you to start with.

(This ghost has anger issues.)

“Tell me about it.” You said as you idly sidestepped the dummy dust balls at just the right trajectory that they hit their master. A few repeats and he freaked out and replaced them with the dummy-bots. Nothing much to those either, they’d home around once then lose their homing and be able to hit the dummy.

“Bah, idiots, Idiots, IDIOTS!!! Thankfully I've got my new and improved weapon, Laser-dummy-bot, go!” Uh oh, that didn't sound good.

A row of new dummies that you hadn’t seen before appeared to strike at you, you braced yourself as they started to charge up and glow slightly.

(Uhhh?)
All at once they stopped charging and began glowing in rainbow colors, you weren't expecting just how fast the lasers were going to be, they all hit you dead on, causing things to go dark.

You shook your head and looked around, you were in the previous room. “Did I just?” You looked around, he'd just killed you, you'd just died and had to LOAD.

(Gee, you seem disoriented, are you okay?)

You crossed your arms, “He actually killed me.” The fact you just cheated death would be a feat worthy of some PTSD, or wayward blessings directed towards various deities, for you it was just an excuse to be incredulous.

(Uhh, huh?)

You sighed, telling Asriel that you had to LOAD because of the enemy in the next room.

(Wow, I uh... how do you respond to that?)

You blinked twice, you didn't actually know how to respond to someone saying that. You shook your head and went in, re-engaging the dummy for a second round.

Thankfully round two went much smoother, you waited for the lasers to finish charging and dodged out of the way facing the dummy, the lasers all hit him at once and, to your horror, caused him to immolate.

“I'm on fire, I'm on fire, I'M ON FIRE!!!!” He screamed as he dove into the water to extinguish himself, the surfaced, “You know what?! Forget this!” He said as he stormed off, well that was new.

“Oh... I just missed your friend.” You heard that familiar, weak voice, “ohhh... I was just coming by to say hi and he left...” It was Napstablook, self-conscious as ever.

“hey, my house is just up the way, you can drop by if you want to visit... or not...” He said as he drearily floated away.

(Is he always so down?)

“Even when he's happy.” You responded with a sympathetic smile as you watched him float off, then went over to go join him.

He always seemed so happy when you visited him, as happy as he could get, at least. You listened to his music tracks and attempted, and failed, to eat the sandwich he offered you, then took up his offer to lay down and feel like garbage.

(Huh, how does one even feel like garbage? Do you just kind of- whoaaaaw...)

Asriel seemed shocked by how awesome feeling like garbage was.

You put Blook's music back on before leaving and watched as Aaron and Woshua ran off afraid.

(I mean, it's not that bad.)
You shrugged as you continued onwards into the room with the glow in the dark mushrooms and were jumped by a Temmie. You just sat there for a minute wondering what the heck it was going to do, everything to this point was just 'what happened before, but more', Temmie was... special, in that way.

(Uh... Frisk? Its face just vibrated off its body.)

“It does that.” You said in a completely unsurprised tone of voice before eventually deciding to flex, better to deal with Aaron who you could at least predict instead of dealing with Temmie.

You counted your blessings as you flexed Aaron out of the room, then walked down into Temmie village.

(Golly, there's an entire village of these guys?)

“Just seven or eight... and Bob.” You stated as you chatted them all up and spent some time buying and re-selling enough to pay for the shopkeeper's college, and still turning enough of a profit to be set on money for the rest of the adventure.

(Frisk... did she just let you buy and re-sell the same Temmie flake enough times to buy the most expensive thing on the list and still turn a profit?

Can we go back to the main part of the caves where vicious monsters want to kill us? At least out there things make sense.)

You giggled at that as you left, you were filled with Determination.

Continuing onwards into the dark room with the lanterns and crystals, you stumbled through the darkness and showed Moldbygg your respect for personal boundaries and started wading again, eventually coming to the echo flower.

“Behind you.”

You turned around as the caves lit up to see Undyne approaching.

“Seven.” She said, “Seven human souls... and our King, King Asgore Dreemurr... will become a god. With that power, Asgore can finally shatter the barrier, he will finally take the surface back from humanity and give them back the suffering and pain we have endured.”

(What... why?)

You frowned as you felt Asriel's emotions coming up again, “Understand, human? This is your only chance for redemption, give up your SOUL, or I'll tear it from your body.” Undyne said as she summoned a spear and started to approach you.

You didn't get ready to fight though, because you knew there would be an intervention. Kid jumped from a patch of tall grass and distracted Undyne, she didn't want him being involved so she grabbed him by the cheek and carted him away, giving you time to move forward.

(Gee, that lady knight makes me feel really uneasy.)

“Let her ego come out, you won't feel that way for long.” You said. Her ego is what actually made
her beatable in this path, in the other one she was far more solemn, more serious, and it turned her into an unholy terror that killed you only a few less times than Sans did, despite possessing the same fighting style as before.

You walked through the room with the echo flowers and to the narrow bridge, you refused to tell off Kid and then saved him when he tripped and almost fell. “Y...yo...dude! If you want to hurt my friend... you gotta go through me!” Kid stated after you rescued him, forcing Undyne to back off. You said your goodbyes and watched as he went home, then proceeded into the next room.

Undyne started telling you about the monster's history before cutting herself off with a cry of “Ngaaaaah!” and removing her helmet, offering you the chance to SAVE before entering combat, one you gladly took up.

(Concentrate Frisk, I'm here for you.)

Undyne attacks!

You nodded as Undyne swept over your soul, making you immobile but granting you a shield.

And then the combat kicked in. Undyne attacked you with every bit as much ferocity as she did on that other route, except now you didn't have the LOVE and health to stand near as much of a threat.

You didn't even make it past the first hail of spears before having to LOAD.

Round two.

You made it a little farther this time, but still no dice, you just stared opened mouth as Undyne sent two spears from two different directions at the same time, something that was literally unavoidable.

Round three.

You were getting a little frustrated, honestly, but you told yourself it was okay, you weren't going to fight back, you just needed to figure something out.

(Frisk, you don't seem to be in a very good mindset, are you okay?)

You shook your head, “There's way more resistance this time, she's able to make determination, she's not going to give up that easily.” You said as you re-engaged her.

Round seven.

You weren't getting angry, you told yourself you weren't... getting... angry. Baby steps though, you were making it a little farther every attempt, all you needed to do was get to the point where she'd let you run, then you'd double back to Hotland.

Round ten.

You were done, you had no idea what to do, then you remembered Papyrus. You didn't want him put in the line of fire, but Asriel may be the key to this.

“Asriel... can I ask you to help me on this?”
(Huh? I can try.)

Round Eleven.

You started realizing the universe had looped into some kind of dependency on Asriel's presence alongside yours, when his SOUL began to join in, a second shield appeared behind you to block the spears you had just been soaking up before.

It made it do-able, but it wasn't any easier, wave after wave of spear came from every direction, but Asriel had your back and deflected as many as he could.

Eventually that flash of hope came as Undyne swept her spear over you and and allowed you to run. She was a lot faster than you, at least you remembered it that way, but the second you thought about having to go through that hell again on a LOAD made you break out into the fastest sprint you've ever done.

Eventually your phone rang, you looked at Undyne and gave her the 'one moment' finger and she nodded understandingly.

(Well that's... polite of her.)

Asriel said, kind of at a loss for words as you listened to Papyrus scream about how you and Undyne would become besties, you nodded and hung up, “Finished?” Undyne asked, you just nodded, then proceeded to run again, into Hotland.

Undyne was hung up by noticing Sans not doing his job, then collapsed from the heat when you crossed the bridge. Despite the hell she put you through, you didn't even hesitate to get a cup of water and pour it on her head to rejuvenate her, she shot you a glance and walked off.

(That was... a trial.)

You nodded, praying silently that Mettaton wouldn't be nearly as bad as that was as you made a SAVE before Alphys' lab, then hitched a ride on the river person's boat back to Waterfall, it was time to make another friend.

Nothing about your “date” with Undyne really changed, you watched as Papyrus jumped out the window to excuse himself, how Undyne offered you a drink, annihilated her table and all but force you to pick some tea.

“You know, it's funny.” Undyne said, “You remind me a lot of Asgore, you know, one time I attacked him to try to prove myself, I couldn't land a blow on him no matter how hard I tried, and what's worse, he didn't fight back the entire time.” You closed your eyes as you took a sip of the tea.

(Dad was always the single nicest person I knew, he would never get angry, never raise his voice, was always willing to listen to people's problem and solve them if he could...)

You nodded as Undyne started talking about Papyrus. When would it be a good time to break the news to him? That Asgore wouldn't back down, that you'd have to fight to wound, and then Flowey would...

You desperately wished that you could just go to the labs after reaching New Home, but you hadn't fought Flowey in his insane god form since the True Reset, there won't be anything you can do
about it.

