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**What Happened In '87 Stays In '87**

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

Summary

Self-proclaimed 'fraidy cat' Mike Schmidt is hired as a security guard at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. He soon realizes that the company has dark secrets, along with a strong desire to keep them hidden. The close-knit group of staff are friendly yet reluctant to answer his questions. As Mike's suspicions increase, he realizes he must conquer his fears in his pursuit of the truth.
"... and then there was the Bite of ’87. I'm sure you've heard about it; that tragic event that occurred at the old location. We all remember the day Mr. Fitzgerald has his head bitten by that “Mangle” animatronic. He was a good guy; always did his job and never complained about the work conditions. But then came that tragic day; he came a little too close to that thing..." The man sighed. "He's still alive, though maybe not as, uh... functional as he was before. Mr. Smith came in to replace him for the company's sake, and helped us out in the meantime. There was also The Missing Children Incident that followed... No one really knows a whole lot about it. Not even myself, to be honest, and I run this place.”

Mike shifted in his seat uncomfortably as the man spoke. He listened patiently, but he wasn’t sure why he was hearing the dark history of the company’s past on his first night. Most companies wanted to encourage new employees, not scare them off before they even started their first shift. “No offense, Mr. Fazbear, but... why are you telling me all this?”

Mr. Fazbear paused, meeting Mike’s light blue eyes for a brief moment. “So you’ll be aware of what the company’s been through. I’m not going to try to hide it from you; we’ve had some bad accidents since we opened our doors back in 1971. Many night watchmen before you have tucked tail and fled, so I want you to understand what you’re getting yourself into first.” He spoke in a serious, cool tone, his entire demeanor reflecting the stress he was inevitably facing as he unloaded the dark past of his business to some 20 year old. He could only hope that by some miracle the lad would take the job despite this; they were short on staff as it was.

“You’re making this sound like I’m signing on for a dangerous job.” Concern grew in his voice. "... Am I?”

“Dangerous?” Mr. Fazbear stared at him in disbelief. “Mr. Schmidt, you’ll only be looking at a few security cameras to ensure the building is secure from twelve to six am. You’re in no danger. I just don’t want you to panic when you stumble across an old newspaper that says ‘something bad happened at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza’ or the like.”

This entire situation wasn’t making a whole lot of sense to Mike, so he decided to stop asking questions about the company, for now. “I won’t leave. You have my word.” At his statement, the older man managed to crack a smile.

“Your office is this way; follow me” the owner said, and Mike did as he was told. The room was quite small; it only had an office chair at a desk filled with clutter, a poster of the Fazbear band that read “Celebrate!” that was slightly overlapped by the numerous kids drawings, a rickety desk fan, a red emergency phone among the clutter, and some expected surveillance equipment. The odd thing about it was the button panel by the door frame with buttons that read “Door” and “Light”.

Mike took in his surroundings. Between the sloppy at best desk and the claustrophobia-inducing room size, it was hard to not feel disappointed about his new work environment. He was thankful to be earning some money for his trouble, even if it was only minimum wage.

“Feel free to change things around if you’d like. Also, don’t leave this room during your shift. Listen to the recorded messages my assistant left for you. He’ll explain everything you’ll need to know.”
Mike took his seat in the office. “Uh, thanks, sir.”

“I’ll see you in the morning.” Smiling, he assured him, ”You’ll be fine.” Before Mike could say anything else, Mr. Fazbear had left.

“Now what?” Mike grumbled to himself. He lazily looked around his office until the phone rang without warning, causing the young man to almost fall out of his seat. He picked up the ringing red phone on his desk, confused as to why an emergency phone would have an incoming call. It quickly made sense when he’d heard the man on the other end. It was the message from Mr. Fazbear’s assistant, explaining how to do the job.

Apparently the animatronics wandered at night, and he was to close the doors if they tried to enter his office. Simple enough. Yet, his explanation of why the characters weren’t allowed in the office was bone chilling, to put it lightly. If they got in, they’d confuse him for an animatronic endoskeleton and forcefully stuff him into one of the suits, filled with many awful things to impale him.