(You seem down, Frisk, you're not telling me something about dad, are you?)

He had you figured out before you could even say a word about it. You shook your head, putting on a happy face for the rest of your visit with Undyne as she decided to teach you how to cook, and ending with her house as a fireball but her firmly in the realm of being your friend.

Rather than immediately proceed to Hotland, you returned to Snowdin for a good night's sleep, though you weren't half-dead this time so you probably wouldn't be able to sleep in the Snowed Inn, you asked Papyrus if it was okay to stay at his house for the night before continuing your journey, and he seemed all for it.

You rested on the couch and closed your eyes, ready for tomorrow and filled with determination.

“Come on runts! Is that all you got?! How do you expect to be able to run a marathon if you can't even outrun me!?” Undyne said as she chased after the two of you whirling a spear. Her methods of training were always a bit more... intense.

You always felt like she was about to kill you if you tripped, but if you actually got hurt during training she'd be the first to call for help, or go get it herself if it was incapacitating but not super severe, and she would always bring Alphys over to hang out with the two of you and watch anime, even though Toriel didn't approve of how violent it was.

Chapter End Notes

Hmm, things to say, hrm...

Well, updates will probably be slower instead of the one a day I've been putting out, these are getting lengthy and I'm trying to stay as detail oriented as possible, combined with other real life stuff to do.
Okay so I may have lied about there being a break between updates, I had a fit of inspiration and just wanted to write.

You woke up and rolled off the couch hard enough to give a loud thud. “Uhh, feels like I slept on a pile of rocks.” You muttered as you stood up and looked under the cushions, right, you had completely forgotten about just how many individual coins Papyrus and Sans had lost under their couch.

(Well, at least it en”rich”ed your experience.)

Asriel laughed at his own pun, your eyebrow twitched slightly at that, “So you do take after your mother.” You deadpanned as you walked outside. You gave a wave to Papyrus and Undyne as you headed out.

(Were those two standing outside all night waiting to see us off?)

“I wouldn’t be surprised Asriel, I wouldn’t in the least.” You said as you reached up to a tree and got a stray stick, this would be useful soon. You got on the river person’s boat and headed to Hotland. You departed and waved goodbye to them before walking into Alphys’ lab.

Alphys hadn't changed any, still a walking bundle of nervous breakdown waiting to happen, you listened diligently as she explained the situation with Mettaton, then the shaking as he appeared and you were launched into an impromptu quiz show.

“Welcome to the quiz, human! I- oh yes, before we can begin, I almost forgot.” He suddenly whipped around and grabbed Alphys, and wheeled her out of your sight, then locked the door behind him.

(So, killer robot, why have things gotten so weird since I've been gone?)

This was not going to be pleasant. At all.

The quiz begins.

“Question one: What is the prize for answering correctly?” He was asking the same questions, you gave a silent thanks as you answered correctly, it wasn't a hard question.

Question after question came at you, then you got to the really hard stuff, stuff that Alphys would have helped you with by signing with her hands towards you. You had a slight inkling that you remembered what number the answers were and did such, but all it took was one wrong answer.

(Multiple choice is a pretty awful format for a quiz.)
“Bzzzt! Wrongo!” He zapped you once with electricity that left you feeling fried and laying on the ground, if he hit you with that again you would die. You shook your head and stayed determined, somehow recalling enough of the previous loops to get through the quiz.

After he boosted off, Alphys unlocked the door and charged in, “O-oh my gosh, a-are you alright?!” You just rolled over on your back and coughed out a cloud of smoke. “Oh no! U-uh, uh, oh, I know!” She reached into her fridge and pulled out some thankfully pre-prepared instant noodles and offered them to you, you sat up and started eating to regain your strength.

“I w-wasn't expecting him to throw me out like that, I-I would have helped you if he hadn't.” She said, rubbing the back of her neck and sweating profusely, you just smiled and told her it was okay, “O-oh, well uh, ohhh. It looks like Mettaton is playing for keeps, O-oh! I know, give me your phone for a second, i-if that's okay.” You nodded and handed her your phone, then watched as she ran off to upgrade it.

Playing for keeps was an understatement. Originally he played along with Alphys' attempts to be the hero until the Core, this time it seemed like he was actually planning to kill you and just keeping things sporting with the games.

Alphys brought your upgraded phone back to you and ran into the bathroom-that-wasn't-a-bathroom to hide, you wanted to try to get into there to go ahead to the true labs, but you knew better, you had to keep things at least a little consistent or something may go wrong.

You walked outside and spent a minute fiddling with the phone to turn off the automatic notifications for the underground's social media, listening to Alphys ramble was charming the first time, but you had places to be and couldn't get distracted.

You were jumped by Vulkin and gave him a big old hug, ignoring Asriel's high-pitched squeeks of how cute it was, and the burning sensation on your body that was hurting your defenses as you sent the little guy on its way. You stood in Tsundereplane's personal space until she ran off blushing.

(Ah... young... love?)

Asriel sounded incredibly confused as you walked south and grabbed the frying pan that belonged to one of the other fallen humans, this would definitely come in handing for squeezing that bit of extra energy out of the monster food you ate.

You listened to Alphys' call about the laser grid and how orange attacks worked and managed to duck and weave through the security system and solved the block-moving shooter puzzles, they were more complicated but without any impending threat of death they seemed almost a non-issue after everything else.

(Puzzles puzzles everywhere, someone has issues.)

You shook your head at that as you went into Mettaton's next trap, the cooking show.

Things proceeded as normal until the part where your phone turned into a jetpack and you started flying, Mettaton was trying very hard to not let you reach the top, the attacks thrown at your SOUL during battles was nothing compared to the shower of flour, eggs and milk.

You didn't make it and went back to the ground, you saw Mettaton rev up the chainsaw and look at
you with purpose.

Nope.

You immediately loaded your last save and went about doing it successfully, then took a sigh of relief.

(That was uh... intimidating)

“Yeah, you should have seen what I had to LOAD from.” You responded, thankful that he was still playing along enough to let it go when he was “thwarted”.

You went upstairs and said hey to Sans, “hey kid, wanna buy a hot dog?” He asked you, holding one out, you shrugged and took one, even though you knew it wasn't actually a hot dog.

“Hey, Sans?” You stated, causing him to look up at you, “See you at the hotel.” You said with a bit of a smile, he blinked twice at that, then closed his left eye and rubbed his head.

“heh, that time travel stuff is pretty creepy when the shoe's on the other foot.” Well at least he admitted it, “but yeah, see ya there.” You continued, taking the time to look down at your phone to see Papyrus posting his flex picture, it was as charming as ever.

You went through the puzzle that Alphys would interrupt you on, then stared at the puzzle you wish she'd have helped you with, the switching steam vent puzzle was much longer and way more complicated this time.

It probably took you half an hour to solve the puzzle, during which time you watched Tsunderplane flying around trying to get you to notice her but acting indignant when you actually did, and Sans walking by and, in a way unknown to you, walking across the conveyor belt at his normal pace without being carried backwards.

You finally got past it and gave a heavy sigh.

(That was easily the most annoying puzzle that hasn't been a threat to our life that we've had to do yet.)

Your thoughts exactly.

You hooked up the royal guards despite how many blades they swung at you and headed on to Mettaton's “news cast”.

Naturally, he didn't care what you selected, just that you did and suddenly everything was a bomb.

Thankfully this challenge was mostly unchanged with the addition that Alphys couldn't peg down the oddly nimble glass of water, you had to snag it out of midair to be able to disarm it.

(Golly, this place is going on for a long time.)

Onwards you went, making sure to remember Heats Flamesman's name and jumping through the rest of Hotlands' hurdles and puzzles, eventually arriving at Mettaton's opera. When it came time for the trap door, you pursed your lips and tried something new by jumping and grabbing his dress.
“Wha- hey, come on darling! Haven't you ever heard of dramatic tension?!” He said as he tried to shake you off, eventually succeeding and dropping you into his dungeon, oh well, it was worth a shot. Especially because you didn't want to imagine that he was going to force you to actually complete the maze or try to kill you.

You didn't pass it, that was a given considering its nature, but thankfully Alphys got the firewalls turned off and then helped invert your soul so you could chase Mettaton off.

You looked at the area of Muffet's web, this is what you bought the spider donut for. You ate it after she ambushed you and she was more than happy to let someone who supported their enterprise go free. You arrived at the MTT hotel and met up with Sans.

“hey kid, ready for that bite?” He said, not bothering to phrase it like you didn't know it was coming. You nodded and followed him through his shortcut.

“well, here we are huh? your journey's almost over, just through the core and then to asgore.” You cringed at that, you didn't want to fight Asgore, but what could you do to stop it? You shook your head.

(Frisk, when we have a moment, please tell me what happens... I deserve to know.)

You nodded, “You're right, you do.” You said, uncaring that Sans was right there.

“So, kid, guess now's as good a time as any to tell me who you're talking to.” Sans said, eyeing you. You looked around to make sure there were no errant ears, then started to talk.

You told him how the reset threw you way farther back than just the start of your journey, how you'd gone back to the night of Asriel's death and managed to save his soul from disappearing, how he's been with you the whole time talking in your head, seeing your travels and understanding what will happen.

Sans didn't respond, he was, for the first time you've ever seen, completely speechless. Eventually though, he found his words, “kid... it sounds so crazy, that something like that could happen but... y'know what? i believe you.”

He looked at you with a smile, “you got some precious cargo there kid, i'm tempted to ask what you intend to do with his SOUL but no body, but you don't have to tell me, we all got our part to play in this, and if i got to know too much, it might not happen the way its supposed to.”

He looked up at the ceiling, “see ya at new home, frisk.” He said before walking off, you nodded, feeling filled with determination.

(Wait, did you hear what he called you?)

You hadn't even realized it until Asriel called attention to it, he just called you by your name, something that should be impossible in every sense of the word. Just who in the world was he? Even in the best ending, you never figured out how he knew so much.

You shook your head and bought a stay at the hotel despite the awful prices, you'd made sure to get at least enough money from Temmie to afford it. You walked in and sat down on the bed, then sighed, “Asriel... about your dad.” You said, you weren't looking forward to this.
(Frisk, you told me he survives in the ending you're going for, but every time someone brings him up you get crestfallen, what aren't you telling me?)

You frowned as you laid down in the bed and stared at the ceiling, “Dad...” You said, “The first time we fight him, there's only one outcome...”

(You don't mean...)

“I don't kill him, but that flower, the one from the ruins, he finishes him off after we leave him weakened, even if I try to spare him.” You frowned deeply as Asriel started crying.

(Why?! You mean I'll have to watch it happen?!) You shook your head, trying to not add your tears to his own, “You won't remember it, after I finish dealing with Flowey, I reset back to the time when he's alive and we work towards the best ending from there... Asriel, I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner because.. I'm not sure if I wanted to at all, you'd wind up forgetting it anyway.” You said, feeling the guilt run up your spine.

(How do you know that?! How would you know that I'd forget? I can still feel the ripples of the other times when you've died, I can't remember them vividly but I know they happened!)

You closed your eyes and started crying, “I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.” You said as you cried alongside him, “It won't be something you want to see, it won't be easy to stand by and watch, but it has to happen this way at least once. I'm sorry!” You screamed.

(I...)

There was a long silence between the two of you before he spoke again.

(You're sure it's going to happen this way?)

“Positive.” You said, feeling that twinge of doubt in your head, that moment of “but what if it doesn't?”, what if you can't guarantee that ending happens amongst the rest of the mess going on with the timeline, and how harsh this adventure has been on you?

You couldn't, as much as you hated to admit it, you just had to hope, that's all you could do.

You rested your head and fell asleep, it was a dreamless sleep that was only a little better than a nightmare, you woke up and prepared to head on to the Core.

You didn't want to let it get the better of you, but it kind of was, thinking of what could go wrong that could diverge from your happy ending.

Flowey could see Asriel's soul and decide he doesn't want to enact his plan because he knows what you're doing, Asgore might see it and not decide to fight back, in which case to make it happen you'd have to- oh God.

No, you shook those thoughts out of your head and just kept determined, what else could you do?

You made your way through the core until the branching paths at the end, you solved the shooting puzzle, it was probably going to be easier than the gauntlet of fights in this path.
The time came when you had made it to the end.

Mettaton.

“Hey look! A mirror.” You called out, causing him to spin around so you could flip the switch.

“Clever... very clever.”

Mettaton EX makes his debut.

You weren’t sure what was going to happen differently this time, but you started out by grabbing your stick and throwing it, Mettaton blinked and caught in his teeth, flashing a grin like he'd just caught a thrown rose and causing the ratings to rise.

The fight was like most of the rest up to this point, that kind of “the same but more” philosophy, more bombs, more bots, and he attacked you with his heart more frequently.

But you didn't give in, you let yourself get bashed and posed dramatically, you ate food when you needed to in order to avoid death, you wrote an essay so long he said you should write a book and gave huge ratings.

You let the crowd cheer for your death with a heel turn, but you never boasted because you were fairly sure you'd be unable to keep that promise.

You were shocked, blown up and zapped over and over again, but you were so close to the end, so close to Asgore, you were filled with determination.

But the thing was, he wasn't backing down, even when he was just a torso and the ratings went over ten thousand he wasn't giving up. Losing your patience, you eventually just started to scream.

“Mettaton!” You yelled, “I won't just save myself, I won't just leave and I won't kill Asgore! I'll find a way to break the barrier for him so everyone can follow me out, I PROMISE!” Mettaton just stared at you in shock as the music stopped, the ratings shot off like a rocket.

“Darling... you... do you have any idea what you just promised us?” You closed your eyes, then looked up at him with a smile as you opened them again.

“I meant what I said.” You stated plainly, “I'll do it.”

The show ended then and there, the phone was flooded with callers not only screaming their love for Mettaton and desire to not see him leave, but also screaming in support of you, taking your promise to heart.

The fight came to a close as the cameras turned off, “Human... you've made an impossible dream for all of us, not just that the barrier will fall, but that it won't cost you your life.” You looked up at him and grinned, “The dream will come true.” You said confidently, Mettaton, for perhaps the first time in his life, had no words.

“Knock 'em dead, darling.” He finally said as his batteries ran out just in time for Alphys to come inside.

You walked towards the elevator to New Home as Alphys told you about Asgore. “What you said...
about breaking the barrier for us, how can you keep a promise like that when it's i-impossible?” She asked you.

You turned around and smiled at her, “Because I don't break promises, even the impossible ones.” You said, idly reaching up to your chest as the elevator closed behind you.

It was off to New Home, you felt yourself filling with determination.

(Let's do this, Frisk.)

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter is going to be... hoo boy.

I admit Hotland might be my least favorite area of the game even though I love the characters that the area is centered around, that's why this one is so curt and abridged, but oh well, I still think I kept it readable.
As the elevator ride ended, you stepped out and walked forward, looking at New Home from the rise that connected to the palace, “This is it, everything always comes to an end here.” You said.

Yes, everything, be it the so-so ending where Asgore dies but you escape, the best ending where the barrier shatters and you all make it out, and even that timeline you desperately wish you could forget. It all came to a head at the room where the barrier stood.

You walked into New Home and looked around, seeing that familiar layout.

(It's just like the ruins, just like I remember it.)

You walked to the left when a froggit jumped you, it was the first time you'd seen one on this path, but you knew it wasn't here to fight, it began to speak, another one joining it soon after.

“A long time ago, a human fell into the Ruins.” One said, the other continued “Injured by its fall, the human called for help.”

(Frisk, is this...?)

You grimaced, trying to not cry as you took the key from the kitchen, on the way back some Whimsun appeared.

“Asriel, the king’s son, heard the human’s call.” It said meekly as the other stuttered to continue, “He brought the human back to the castle.”

(This story is...)

“This was the first time I heard your name, the only reason I knew you existed.” You said lowly, Asriel hadn't started crying yet, the tears coming down your face were yours and nobody else's.

More monsters stood in your path as you went into Asgore's bedroom to grab the second key, taking a slight detour to grab the heart shaped locket and the dulled knife, "I'll give this back when you have a body again, but for now, I'm going to use this locket, Asriel" He didn't protest it.

“Over time, Asriel and the human became like siblings.” One added, “The King and the Queen treated the human child as their own.” The second said, “The underground was full of hope.” The third stated.

(Chara...)
Asriel's tears joined in your own as you walked down the stairs.

“And then... one day...” Two of them said together. “The human became very ill...” The next monster that appeared said.

(I don't want to listen to this again, Frisk.)

You clutched hard on your chest as you continued walking, trying to not focus on the past.

“The sick human had only one request.”

“To see the flowers from their village.”

“But there was nothing we could do.”

“The next day.”

“The next day.”

“...”

“The human died.”

(Chara... they planned it all from the start, because they wanted to help us escape, they died intending to let it be something that would free us... but...but...)

You continued walking as the monsters explained their history, how Asriel took Chara's SOUL to see their village one last time, already knowing the bitter twist that they were unaware of, how it was a ploy from the start to gather six more SOULs into Asriel so he could become a god, and how Asriel died because Chara wanted to start another war.

You recalled how you were given the chance to save him, being thrown back into the past and seeing him bashed and burned, holes where stab wounds would have been bleeding if monsters bled blood, how he fell at the feet of his horrified parents and turned to dust, starting a cycle of death in the underground that robbed human and monster alike of their lives.

The far-reaching pain of that singular, well-intentioned choice, the one that played him right into Chara's hands. That's why you wanted to save him, that's why you wanted him to live again.