“Thanks for the warning, Mr. Fazbear! So much for ‘not dangerous!’” he’d wailed to no one but himself. As much as Mike wanted to slam his fist into the buttons controlling the doors and leave them closed, he was warned he had a limited power supply. Instead, he clicked the monitor on and began watching the Fazbear band, staring eerily at the empty dining room. They were probably messing with him. At least, that’s what he’d hoped…

Twelve became one, and thus far, not a single thing had changed. Mike had taken the time to thoroughly check out his office. The bird one’s horrifying little cupcake prop was on his desk; its beady little eyes staring straight into his soul. After the prank call, it was starting to make him uncomfortable, so he turned it around in some hope that it’d make his job a little easier on his nerves. Whoever was responsible for the office decorations needed a talking to.

Mike knew he was a ‘fraidy cat’, and he would have been quitting in the morning if he hadn’t need the low wages this job would provide him with. The building was much scarier at night, which was saying a lot considering how unsettling the animatronics were during the day. Why did the job just have to be with animatronics, of all things? As if the thought of inanimate objects coming to get him didn’t already haunt his nightmares.

Two in the morning, and Mike was still alive. Nothing had moved! Clearly, this was all an elaborate prank; it had to be. Everyone knew the animatronics were bolted down to the stage. He continued to believe this until he checked the camera on the “Show Stage” again, and found the one with the “Let’s Eat!!!” bib missing. He nearly jumped out of his skin. Maybe it was another employee wearing costume. It had to be.

He scrolled through the camera feeds until he landed on “Dining Area”, where the yellow bird was seemingly waiting for him. It looked up into the camera from an angle, its beak hanging open in an unsettling manner. It was awfully similar to the cupcake sitting beside him. Mike closed the camera a little later for both his peace of mind and his power consumption. He checked again at three and it was gone. His heart began to race as he frantically clicked through the cameras, finding it waiting in “East Hall”, staring off absentely with its jaw lax again.

Not expecting to see it there, so close to him, he shrieked like a little girl. By this point, Mike was watching the camera intently, not lowering it for even a second. He was mentally kicking himself for falling for the prank, yet the possibility of it being real was too frightening to ignore. He concluded that rather be teased than be impaled.
Before long, the camera went dark and he heard footsteps approaching. His heart kept pounding as he lowered the monitor, getting ready to shut the door. When it came, he’d seal the door and turn on the light, then take a good long look at it. He’d catch whoever it was trying to make a fool of him.

Unfortunately, Mike couldn’t stop compulsively toggling the door light on and off. He knew it was close, and he was going to be ready for it when it came. After a few minutes of checking, the yellow mascot eventually made its presence known, causing Mike to shriek and slam his fist against the door button as fast as he could. Leaving the flickering light on, he ran as close as he dared to the window, examining the costumed fiend before him.

However, it was not a costume at all. All the proper animatronic parts were where they should have been, without a hint of any person inside whatsoever. He considered the idea of it being a remote controlled robot, but wasn’t convinced enough to open the door. He flicked the light off before stumbling back to his seat, trembling.

Eventually, when Mike clicked on the flickering light once again, the creature was gone. He’d left the door closed until the assistant’s message came to mind, reminding him to open the door unless he wanted to run out of power. The restaurant was creepy enough as it was; it didn’t need to be pitch black as well.

The rest of the night was uneventful as he waited until the end of his shift. When Mr. Fazbear came in the morning, he’d have a word with him.

At around eight in the morning the next day, Mr. Fazbear stepped out of his car and deeply inhaled the fresh morning air. It was a crisp Tuesday, just cold enough to make a person prefer to go indoors—it might help business improve a little. He hummed a few notes from Carmen Overture on his way inside, since it was stuck in his head. His performance interrupted by a frail blonde man waiting at the doors of the restaurant with his arms crossed. The young man’s pale blue eyes were very tired, but they were almost seething as well.

"Mr. Schmidt? What are you doing here? Your shift ends at six."

Mike simply glared at his boss. "You lied to me!" The freckles that covered his face were starting to disappear, due to the rapid reddening of his face.

Taken aback, the man stumbled on his words. "L-Lied to you? I'm not sure what you're talking about..."

"T-They come alive at night!" he shrieked. "Those things, t-they were moving around! The message said they'd s-stuff me in a suit! This'd better be some elaborate p-prank!"

Mr. Fazbear sighed. "Didn't you listen to the message? They're left in a free roaming mode at night, my boy. After '87, the customers didn't want the animatronics to roam the restaurant during the day. So, to prevent their servos from locking up, they roam at night." After some hesitation, he added, "They won't hurt you."

"B-But sir-"

"Only the Mangle has ever actually hurt anyone, and we scrapped that entire line after the incident. The ones you see are perfectly safe."