It was never in his hands, and he never deserved to die just because he loved too much.

The tears wouldn't stop flowing, your tears from recalling everything up to this point, even remembering that last timeline, when Flowey told you about what he did when he woke up soulless and why he did what he did because he just wanted to feel again.

Asriel's tears, you knew, was because he was thinking about Chara, even despite everything, they were still his sibling, and he loved them.

You made it to the end of the hallway before the judge's room, the monsters had reminded you of everything. But more than that, they reminded you why you were still doing this, why you cared so much about Asriel despite how little you knew about him before you started sharing a body.
You weren't giving up, and you weren't going to die, you were filled with more determination than you ever had been before.

You walked into the stained glass hallway and saved, then walked forward.

“well, here we are.” Sans said as he stood in the shadow of a pillar, “this is the part where i'd normally judge you for every EXP you earned, and how much LOVE you've obtained... but... well, y'know how it is.” He smiled at you.

“you're almost at the end, frisk.” There it was again, the fact he knew your name sent a sensation you couldn't describe up your spine, “and you haven't killed a single person, no matter how many times you died or how stubborn they were, you refused to, even when it probably would have been the easier answer.”

“kid, i know i didn't take your word at face value at first when you told me about not being in control in that other timeline, but seeing what you did, what you've done, i'm certain that you weren't in control.”

He closed his eyes, “kid, good luck with asgore, i got something i need to check on.” With that, he walked behind the pillar, you knew that he'd disappeared behind it into one of his shortcuts.

(I'm not sure... what lays ahead, but I'm with you Frisk, let's earn this happy ending.)

“Asriel... this is the part where you probably won't remember what happens in this ending, just keep an eye out for me to snap to attention looking different, and doubling back.” You said as you saved just before the room you'd first encounter Asgore in.

(I... understand, see you on the other side, Frisk.)

You nodded as you proceeded forward into Asgore's throne room.

“Hold on just a second, I just need to finish watering the flowers.” Asgore said as you walked in, and then... you started having flashbacks.

In the best ending, Asgore and Toriel were on the way to having repaired their relationship for your sake, she still got annoyed and snippy at him, but he would always take it and never give it back, eventually he started living in the same house in his own room, but the day before the reset you saw Asgore take his bed out of the house, and him and Toriel bring in one big enough for both of them to sleep in, and you knew what that meant for their relationship.

He was your father every bit as much as Toriel was your mother, he would play catch with you, you'd share stories over tea, you'd go to the park together and get a view any kid would be jealous of riding around on his shoulders.

He turned around to face you... and you couldn't do it, before he could even register the shock on his face, you spoke out.

“Asgore.” You said lowly, “I'm not going to fight back.” You said, “I remember another time where you became someone precious to me, I can't muster up that will to hurt you, even in self-defense.”

(Frisk... you...)
Asgore didn't know how to respond, “You...” He closed his eyes, “I... is that true? In another timeline you...” He clenched a fist.

“I saved Asriel's SOUL, I don't know how, but he's with me too.” His eyes shot open wide at that, and he fell to his knees, you could see that hopeful searching glance as your SOUL started to glow with a gentle red-and-white light.

“You're... you're not lying.” He said, falling on his hands and trying to not cry.

He looked up smiled, “Asriel, is that really you?” He said, you could hear it in his voice, he wasn't keeping up his composure.

Asriel took control of you, you didn't fight it as he ran up and hugged Asgore, “This sensation... it really is you.” He said, crying.

“Aw, isn't that cute, how SICKENING!” Asgore's eyes shot open as another voice rang out, a circle of bullets appeared around Asgore and closed in, his last act for your sake was to throw you across the room to safety as Flowey's ambush prevented you from changing fate.

“No!” You and Asriel both all but screamed as you saw Asgore turn to dust and his soul shattered by one last spiteful bullet.

Flowey unburrowed and laughed in your face, “Golly, so much for the great king of monsters, left wide open because of his sentimentality!” You grimaced at that, Asgore had left himself wide open because of the emotions you'd made him feel.

“Hahahah! And while you were getting all mushy and lovey, I took the human SOULs! Now it's MY time to shine!” Flowey gave that familiar, terrible laugh as the world around you went dark.

You walked forward to the save where Flowey would ambush you and stood there, staring forward as he appeared.

“Golly, look at the mess you've made, we came so close to ruling the underground, but here I was, not anticipating just how bloodthirsty you could be, Chara!” He laughed, “You reset because you didn't like it? Because you did this before? Or just for the fun of it? Well then, if that's how you feel, then let's play a game! I'll split your SOUL in half and shatter that creamy center, I don't need that weakling anymore!” He said as he looked at Asriel's soul and smiled sadistically.

Omega-Flowey made his entry, he was still every bit as eldritch and horrifying as you remembered, and he opened up the fight by shooting that laser out of his mouth, one that you barely dodged. He only used that you try to finish you off and now he was using it in combat, it would seem that even he was going to try harder to kill you, something you didn't think was possible.

His attacks were hard to dodge the first time, this time, impossible would have been the word to use, you were only staying alive because he was still playing with you, loading his own SAVE when you died to make you go through it again.

The first SOUL lit up, light blue.

You dodged around the knives cautiously, eventually they all stopped, faced you at once and then flew in your direction. You barely managed to find the room to dodge it before calling out for help
and turning the knives into bandages to heal you.

Flowey laughed like a lunatic as he sent vines at you, you feebly struck him as his arms turned into fly traps and began to suck in locusts that tore at your SOUL and weakened you.

The second SOUL lit, Orange.

The gloves were spinning at an incredibly rapid pace compared to the last time, you could barely get in the safe zone in the center in time, and then had to just soak up the hits to reach ACT and call for help.

Back to fighting him, he started to SAVE and LOAD rapidly to catch you off guard, but this time he almost seemed to know, if you dodged one way, he would load and attack the way you'd dodge if you knew it were coming, a double-reverse psychology trick.

The third soul lit up, Dark Blue.

The ballerina shoes were just barely leaving the ground and the stars keeping you trapped would duck down, you had barely enough space to dodge, but you stayed determined until you could call for help and heal off the music notes.

“Why aren't you dead yet?!” Flowey screamed as he shot that laser again, it clipped your SOUL and left you hurting badly, another hit like that without healing and you'd be through.

The fourth lit up, Purple.

The words weren't just moving in horizontals, but diagonals, you barely had enough room to move through the criss-cross of hateful words to find the ACT command, but you persevered long enough for the hopeful words to come out.

Flowey was getting really angry at your continued persistence, he would save and load the same moment multiple times to try to catch you whichever way you thought you'd dodge, you were down to your last hit when the next SOUL lit up, green.

The fires almost reminded you of what happened with Toriel when you fought her, they would hit the bottom of the arena and bounce up to try to hit you again, you could only take one more hit and they were nearly impossible to dodge, but somehow you made it until ACT appeared and caught the eggs that came down to heal you.

“Why?! I'm actually trying this time!” Flowey all but screamed as he immediately lit up the last one, yellow.

A second gun appeared to shoot at you, the hail of bullets that were firing in every direction and so hard you didn't have much room to dodge, you took a lot of shots, but eventually reached the ACT command.

The six SOULs broke free of Flowey's control long enough to heal you back into perfect condition, this was it, time for the tide to turn.

Flowey wasn't going down without a fight, even compared to before he refused to back down as you struck him whenever the chance presented itself, the damage starting out small but increasing, his amused ouch eventually turning into pained screams as you battered him down, dodging tentacles,
lasers and bombs thrown with more severity than he ever did the first time.

You eventually struck the final blow and watched as he reset on you and started his monologue, calling for help and waiting for the six SOULs to fight back... except.

“Did you think I wouldn't have planned for this?! I've got the SOULs so far under my control that you couldn't even dream they'll help you anymore!” Your eyes widened at that, oh no.

“You can struggle all you like! call for help all you like!” He said, laughing.

“But nobody will come to help you!”

(Wrong.)

You started hearing music play around you, a simple, repetitive theme that nonetheless made you want to cry... it was that music box.

“What is that obnoxious chiming?!” Flowey screamed.

(Frisk is my sibling, they saved me from death and went out of their way to keep me around, YOU'RE NOT HURTING THEM ANYMORE!)

You felt your SOUL swell with power you had never felt before, Asriel's magic was empowering you.

“Tch, stupid sentimental brat! I'll show you where that gets you!” The mouth parted and blitzed you with a laser.

It didn't even scratch you.

“Wh-wh-what?! It did no damage?!” Flowey was freaking out as you clenched your weapon and struck, in one blow half his life depleted.

“What is this power?! Where is this coming from?! How are you so determined that you can overpower six other human SOULs?!” He screamed as he desperately tried and failed to load his save file.

You just reached up to your heart and smiled, “You'll understand soon, Flowey.” You said as you raised your dulled knife and swung one final time, ending the battle.

(I want to kill him for what he did to dad, Frisk, I really do... but everyone deserves a second chance.)

You nodded as you looked over at Flowey's damaged and broken body, refusing to finish him off.

“You... you're showing me mercy?” He said, “I haven't learned anything from this, I'll come back...” You just stared, impassive as he ranted at you, “I'll kill you! I'll kill everyone you love!” You didn't budge, “...? Why are you being... so nice to me?” You closed your eyes, “I can't understand, I can't understand! I just can't understand!” He said as he ran away.

You opened your eyes as you walked out of the barrier with Asriel's soul.
(So, what happens now?)

“We wait.” You said as you sat on the cliffside, the sun was still high in the middle of day.

Flowey eventually appeared just behind you, still stuck in the barrier, he told you about the way to get a happy ending and left, bringing a smile to your face.

(That's the sign?)

“It is.”

(See you on the other side then, Frisk.)

“One final hurdle, and then... then we'll be there.” You said as you reached up to your chest, and loaded your last save.

It was time to go for the best ending.

Chapter End Notes

The end of the God-Flowey fight was super satisfying to write with the way this AU had put itself together, I hope everyone else is satisfied seeing him absolutely pop his top in that way.

I was originally going to do a hard-mode Asgore fight, but as I was writing more I realized that in this timeline more than ever Frisk would probably refuse to fight him, so I opted for something a bit more emotional instead of physical.
Hopes and Dreams

Chapter Notes

Feeeeeelss

I had to write this one because I had so much inspiration, the game's finale filled me with determination.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Your eyes opened, you spun on your heel before going into the throne room and started walking back with purpose towards the core.

(Frisk? You did it, didn't you...)

“I didn't have to kill him... I tried to save him this time, even, but things played out the same.” You said lowly, it was awful to count your blessings that Asgore died, but things had been set up so that you could still free everyone.

(I... understand, I have a vague feeling of what happened, I know you didn't do it, that's all I need to know. So, where to?)

“To the Core, we double back to the MTT Hotel and then Undyne calls us for a favor, from there, everything falls into place.” You said as you got in the elevator that went down to Hotland.

On cue, Undyne called you for that favor and you started heading to Snowdin.

Images flashed in your mind of the life you'd live with Asriel beside you, hanging out with your friends, patiently taste testing Papyrus' spaghetti, being pranked by Sans, being worn ragged by Undyne's training and nerding out with Alphys, sharing stories and laughing over dinner with Toriel and, when she forgave him, Asgore, as a happy family.

You got out of the elevator on the bottom floor of Hotland and didn't just walk, you sprinted. It was so close, so close you could feel it. You were filled with determination.

(You seem really excited.)

“We're almost there, Asriel.” You said with a smile as you walked down and greeted the River Person.

Undyne handed you her love letter as you passed by the house in Snowdin, you grabbed another stray stick off a tree and made your way back to Hotland.

You slipped the letter under the door to Alphys' lab, then went through the whole embarrassing mess with her mistaking you for being taken on a date. You had officially befriended her, and hooked her and Undyne up.

(That's cute, they're trying to hide it but you can feel the love they have for each other.)
You nodded as you headed off from the dump and got Papyrus' call, “FOR NO REASON IN PARTICULAR... I FEEL STRONGLY THAT YOU SHOULD GO CHECK ON ALPHYS.” He told you. You wondered how he had that sensation, but remembering what Sans told you once, you had a pretty good idea where he got the idea from, that and for the love letter. You and Flowey were both playing each other, but he didn't know your endgame.

You fast-walked down to the River Person's dock and arrived at Alphys' lab, then went down the elevator as the power cut out, you were now in the darkness of the true labs.

(Something here... feels wrong.)

You steeled yourself, you knew the amalgamates were as harmless as most of the rest of the monsters were, though that wasn't saying much at this point. You just had to stay determined.

The memoryheads came first, you dodged the rainstorm of explosions they aimed towards you until you could translate their speech and turn down their invitation, you took the key in the sink and unplugged the lock.

You walked down the hallway until Reaper Bird attacked you, you mystified it, prayed for it, and chose to not pick on it as the freakish humanoid figure it summoned and tortured tried to attack you. Its component parts thanked you before departing.

As you walked, you made sure to read the logs for a refresher on what happened down here.

(Alphys... I understand why she always acted so nervous, she had such a huge guilt on her shoulders over this.)

You nodded, “A guilt we need to help lift.” You said as you walked to the room with the fans and were jumped by Endogoney. You never really stopped to realize how useful sticks had been all through your journey until you threw it and it chased after it, leaving you alone.

You dodged Lemon Bread's teeth as you hummed her sister's song to her, making her remember herself.

You joked to So Cold and made her remember her son and husband, letting her go free.

You took each key as you found them.

(Frisk... you forgot a room.)

You frowned at that, he was right. You went into the room just north of the determination extractor,

(What are these?)

You shook your head, “Home movies, ones your parents shot... and ones that you shot.” He grew silent at that.

(About Chara?)

You nodded, “This is when I realized the full gravity of what you two did, the buttercup plan...” You
didn't want to say that, but you couldn't think of how else to phrase it.

(Chara... they hated humanity, they didn't have a very happy reason for coming to Ebott, a place where people are rumored to disappear, they wanted to help us break the barrier so they...)

You shook your head, ignoring Asriel's tears running down your face as you left the room and plugged in the rest of the keys and turned the power on. On cue, Alphys came to stop the amalgamates from attacking you, then chose to stop hiding them and went to take everyone home.

You walked into the elevator as it shut behind you, and heard your phone ring.

“See you soon, Chara.” The voice said, you realized well whose voice that was.

(Chara? You're not them, you look like them, dress like them even, but you're not.)

You nodded, then gave a heavy sigh, here goes nothing, you thought as the elevator slammed shut and threw you to New Home.

You made one final save and let events with Asgore play out as normal this time, without pleading to him about Asriel's SOUL.

And then.

(M-mom?!) 

“Such an awful creature, torturing such a poor, innocent youth.” Toriel said as she sent Asgore flying, eliciting a weak smile from you.

One by one, your friends piled in, each doing their own thing to stop the fight, removing any ill will and re-affirming to Asgore that this wasn't the fate that was handed to you.

Toriel and Sans met for the first time and tormented Papyrus, Undyne and Alphys were egged on by Mettaton to almost kiss and Toriel stood in the way for your sake, everyone was standing side by side, smiling at you.

(E-everyone... Frisk, all your friends care about you so much, to be doing this for you.)

You nodded, trying to hold back tears and not think about what came next.

That thorny whip spun around and restrained everyone as Flowey appeared.

“You IDIOTS! While you guys were having your little pow-wow... I took the human SOULS! And now, not only are THOSE under my power... But all of your FRIENDS' SOULS are gonna be mine, too!” He gleefully chuckled as you clenched your fists.

(Him again...)

You watched as he ranted about how your friendships made you weak, how you were trapped and he was going to kill you, and you watched as your friends did everything within their power to protect you from him. One by one, everyone flooded into the room to support you, and Flowey gave a cackling laughter as he drew everybody's SOULs into his form... including Asriel's.
You tried to reach for his SOUL as you saw it pulled away from yours, for the first time since the reset you were alone with your thoughts as you watched that white inverted heart swept up in that torrent of everyone else's.

Asriel clenched his fists, he looked around, then he turned and opened his eyes, smiling at you, this is where the final battle truly begins... except.

“Frisk.” He called you, making your heart skip a beat, “You did it... you kept your promise.” He said, giving you a sweet smile.

“What did I say?” You said happily, holding in your tears, “I told you I always keep promises, even the impossible ones.”

You dropped to your knees, “When Flowey absorbed my SOUL just now, our memories merged, he was so angry, so ready to destroy everything, but when the memories I had made with you joined with my body, well, we became the same person, we became me.” He walked forward as you stood up, then, with a grip you wouldn't have expected from his size, he hugged you so hard you felt like you were going to be crushed. "My body did some awful things, Frisk." Your just raised your hand and patted him on the back, repeating his own words back to him about not letting the past haunt him.

“That's right, you have one more promise to fulfill.” Asriel said, stepping back, “I'll destroy the barrier and then let everyone's SOULs return to them... well, all of them but one, the one that belongs here.” He said as he started to float.

It was a massive torrent of hearts, of the hopes and dreams of everyone, they all swirled around in a vortex as the barrier split in half, then shattered like glass.

Asriel fell to his knees, you ran up and hugged him, “You did it Frisk, I'm... feeling pretty tired, I think a nap sounds good...” He said as he closed his eyes, you panicked for a split second before noticing that he was still breathing, he was just tired.

You smiled as you saw your friends' bodies re-appear in the room with you, the rest of the SOULs returning to the their homes to wake up as normal.