"S-So they won't stuff me into a suit?"

"Go home, kid," the boss grunted. Mike took his cue to leave, hoping for his sake that Mr. Fazbear
was right about the animatronics being safe. That thing from last night didn't look friendly. It looked like it actually was coming to kill him, and that thought alone was enough to make him consider quitting. But, he'd try again. He needed the money. Besides, it was all in his head, right?
The clock struck twelve and she knew what that meant: time to power on. "Bonnie... Come on, Bonnie, power on! It's midnight!" Chica cheered. Unlike most nights, the chicken had powered on first that night, and was eager to wake her bunny friend.

Bonnie’s eyes flickered on and he turned his head towards the feminine voice nearby. "Good evening, Chic," Bonnie replied in his slightly annoying tenor voice. There was a reason why he was the only animatronic that didn't sing.

She grinned at him, strolling over to his part of the stage. "We have a new endo~!"

His eyes widened "We do? Cool!" Bonnie enthused with almost too excitement.

"I saw it yesterday, it's a frail little thing," she explained. “It screamed like a little girl!"

At this, Bonnie began to laugh. The thought of an endoskeleton screaming at seeing Chica, of all animatronics, amused him greatly.

"I don't know why it's not wearing its costume, or why it's hiding in the security office," she continued.

"Who cares, let's get it!" he proposed. “We'll bring it to Freddy; he'll know what to do! He'll be so proud of us!" He grinned at her, his eyes lit up in glee. "I'll take the West Hall, you take the East!"

She nodded excitedly. Before Chica could make a move, Bonnie had already set his guitar down on the stage and was posed for the camera, making every effort to be creepy. She shook her head and laughed at him. "Bonnie!"

"What? We should get there as soon as possible! It's breaking the rules to be out of costume, after all. And we know how Freddy feels about following the rules!" The glint in his eyes as he spoke was rather intimidating, unlike his usual playful self. The camera light clicked off, and Bonnie made a break for West Hall. Chica followed his lead and went to the camera outside the restrooms. After some time, she heard the endo's shrieks, much like previous night, so she ran over to investigate.

She was greeted by the disturbing sight of Bonnie holding it up by the throat. Its scrawny legs swung frantically in the air, its arms desperately clawing at Bonnie's hands. When he saw her, he smiled.

"Look! I caught the endo!" he cheered as the creature in his hands made a choked cry for help. "Wake Freddy up, I'll be Backstage!" And with that, the rabbit bounced off with his victim struggling helplessly.

Chica knew it was an endo, but she couldn't help but feel bad for it. It looked miserable. Yet, it was breaking the rules. It should have known better. Despite this, she couldn’t stop herself from pitying it. It didn’t make sense.

As requested, she quickly went back to Show Stage to wake Freddy. Chica could only hope he’d be able to offer some advice.

She stepped up on the stage and gently nudged Freddy's shoulder. "Freddy?" she asked softly.
The bear powered up quicker than Bonnie did, answering almost immediately. "This’d better be important. You know I usually take the first three days of the week to rest." His voice sounded rather tired and mildly annoyed, much like a teenager wishing to hit the snooze button on an alarm clock in the morning.

She shyly answered, "I-I'm sorry, Mr. F-Fazbear, but-

"How many times have I asked you to not call me that?" he snapped.

Chica's voice grew even more timid and quiet. "S-Sorry, Freddy..." When Freddy ‘asked’, he was actually telling. They all knew and respected this, as Freddy could be quite scary when he was angry. The only one worse was Foxy...

"Much better," the bear added gruffly. He calmed down a little and asked, "What do you need?"

"Bonnie found an endo!" she shrieked.

Freddy's eyes widened a little at her announcement. "A rogue endoskeleton? We haven't found one of those wandering around for a year at least. Where is it?"

"He has it Backstage..."

He smiled a little. "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go!" Setting down his mic, Freddy hopped down and went Backstage, Chica following closely. When they arrived, Bonnie had the poor endo pinned by the throat to the repairs table. It looked quite scared as it continued to struggle, becoming increasingly desperate to escape with each passing second.

Freddy spoke up first. "I hear you've caught an endoskeleton out of costume."

"Sure did!" Bonnie grinned at Freddy in sadistic excitement. "It keeps trying to get away, but I'm taking care of that. It should know the rule by now: all animatronics are to be wearing their costumes at all times unless repairs require the suit to be removed." The endo's feeble attempts at escape became weaker and slower as he recited the rule. Chica noticed this and frowned a little. Last she checked, animatronics didn’t power down the way it was. Its battery must have been broken.