You wanted to fall asleep too, the weariness of the adventure was finally catching up to you, but you stayed up, because there was one last thing you would have liked to see.

Toriel was the first one to wake up, she stood and looked at you, “Frisk, you-” She stopped dead, her eyes going wide and her mouth dropping as she covered them with her hands, wordlessly, she dropped to her knees and started crying in joy at what she saw.

Asgore woke up seconds later, his reaction was identical. Before you could register what happened, both of them had swept you and Asriel into a massive hug between the four of you, bawling the largest tears you'd ever seen in your life.

“I thought that... when the ruins... your SOUL didn't look normal, but... to think that...” Toriel said unable to form a complete sentence, Asgore didn't even respond, he was too busy crying.

You just smiled through your own tears, “I wasn't going to leave this happy ending like this, not without him coming with us.”
One by one, Papyrus and Sans, then Undyne and Alphys, they all woke up, and you explained what had happened to Asriel, they all deserved to know.

“A-amazing.” Alphys stuttered, “That a power that can alter time like that even exists, much less th- that you managed to do that with it.”

“I CAN’T BELIEVE THAT FRISK MANAGED THIS! I'M NOT CRYING, I'M NOT!” Papyrus cut in, desperately trying to wipe away the tears somehow coming out of his eyesocket.

“you made a miracle happen frisk, just like you promised me, good job.” Sans said, winking at you with a wide smile.

“Hell yeah! Way to go Frisk! Not just breaking the barrier, but bringing the kid back with you!” Undyne started pumping her fists and jumping around, desperately trying to look like she was sweating from activity and not crying.

“A miracle... yes, that's... that's a good word.” Asgore said as he looked down at his son with a smile on his face, “Asriel...”

Asriel eventually woke up and looked up, he smiled and started to cry, “Mom... Dad! It's really you!” He screamed as he hugged all of you.

“THE AMOUNT OF HUGGING GOING ON IS TOO MANY HUGS WITHOUT ME INVOLVED! I WANNA JOIN IN!” Papyrus yelled as he latched onto you in a hug.

“Yeah! Yeah! That's the right idea Papyrus! Make way, C'mon Alphys!” Undyne yelled as she grabbed her girlfriend.

“W-w-wait! I don't do hugging well!” Alphys protested as she was dragged into the expanding group hug.

Sans was the only one who didn't join in, he seemed to be staring out a window at something... and sweating.

Minutes passed as everyone talked, introductions being given all around and smiles and tears in equal amounts at Asriel's return, eventually, Toriel suggested that you go on a walk around the underground and said hello to everyone before you all left.

You nodded and went outside, you were in the Judge's hall when you noticed a note had been slipped into your pocket. You took it out and read it, and your eyes widened in shock and horror, your pace suddenly quickened.

“well frisk, you did it, asriel's back to us alive, the barrier's gone, its a happy ending, right? well, maybe not. kid, something is going down at the ruins, a spacial anomaly that i feel like i've felt before.

kid, i think whatever presence controlled you is back and unhappy, its trying to do a reset.”

You ran into the ruins, this timeline was NOT going to be ripped from you.

Your steps hastened, and you were filled with determination.
You came to that room, the very first room of the adventure where the flowers broke your fall.

At first it seemed empty, but as you walked up to the flowers you heard the door slam. You turned to look at the now-sealed room and turned back around only to see another figured standing there.

A child about your age, wearing a green shirt with a single stripe, glowing dimpled cheeks and a sweet smile on their face. There was a slight gleam of light on the knife hidden behind their back.

As you tensed up, you saw strings appear on their body, followed by the open air behind them tearing open like fabric being ripped, and then opening up into a singular giant eye that looked around, eventually settling on staring directly at you. Those strings were its eyelashes, this was the presence that was controlling you, finally showing itself.

The yellow sunflowers on the ground were kicked up in a sudden, violent gust, golden petals circling around you like a tornado.

“Greetings, Frisk.”

Chapter End Notes

My reasoning for skipping the God of Hyperdeath fight is the same as Asgore last chapter, I wanted it to be more about the emotions, plus a bit of canon divergence, plus the fight's scripted to be unloseable anyway, so how would you make it harder?

Next chapter, however, is going to be the real final boss of the story and the largest part of where this diverges from being a Hard Mode and fully into the realm of being an AU story.
“You.” You said, not wanting to call their name, you knew too well who this was.

“You can call me by name, you know, I'm bound to this thing so you don't have to worry about me possessing you.” They said as they motioned to the eye that was trying to move them like a puppet on a string, and seemingly being frustrated when their movements remained their own.

“Chara, why are you back?” You asked, watching the eye as it glanced around, though it would always come right back to you.

They laughed, “Well, I've been back, ever since you... well, I can't say you, can I? Ever since they did that last loop.” Their smile still didn't go away, “I had killed everyone, I was ready to move on to the next world, but then that last one stood in the way and called you back.” They gave a shrug with their right shoulder, still hiding their knife behind their back in their left arm.

“You didn't want this, you didn't want a world of silence, so I made that decision, I blinded the entity, this presence that's controlled you, controlled us... and I made a deal with it, I would “bring its world back” if it sold its SOUL to me.” They giggled completely like any other child their age would, but the stuff they were talking about was so dissonant it sent a shiver down your spine.

“So I tried to bring the world back, but I couldn't, because there can only ever be one SAVE, and yours was still present, I'm a phantom in this world, but your heart still beats, still makes determination.” They looked back, “And besides, I wanted it to see the kind of world you'd bring about.” You cringed at that.

“I could do some things though, like rewrite minor rules of the world, make your journey harder, I wanted to see if you would break... I didn't consider that you might save Asriel's SOUL, I didn't consider that him being with you would make you try so much harder.” They laughed again.

“When it saw that you weren't going to come back to them, they decided the world would be better off reset, so that they could continue to play with you as long as they wanted.” Chara closed their eyes.

“But... I'm giving you a sporting chance here, Frisk.” You lowered your shoulders at that.

“Because the presence sold their soul to me for this chance, we're bound together now, if I die...”
Their eyes opened again, they were hollow, pitch black holes, “They die with me!” At that, the
presence suddenly jolted to stare at Chara, the pupil dilating in shock at that. You just stared forward.

“So then, Frisk, it's time for this to end, I wonder, can you find a way out of this without killing me?
Or will you validate everything I, and Flowey, believed in?”

You raised a hand to your chest and closed your eyes.

Asriel, Toriel, Asgore, Papyrus, Sans, Undyne, Alphys, Kid, Napstablook, Mettaton, everyone. If
this reset happened, you're fairly sure it wouldn't be able to happen this way again, you weren't going
to let this happen, but you also weren't going to take Chara's life.

You opened your eyes again as you felt everyone's hope, their dreams, and their love behind you.
You can do this, your SOUL began to glow.

You were brimming with DETERMINATION!

Chara and The Presence stand before you.

“Well then... let the games begin. I hope you don't mind if I go first?”

The sunflower petals that had been kicked up by Chara's appearance suddenly turned into metal,
each one like a knife circling around you. You readied your defenses as the petals all encroached on
you from every direction, a shower of metal that blew in like a storm.

You managed to dodge them when you felt a presence on the left side of the arena. You quickly
steadied yourself and pushed away as a wall of knives erupted from the edge of the arena. This
wasn't the kind of power a human should have, what WERE they?

You counted your blessings that you managed to avoid that attack as you looked up at Chara, trying
to think of how you could defeat them without killing them, while still removing that Presence.

“That skeleton taught me a thing or two about playing unfairly for raised stakes, hope you don't mind
if I emulate him a bit.” Chara said, giggling childishly again. You frowned deeply at that, the
thought of someone emulating Sans didn't exactly appeal to you.

You knew the kind of creature Chara was, you couldn't defeat them by ACTing, you had no choice
but to FIGHT. You struck out with the dull knife, Chara made no effort to dodge it, but it didn't do
much damage either.

“It's funny, when this journey began I thought “Why am I alive? Didn't our plan fail?” And then I
realized, I was called back to life.” Chara narrated as they launched their next attack. A hail of
shrapnel exploded over you and rained down in every direction, you took a scratch to your SOUL
and screamed a bit.

That wasn't it though, three knives appeared at the top of the arena and zeroed in on you, then
launched straight forward, their timing deliberate enough to provide you trouble dodging even on a
perfect horizontal strafe.

You rubbed the cut that they made, then struck again, once again it barely hurt them.

“At first, I thought it was you, your determination, your love of EXP, LOVE, Gold and desire to get
stronger, the four pillar of my being, I thought that was why I was called back, to help you destroy this world.” The shrapnel formed a row that suddenly began to move rapidly, forcing you to dodge through a narrow tunnel, another attack that they ripped from Sans, one you were awful at dodging.