"Bonnie..." Freddy warned.

"Yeah? What?" With that, the endoskeleton pinned under his hands went limp.

"Did its batteries die?" Chica questioned. Seemingly not hearing her, Freddy came over to the endo. After taking a short look at it, he pulled Bonnie's hands back forcefully.

"Hey, what gives? I worked hard to catch that! It's faking it! You'll let it get away!"

"He almost died." Freddy corrected. The two other animatronics simply stared at him. "That's a human man, Bonnie. A night guard, judging by the uniform..." He settled the man into a more comfortable position on the workbench.

"A-night guard? It's been awhile since we've had one of those... Is it, um, he, I mean, still alive?"

Chica asked.

Freddy examined the man before him a little closer, noticing the laboured rising and falling of his chest. "He is, but he probably wouldn't have been if Bonnie kept holding him down by the the neck." He glared at Bonnie sharply.
"What’s with the look? I was following the rules! The endo’s out of costume. It’s our job to suit it up!"

Freddy sighed in disappointment. “He’s a human, not an endoskeleton.”


He leaned in closer to examine the man’s face, brushing some of his sweat drenched hair off his forehead. “I don’t think so.” Backing away a bit, he read the man’s name tag. “His badge says his name is Mike. I don’t remember his name, but I’m pretty sure that wasn’t it…” Freddy looked up at the sad Chica and the annoyed Bonnie. “Go. I’ll make sure he’s okay.” Chica nodded and left the room without a word. Bonnie followed shortly after, glaring daggers at ‘Mike’ and Freddy on his way out.

At roughly five in the morning, Mike began to stir. His throat ached, reminding him of what happened before he lost consciousness. Considering the phone message had warned him that being caught would most certainly lead to his demise, it was a wonder that he found himself alive after what he’d been through. With a great deal of effort, he forced his eyes open, only to be surrounded by shelves of masks and numerous animatronic parts lying around which, as expected, freaked him out. What did him in, however, was the bear sitting nearby. Terror quickly gripped him, causing him scream, only to sound like a pathetic groan. He attempted to crawl away, but dizziness prevented him from doing so with any effectiveness.

He gave up; escaping was impossible. Mike knew he was about to die. He was too scared to watch how he’d be forced into one of the suits, so he let his eyes fall shut once more, awaiting his end.

“Mike?” a friendly voice asked. When he didn’t respond, it repeated itself. He figured he was in the hospital, probably being given some strong drugs for the pain.

It turned out to be real. The voice belonged to none other than Freddy Fazbear himself, who was now standing beside him by the time he’d decided to open his eyes on some whim. His eyes widened as much as they could in his poor state, and he once again made an effort to escape his certain death. The robot came and stopped him, holding him in place gently.

“Calm down, I’m not going to hurt you. You’re not who we’re looking for.” After a few moments, Mike stopped struggling.

“W-Who…?” Mike croaked. His voice was so raw, he could hardly speak. By now, his neck had swollen and turned a grotesque shade of purple.

“A bad man.” The robot sighed. “That’s a story for another time, though... For now, rest. I’ll put you in your office for Mr. Fazbear to find you. He’ll get you the help you need.”

Mike didn’t want to ‘rest’, he wanted to know what was going on. He wanted to know who the ‘bad man’ was and what he had done, why the allegedly murderous robots seemed to have a soft side for injured night guards, and why they were even out and about in the first place. He struggled to believe that it was only to prevent their servos from locking up. There was so much to know, yet he was too weak to keep his eyes open, let alone ask questions.

Mike’s eyes gave up on remaining open. Freddy gently picked him up, supporting his injured neck with care. He took his time to ensure he didn’t jostle the man in his arms too much, and set him down in front of the desk. Trying to sit Mike up with an injury like his would be too painful and potentially dangerous.
Freddy took a couple steps back and warned, “You might want to be more careful if you choose to come back here. Bonnie’s convinced you’re an endoskeleton, and I doubt it’ll be easy to change his mind. He’s always been the stubborn one…” Freddy could tell Mike wanted to talk, and knowing he was in no shape to do so, left the office for the night. He fell back into the clutches of sleep shortly after.

"Mike...? Mike, are you okay?” a new voice asked. He could tell it wasn't Freddy’s, soon recognizing it as his boss’ voice. He simply groaned in response. "Your neck! What happened?"

"B-Bun..." was the only thing Mike could manage to say, which came out only a little louder than a hoarse whisper.

Mr. Fazbear’s eyes widened in shock. "Bonnie... Bonnie did this to you?” Instead of a legitimate response, he got another groan, which he took as a yes. Now he had a dilemma. It'd been so long since someone had actually been hurt at Freddy's. The last thing he needed was another lawsuit... "I'll take you to the hospital, but you'd better not tell them how this happened...” Again, he received a groan as a response.

Much like the bear, Mr. Fazbear handled Mike with care, taking him to his car without hesitation. He laid his employee in the back seat and drove him to the hospital. All actions had to be taken to give Mike the best care possible so he wouldn't sue. He already knew that one more lawsuit would have Freddy Fazbear's Pizza shut down for good. No more rebranding or reopening; it'd put the final nail in the coffin. If it wasn't safe enough for the employees, no parent would believe it was safe for their children, either. He just had to trust that Mike would keep quiet about the cause of his injury.
The Bite Of '87

Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Saturday November 14th, 1987

The night before, Anthony had called in, notifying Jeremy that he wasn't even supposed to be working last night. Regardless, he was asked to help with the birthday party today; the last one before the restaurant closed for investigations. For what, he couldn't be certain. Considering the party was for his friend's four-year old daughter, Taryn, he would do everything in his power to ensure it ran smoothly and looked good on the company.

Jeremy came in that afternoon, exhausted from the night before yet attempting to appear energetic for the kids. As requested, he came in his uniform and arrived at Party Room 2. The kids were already cheering, laughing loudly, and making a mess. Had he not known better, he would have sworn the party room had been hit by a tornado rather than a group of children. He expected it and didn’t let it bother him, especially since he wouldn’t be the one responsible for cleaning up afterward.

Panic arose in him as he saw the new Bonnie animatronic crouched low, talking to the children. Freddy was nearby, passing out cake slices while Chica joked with some of the other kids. They were so different during the day; almost impossible to imagine they could be dangerous. Potential death trap or not, his job remained unchanged: stay by the animatronics to ensure they wouldn’t hurt anyone.

To provide the most effective supervision possible, Jeremy toggled between the three wandering entertainers, keeping close tabs on them as he did with the security cameras at night. At one point, Freddy narrowed his eyes at him, seemingly staring into his soul, but Jeremy didn't shrink back this time. He let him know with a glare that he was the one in charge. As the security guard, it was his job to keep the guests safe, and if any of them so much as dared to simply lay a finger on one of the kids too roughly, he'd have them shut down permanently. Although the animatronics were only behaving oddly around adults, prevention was of utmost importance.

"Mama," the birthday girl, Taryn, chirped, gently tugging on her mother's sleeve. "Can we go to Kid's Cove? Pleeease~?"

Her mother sighed in response and asked, in a surprisingly calm tone for the hectic nature of the party, "Why would you want to go see that broken down thing when you can stay here with the Fazbear band?"

"But Mama~!" the girl whined. "I want to see Foxy!"

Jeremy came over and approached the mother. "I hate to interrupt~"

"No, it's not a problem, uh," she read his name badge, taking a moment before piecing it together. "... wait, Jeremy? What are you doing here? I hardly recognized you in that stuffy uniform!" She smiled at him with that charming smile he loved so much. "I thought you didn’t work on Saturdays."

“I usually work nights, actually, but they called me in to help with the party. Uh... how are things?”

“Oh, just wonderful! Taryn is having a blast, and I’m sure her friends are too!”

He looked over his shoulder and saw one of the other girls high-fiving Chica. “Uh, yeah…”
She raised an eyebrow. “Is something wrong?”

He shook his head quickly. "No, not at all. I was just thinking of something, that's all." He smiled at her, hoping she’d believe him. "There's nothing to worry about, Adeline." He gazed into her warm brown eyes. For a brief moment, Jeremy almost felt a sense of calm amongst the chaos.

They had been friends for a while outside of work. He didn't get to see her as often as he would have liked to, but bumping into her at the pizzeria was always welcomed. Adeline had become a regular at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza, mainly because her daughter loved coming. She was a single mom, around his age too.

He mentally slapped himself. Jeremy reminded himself that he had an important job to do. He couldn’t let himself be distracted by a gorgeous woman that would never be interested in him. Or so he thought. He’d never said anything to her about it, and now was definitely not the right time.