Your SOUL skipped along the blades and left you wounded, but you had prepared, you pulled a bicycle out of your pocket and broke it in half before eating it to get your strength back.

“And then, after it was all over, I realize it wasn't you that called me, it was this thing, this Presence from somewhere else, you never had a choice in the matter, just a loyal puppet on a string regardless of your own wishes.” You suddenly felt very confined, you couldn't move! A knife appeared above you and began to slowly approach.

“Hey Frisk, don't you dare let this brat win!” “Dude! Keep fighting!” You heard Undyne and Kid's voices call in your mind and felt your SOUL change to GREEN. You summoned a shield and deflected Chara's knife.

“You know, it wasn't my intention to be thrown into a life where I'd have to deal with monsters, but I was glad I did.” Chara stated, somewhat somberly even though they never dropped that smile. The shrapnel whirled around you, little bits coming at you from various directions, forcing you to block, followed by another knife aimed dead at your heart that you blocked, but caused the shield to break.

You took another swipe at Chara, still no damage of note.

“What I felt for Asriel, for Toriel and Asgore... it was genuine, you might find that hard to believe, I know I do.” Knives circled around the arena then came towards you, each one spinning clockwise in a pattern that left you just barely enough room to dodge. You didn't make it and got cut up.

You hissed in pain and dreamed of the future you were fighting for, the empty space in your inventory started filling up.

“So why did I kill them on that other path then? Hell if I know, maybe I'm like Flowey was, alive again but without a SOUL, where is my SOUL? If I had to guess, probably burning in Hell.” They stated matter-of-factly as you saw knives appear up top, they were charging up to stab.

“HUMAN! WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!” “ooooh... please be safe.” Papyrus and Napstablook's voices yelled in your head as you felt your SOUL turn BLUE, it dropped to the bottom of the arena affected by gravity just in time to avoid the knives that stabbed in at a lightning fast pace.

You reached up to your chest, nodding at their support, you reached into your pocket and the dream came true, restoring you to full health.

“I hated humanity, I lost my parents young and everyone who saw me treated me like living refuse, even in the little shire I called home. I never really had a home, falling into the Underground was meant to be an end to the pain, in a way, I guess it was.” Knives ran along the floor of the arena, forcing you to jump under the effect of the blue soul and guiding you towards the center of the arena. Two knives as long as the area to started closing in from both sides.

“on days like these, kids like them should be burning in hell, right, frisk?” Sans' voice called out as the world flickered to black, when things returned to normal the blades were gone and your SOUL was normal again.

“But the more I thought about it, the more I realized just how much the monsters had been hurt by
humanity too, I wanted to help them... and then I learned about the nature of SOULs.” The shrapnel around you flew to the top of the arena and showed you gaps to move through, then turned into a cloud and swarmed down, parting where the holes were shown to you and allowing you to dodge.

You took another swipe, still just a chip against their body.

“I was still hollow, still wanted to die, and monsters wanted to go free, it was a simple solution, really, so I put an end to it all by eating buttercups, I didn't expect it to be quite such an unpleasant way to go.” They giggled as the shrapnel turned into another cloud, this one had no gaps in it as it slowly descended on you.

“W-we're here too!” “Don't let this ruffian dim your star, Darling!” Alphys and Mettaton's voices called as your SOUL inverted, turned YELLOW and became capable of shooting, you used it to blow a hole in the storm of shrapnel and moved through safely.

You took a jab at them, still nothing.

“I didn't anticipate having a degree of control over Asriel's body when he absorbed me, nor did I think he'd be so innocent as to not fight back even if it cost him his life... we were close you know, if I still had a SOUL, maybe I'd even be remorseful about it.” Chara shook their head and closed their eyes as knives appeared in a line above you.

You moved your SOUL into position and shot at them, only to have them explode into smaller, faster knives, but they moved fast enough to give you an opening to slip through them as they came down in a sequence instead of all at once.

Your SOUL turned back to normal as you acted, holding onto your hopes.

“You're being persistent, but you still aren't trying to kill me, are you? You're not going to get your happy ending this way, if you wait much longer the Presence will reset, you'll lose everything.” They said as a sequence repeated, you were trapped in a box and forced to block knives, then brought under gravity and made to jump a gauntlet. They followed it up by doing an attack that Sans blinked out of existence for you, and making you shoot more obstacles.

You closed your eyes, considering what to do.

“Or, are you saying you want things to reset again? Knowing this entity will then have you back under their control, to be brought to another ending where you kill everyone and I'm in control of you?” They gave a laugh as they finally opened their eyes again, they didn't bother to attack you.

You opened your eyes as well, not sure what to do.

“Let me take the words out of your mouth, Frisk, “I don't care, I'll find a way even still.” There's determined, then there's being stupid.” They said as the storm of shrapnel began to swarm you with no way to be blocked.

“Do not be afraid my child, please return to us safely.” Toriel's voice called out, “Don't give in, Frisk, you are the future of humans and monsters.” Asgore's voice added in.

Two large white paws swept over the arena, bathing everywhere but the area you were in with fire magic and burning away the shrapnel like the flower petals they actually were.
“That's exactly what I'll do.” You said, finally speaking.

For the first time, Chara lost that sweet smile, “Like I said, stupid. How many loops would you be willing to try to get these results again? Ten? A hundred? A thousand? A million? How can you stay determined knowing that this lucky fluke might be the only chance you get? When does it stop being Frisk looking for it, and when will it end up being this eyeball doing it for you?” That caused your head to jerk up.

“So be it, if you won't kill me, then I'll kill you instead!” They finally brought that hidden real knife around and physically lunged for your SOUL, you tried to dodge, but it was going to be a direct hit.

There was a slight metallic ting as their knife hit something else.

“That's... Asriel's locket?” Chara said as they looked at you on the ground, “Why... do you have that?” They asked.

“I was going to give it to Asriel when I brought them back, but I forgot.” You responded.

Chara just sat there for a minute, staring at the locket, “Open it.” They said, you didn't bother to protest, you opened it and saw a picture of Chara and Asriel sitting side by side, looking happy.

Chara looked at it before digging into their shirt and producing their own and popping it open, “Best friends forever.” They muttered, closing their eyes.

“I'm not that person... that person died long ago, I'm someone else.” They said as they closed the locket, “Now prove to me, kill or be killed, or find the third path, Frisk!” They said as they brought the knife down on you.

“Frisk! Don't let it end this way!” Asriel's voice screamed at you, you finally realized what to do. This knife wasn't able to cut people, you would never be able to kill Chara with it, even if you wanted to do so.

You closed your eyes and stabbed the space in front of them even though it appeared empty, but Chara nonetheless stopped bringing the knife down. “What... what did you just do to me?” They said, looking down and their eyes opened in shock, “You didn't... no way.”

Asriel had given you that clarity to strike the unseen, you had thrust your knife into Chara's combat menu, and destroyed their FIGHT option, just like Asgore did to your MERCY option, it was physically impossible for them to continue.

They stepped back, staring at you, “You're serious then, you wouldn't kill me even if means you'd have to go through hell an infinite number of times?” You just nodded as you stood up.

“You... you... damn.” They smiled that sweet smile again with their eyes closed, “Looks like me and Flowey were wrong after all, Kill or Be Killed... it's a load of crap.” They opened them again, they were no longer those hollow black pits, but just looked normal.

“Well Frisk, looks like you win, you beat me without taking my life... of course, I was never really alive in this sense to start with.” They shook their head as they looked up at the light coming in from the surface in this small cave.

“Asriel... now he's alive, isn't he? Given another chance to be the person he was supposed to be?”
They looked down at that pendant and opened it, “Well...” They just gave a bittersweet sigh, “I guess that means my time’s done with, I don’t know if you noticed but... the reset stopped, you put out so much determination with that last attack that you stole the power from this entity.”

They looked back to you, “Hey, take good care of Asriel, if I find out you were being mean to my brother, I’ll come back and kill you.” They said with a smile on their face.

“And you... the entity that would see this all undone, it’s time for you follow me back to hell.” The Eye looked to Chara, then to you, the strings that attached the two were flailing wildly, trying and failing to separate because of Chara’s deal with them.

“And don’t even think about resetting from this, Frisk.” They said, calling you out of staring at that eye, “If you really want everyone to be happy, then you won’t let me come back.” They said one last time as they raised that knife to their neck, you realized what they were about to do and raised your hand to try and stop them, but you would never make it in time, you turned so that you wouldn’t see what happened when the knife started to move.

You looked back and didn’t see any blood, not even a body, Chara was just gone. The Presence however remained there, it was flailing wildly, looking in every direction possible like it was going to be able to see a way to escape its fate, after a few seconds of impotent flailing, the eye rolled back to show nothing but white, and then faded, the air sealed up as it closed like it was never there.

You were left alone in the ruins, just you and the light shining from above.