She frowned a little.. "If you say so. Well, if it’s not too much trouble, could you open up Kid’s Cove? Taryn really wants to see Foxy."

"You mean the Mang-, uh, right, Foxy! Could I open the Cove? Or do you mean will I open the Cove?" he teased with a smirk.

Adeline rolled her eyes. “Okay, will you open Kid’s Cove? Please?"

With a laugh, he added, "I'm sure we can arrange for that."

Adeline giggled and replied, "Thank you, Jeremy." Her beautiful smile danced across her lips again, causing Jeremy to second-guess himself. "The staff here are always so kind and helpful," she continued. “It's a shame the restaurant will be closed for a while. Do you know why?"

"I'm afraid not..." he replied hesitantly. "I don't know what's going on."

"I hope it's nothing serious..."

"Oh, I'm sure it's nothing, really!" He was telling a bold-faced lie, fully knowing criminal investigations were soon to be underway, and he felt awful for it. Yet, the reputation of the company relied on customers feeling safe and having fun, which was of greater importance.

She nodded in agreement.

Jeremy pulled out his key ring. "Right this way, please," he said with a wink, making Adeline grin. He fought hard to not let his mind drift off again.

He lead the party to Kid's Cove, his hand shaking slightly as he unlocked the door. If he had any input in the matter, no one would have been going anywhere near the room; not with a broken wreckage like the Mangle behind its doors. But, he had to make sure Taryn's birthday was the best it could be. He was doing it for her sake.

"Foxy!" Taryn cheered as she ran into the room. Her friends at the party sped in right after her.

Much to Jeremy's horror, the Mangle sputtered to life. With her glitchy voice box, she said, "H-H-H- Hey ki-i-i-ids! W-W-Welcome to Kid's Co-o-o-o-o-ove!" If he could have, he would’ve smashed her apart right then and there. It would have been better for everyone, even the Mangle herself. She was horrifying and miserable at best. She was twitching, too, and it looked anything but pleasant. It wasn’t even fit to be a ‘take apart and put back together’ attraction.
"W-W-Who wants to h-h-h-h-hear some s-o-o-o-o-o-ongs?"

At this, many of the party guests cheered, Taryn being one of the loudest ones. The Mangle then attempted to sing; she didn't do well. Her severely damaged voice box and her dismantled body hindered her performance greatly. It was subpar at best. Near the end, one of Taryn's friends came closer to the sorry excuse for an animatronic. Jeremy tensed, staying with her to fill the gap between the grotesque pile of robotics and the sweet little girl who clearly didn't understand just how dangerous the monstrosity was.

Despite his efforts, they weren't enough. She kept moving toward her. The Mangle twitched in response, so Jeremy followed. He was, after all, supposed to keep close to the robot, no matter how nerve-wracking the experience would be. When he and the girl were within arms reach of the animatronic, the Mangle snapped her attention away from the child before her and stared right at Jeremy, as Freddy and the others had been doing earlier. Her yellow eye and the glowing dot in the middle of the black hole beside it reflected her evil intentions. After all the abuse she had been subject to, her facial scanners had to have been broken.

His worst fears were coming true; the little girl was reaching out to touch the Mangle. From his time as the night guard, he knew the animatronics were not to be taken lightly. Especially the Mangle. He donned the spare Freddy head at night for a reason.

He instinctively pushed the little girl back.

At that moment, world seemed to move in slow motion. Jeremy looked up just as the Mangle's sharp row of teeth came at his head. His eyes widened in fear and he felt his heart try to leap into his throat. He was in trouble now.

Before Jeremy could make any real attempt to avoid his impending doom, the Mangle made her move. The animatronic's teeth pierced Jeremy's skull and clamped down hard. Blood immediately began to pour from the man's head as he screamed, only to quickly lose consciousness from a combination of the injury and shock that came with it.

The children stared for a moment. The one Jeremy saved had blood from the attack splattered across her sun dress. Once the initial shock of the trauma had worn off, all of them bolted from the room, shrieking in fear. Naturally, the little girl closest to the scene ran first. The Mangle opened her mouth, letting the security guard tumble to the floor to fade away in a puddle of his own blood.

Adeline remained in her spot half way across the room, staring in disbelief and terror at the sight before her. Her hands came to cover her mouth and her eyes filled with tears. She came to her senses and fled the room, going straight to the manager to tell him what had happened so emergency services could be called. By some miracle, maybe Jeremy would manage to survive.