You walked out into Snowdin woods and looked up, the snow had stopped falling, you couldn’t help but feel that maybe you could have saved Chara, but recalling his last words, maybe it was for the better.

You took in a breath as you readied to take the long way to the barrier, you had a lot of people to talk to.

You had finally done it though, a perfect ending that wouldn’t be undone, you were filled with determination.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve seen quite a few fics deal with Chara the way I did in a theoretical “you fight him” scenario, but I feel like that’s just because it’s such a perfect way to end it with the kind of character Chara is.

Next chapter is the wrap-up, look forward to it.
Your long journey was finally and truly over, all that was left was the walk to the barrier as you said goodbye to everyone.

You started walking, saying hello to Snowy and his family, even despite his mom being amalgamate, him and his dad didn't mind, they were just happy she was back.

You said hello to Chilldrake and the various icecaps as you continued to Snowdin Town, you chatted up the innkeeper and shop lady about their plans for the future, you told Kid that you would see him on the surface, “It's a promise, dude!” He called back.

You saw the dogs hanging out in front of the librabry, happy their parents are back despite the logistical nightmare it presented for them, then went into Grillbys, and you saw someone different.

A boss monster in a decorated brown robe was having a drink, he was obvious as such even with a hood over his head, you looked at him and noticed he was missing a left arm, and your eyes widened.

“I haven't see you here before, who are you?” You said as you walked up to sit on a stool beside him, he glanced to you and smiled, you couldn't make out any distinct features besides a black goatee and the horns ripping through the hood.

The monster just smiled, “Ah, me? I'm uh, just an onlooker, watching eras pass besides me.” He said, “I have a story I could tell but it's pretty long, maybe once we get to the surface and Grillby opens a new place I'll tell you. For now you should head back to the barrier so we can follow you, Frisk.”

You tilted your head, then nodded at him and headed off. You grabbed Sans' pet rock, he started grousing really loudly when he realized that he forgot it in the original ending.

You remembered to check your texts from Toriel as you walked into Waterfall, you wouldn't meet up with anyone for a while so now was a good time.

“Frisk, Asriel just made a pun! I'm so proud of him!” That brought a smile to your face and you just barely avoided crying, being reminded that this wasn't just a dream, he was really there, waiting for you. Then you remembered something and responded.

“Oh hey, mom, can you tell Sans I took care of that thing he asked me to do? And I also got his pet rock.” You texted back as you waved to the bird that would carry you over the disproportionately small gap.
“Oh, of course... did you just call me “mom”? Well, I suppose if that is what pleases you, Asriel already seems to be using the word brother for you... and Sans says “thanks, for both of those.”” You read as you were carried over, you waved goodbye to the bird.

You said hello to Blook and Mettaton, being sure to give Blook your name, apparently they still didn't get sucked up in that apocalypse. You went to Gerson's and let him tell you the story of king Fluffybuns, then headed up to Hotland.

You realized a bit too late that you forgot to visit the Temmies, or did you “forget” to visit the Temmies?

Oh well.

You kept reading the texts Toriel sent you about the shenanigans they were getting into while waiting for you as you traversed Hotland and said hello to all the school children who were hanging around, as well as that lion wearing a dress and Muffet.

You said hey to the 01 and 02, and saw the Nice Cream man beaming about being able to open up on the surface, you went into the hotel and were tempted to tell Burgerpants of his fate, but no, it'd be too cruel to tell him something unavoidable.

You had finally made it back to the barrier, you talked with everyone for a bit before heading outside.

It was the same sight as always, a beautiful orange sunset sitting over the horizon greeting your exit from the underground.

“To think, that we'd all see the sun again.” Toriel said quietly as she looked forward with a smile on her face.

“Of course we would mom, Frisk promised us we would.” Asriel added in, giving a nod to you as you smiled.

“Oh, Frisk, that reminds me.” Asgore said, “We're going to need an ambassador to help us establish relations with the humans, would you please do us the honors?” You nodded without hesitation.

“YEAH, FRISK IS GOING TO BE THE BEST HUMAN AMBASSADOR, AND I AM GOING TO HELP!” Papyrus said as he stormed off.

“well, someone should go reign him in before he gets into trouble.” Sans said as he walked the opposite direction, leaving Undyne to chase after him in a hurry, and Alphys chasing after her.

“Uh, should I be doing something?” Asgore added, getting a look from Toriel that sent him running off, you could have sworn you saw a brown blur slide down the mountain towards him, but shook it off as Toriel addressed you.

“Well, my child, what are you going to do now? surely you have some place you belong.” She said, Asriel just looked at you, and you smiled.

“My place is here, I want to stay with you guys.” You said. Asriel's face lit up at that and he started cheering.
“Funny child, none of this would have happened if you said that earlier, it's a good thing it took you so long to change your mind. Now, come along, both of you.” She held her hand back, Asriel took her hand, and you took his as she lead you down the mountain to your new life.

Two weeks later.

You and Toriel came in exhausted as Asriel ran up to the two of you, “Hey! How was the meeting?” You gave an external breath as you desperately wanted to go fall into your bed.

Toriel smiled, “The humans heard every word that came out of Frisk and Asgore's mouths, the area around Ebott is officially marked as our land now, monsters are a protected citizen while we settle into our new life, and the nearby city is far more interested in us than afraid.”

Asriel nodded with a big smile, “Golly! That's wonderful!”

Two months later.

Construction on Newest Home (Asgore is soooo bad with names) was proceeding smoothly, you were up helping with construction despite how Toriel didn't want you to be anywhere high if you were helping... or with anything sharp... or blunt... or metal... she really didn't want you to be helping at all, but that wasn't in your nature.

Asriel ran up to you, “Hey Frisk! Mom said that the pie is ready! Not to mention Mettaton's show is about to premier.” That made you come down, humans had fallen head over heels for Mettaton, you couldn't help but feel he had done more for your public image than the sight of you being happily adopted by monsters did.

Three months later.

“Friiiiisk, come on, sleepyhead! School's starting soon, Kid and Snowy are waiting on us outside.” Asriel said as he shook you awake, you just gave a bit of a wave at him, “Come on, don't make me get mom!” Now that got your attention. You woke up so hard you fell out of bed.

One month later.

“What?! You got a car?!” Undyne said in shock.

“Th-this can't end well.” Alphys added in.

“WHY ARE YOU SO SUPRISED? I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, AM A NATURAL AT DRIVING.” Papyrus responded as he revved up the engine, “AND I WILL BE GLAD TO TRANSPORT YOU, MY FRIENDS, WHEREVER YOU WISH!”

“i mean, he certainly found the “drive” for it.” Sans responded, causing Papyrus to slam on the gas and fly off, “heh, guess he couldn't “stick” around for the rest of em.”

One month later.

“Psst, Frisk, wake up, come look outside the door.” Asriel said as he shook you awake, you decided it was worth seeing if he woke you up so early. You peeked out the door and saw Toriel and Asgore
bring in a massive bed, one big enough for both of them to sleep in and you smiled, knowing well what it meant.

**Two years later.**

Everything had settled down, humans and monsters lived in peace, there were still a few fringe racist groups, but they were the unpopular opinion and headless, they couldn't do any meaningful damage. Newest Home had as many human inhabitants as monster inhabitants who loved it here, and monsters had spread across the globe and could be found just about everywhere. You didn't even know the underground was so big that it could hold so many monsters, but then again, your journey led you through a relatively small, straight path.

“Come on, Frisk, it's almost late enough.” Asriel said as he ushered you outside. Asgore said he always loved watching the stars, so when he had your house built he made sure that it had a balcony, and a roof that was slanted enough to lay on at just the perfect angle to stargaze.

“There you two are, ready to watch the meteor shower?” Toriel said with a smile as she handed you both a cup of cocoa, you nodded enthusiastically as you sat down and looked up to the sky to see the shooting stars streak through the sky.

On the other side of the roof, Asgore sat alongside his own adopted brother, “Did you ever think we'd get here, Ral?”

The brown-robed boss monster chuckled softly as he looked at the sky, “When you live forever it's kind of a given you'd probably see it eventually but... I'm glad it's in this context, there's something so much better about watching a meteor shower for the first time in a millennium, knowing that we're watching it alongside humans as friends.”

Asgore nodded as he laid back, “Agreed.”

Ral smiled, “What a perfect world we live in, all thanks to one kid's unlucky fall.”

Chapter End Notes

The End

I'm not sure what I want to write next, if I should stay within this AU I've wrote or maybe try something different, the sky's the limit, I just need to think of good ideas. I know not everyone likes OCs (which is why Ralochs had so little mention until right at the end) but I've fallen in love with the character, so I might brainstorm another story centered around him.

Thanks to everyone who enjoyed this fic and read everything.

Hm, this is my second story to end at chapter eleven, wonder if this is going to become a thing.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!