The ambulances came soon after the call was placed. Paramedics rushed to the scene, taking care to transport and treat the dying man to the best of their abilities. Mr. Fazbear did his very best to ensure that his customers evacuated the building quickly and calmly. The latter was more difficult to execute.

After the first ‘incident’, Fazbear Entertainment was in trouble once more. He vowed to get rid of the Mangle to ensure there wouldn’t be a repeat incident. Disposing of the entire new line-up would be ideal, considering their safety functionality had all but backfired. The old ones may have been ugly by comparison, yet the simpler technology allowed them to do their job with less risk of trouble. All Mr. Fazbear could do was pray to God that Jeremy would make it.
Adeline brought Taryn to visit Jeremy at the hospital the next day. She had to know if her friend was holding on after the accident. The nurse lead her into the room, where she saw him, his eyes shut as if he were only sleeping. His curly brown hair was peeking out from behind the bandages that now covered his entire forehead where the animatronic had bitten him. His olive-toned skin was significantly paler than usual, although that was to be expected after what he had been through.

"Mom, is he okay?" Taryn asked.

She didn’t have an answer for her. He was hooked up to so many machines, with several monitors and tubes clearly keeping the man alive. With the injury he had suffered, Adeline didn’t want to believe the equipment was the only reason he was alive. She wanted to believe he would be fine on his own, no matter how long it took.

"I... I don't know, sweetheart." Adeline came towards the bed and gently took Jeremy's hand in hers and gave it a light squeeze.

Tears came to her eyes once more as she looked at his face. The nurse told her he was in a coma without any indication of waking up from it. The birthday party could have been the last time she would see Jeremy Fitzgerald alive, and she desperately hoped it wasn’t.
His eyes opened with greater ease this time, bright fluorescent lights flooding his field of vision. When his surroundings came into focus, Mike realized he was in the hospital. This time, it was real. He could also feel that the medical staff had put a neck brace on him.

Mike began to recall what happened. Freddy saved him from Bonnie, then Mr. Fazbear had taken him to the hospital. He was thankful for the relief he was starting to feel. He carefully brought his left hand up to his immobilized neck, where he saw it had an I.V. attached to it, realizing his relief was due to the use of painkillers.

"Ah, you’re awake,” his boss greeted. “How do you feel?”

“Better, I-I guess…” Mike’s voice was rather weak, but was certainly stronger than when he’d woken up the first time.

Mr. Fazbear's mouth curled into a bleak smile, pleased to see that Mike’s condition was improving. It was mid afternoon, and he’d only just woken up. With the liability concerns at hand, he didn’t dare to leave the hospital since the time he brought his employee in for medical care.

His smile faded almost as quickly as it came when he said, "I'm terribly sorry, my boy. I honestly didn't think Bonnie would do something like that... I should've listened to you yesterday."

"I-I didn't t-think so... e-either..." He had to speak slowly, yet was grateful to be able to at all by this point.

"We haven't had too much trouble with them. Not for a while, at least. Mr. Howard complained about them before, once. He'd-

"M-Mr... Howard?" Mike found himself getting lost in Mr. Fazbear's description, likely due to fatigue.

"You haven't met him in person, but you've heard from him before. He's my assistant, Anthony Howard. He had the foresight to create those training messages for the new night guards such as yourself. I’ve got to say, they’re efficient." When Mike made a sound of agreement, or acknowledgement at the very least, the boss continued. "After you complained about the working conditions on Tuesday, I listened to the voice recording, and... well, by his fourth message, things sounded as though they were going downhill."

"W-What...?"

"I heard some banging in the background, some sort of moaning, even a favourite song of mine slipped in there. Then, the call suddenly dropped after a loud screech interrupted it. Mr. Howard was talking very fast, flustered, even. The message following it just sounds like incomprehensible noise."

Mike began to panic. "I-Is he...?" His mind raced with horrific scenarios of what could have happened to Anthony. He didn’t want to know which suit his body had been inevitably stuffed into.

"He's fine, I assure you. I'm sure the tape just got damaged, somehow."
"T-The... song..."

Mr. Fazbear paused. "I'm not sure why that's in there." He looked away, pain entering his voice. "It's a piece from Carmen, a excerpt called Toreador March. My sons and I used to love that opera…"

"U-Used to?"

"They... went missing," he continued, "around six or seven years ago."

"I-I'm so sorry," Mike replied hoarsely.

He sighed. "I miss them, but I like to believe they're still out there, somewhere. Not a day goes by where I don't sit by the front door, waiting for them to walk in."

Mike frowned. "W-What are... their n-names?"

"Their names are, or I should say were, Gilead and Frederick." Mr. Fazbear uttered mournfully.

"F-Freddy... Fazbear...? I-Isn't that the name... o-of the b-bear?"

"It is... You see, my brother founded the company, Fazbear Entertainment. I took over later on after the original restaurant, Fredbear's Family Diner, closed." His smile started to return. "Everett always loved bears, actually. The original restaurant had two animatronics: a bear and a rabbit, both a beautiful yellow colour. The bear was even named 'Fredbear', too. It wasn’t exactly original, but the kids seemed to like it."

Mike would've nodded, had he been able to, but couldn’t with the brace fastened to his neck. "H-How did that b-become Freddy?"

"When the original restaurant closed down, Everett opened a new one. He needed to rename it after an... incident. I took over at this point. My youngest son wasn't born yet, but I'd always liked the name 'Freddy'. And with a name like 'Fazbear', it sounded like a fine name for a restaurant with a bear mascot. So, Fazbear Entertainment named the new restaurant 'Freddy Fazbear's Pizza'. Then, when my son was born, I named him Frederick as well."

Unfortunately, Mr. Fazbear's frown returned. "My sons always loved that singing bear..." Mike could've sworn his disheartened boss was close to tears.

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Adeline's House - Thursday January 21st, 1988

Two months had passed since the terrible accident at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza, the one that put Jeremy Fitzgerald into intensive care at the hospital. Adeline would visit him often, holding onto the hope that a person in a coma would benefit from having company come. One afternoon came when she returned home after picking Taryn up from school and checked the phone messages. The hospital called; Jeremy woke up from his coma. She was filled with relief with the news of the miracle. Against odds, she would be able to talk to him once more.

Adeline arranged for her daughter to go to a friend's house before making her way to the hospital Jeremy was staying in. She came in and saw him sitting up in his hospital bed, looking around the room much like a scared animal would. She approached slowly and said, "Jeremy... You're awake."

He jerked back a little. "W-Wha... W-Who?" On top of appearing frightened, he also seemed confused.
She smiled softly and kept her distance to make him more comfortable. "It's me, Adeline. Don’t you remember me?"

His narrowed his eyes and furrowed his brow, studying her face for a while. Jeremy then nodded slowly and answered her. "I... Um..." He made a quiet murmuring sound as he tried to form the rest of his sentence."Y-Yes... I do..."

Adeline drew closer as she saw the man’s fear subside, standing beside his bed. "Do you remember what happened?"

He looked away and gripped the sheet that rested over his body. His knuckles turned white from the tightness of his hold on it. "Y-Yeah..."

"Hey..." She rested her hand on his shoulder and continued, "You're safe now." He nodded. "I thought I lost you..."

Without warning, Jeremy let go of the sheet and bear hugged his friend, his body shaking a little as he began to cry, despite appearing to have been fine the second before. Adeline couldn’t make sense of his sudden shifts of emotion.

Adeline tried to recall if he had been as emotional as he currently was before the accident, soon concluding that he wasn’t. The accident had changed Jeremy, there was no question in her mind about it. She returned the hug and said, "It's ok..."

He managed to choke out a sentence between his sobs. He pleaded, "D-Don't... leave m-me..."

She didn’t quite know what to say to him. She couldn't turn her life upside down to look after a man with a serious brain trauma on top of caring for her daughter, pursuing a culinary career, and maintaining her home. It would be too much to handle. Then again, Jeremy lived on his own and wouldn't be able to look after himself in his current state; someone needed to be there for him.

"I'll... I'll look after you. I won't abandon you."

In response, Jeremy nodded and held her tighter.

A while later, he managed to calm himself. He smiled at Adeline, a hint of his previous charm shining through. "I-I... uh..." he began, stumbling on his words yet not appearing to be too anxious.

"Yes?" Adeline waited patiently to hear what he had to say.

"I... You..."

She drew back slightly to smile at him encouragingly. "Go on."

"L-Love..." Jeremy simply stared into her eyes, captivated. A smile crept across his lips.

"Love? What do you love?"

"Y-You..." He drifted off, squeezing his eyes shut for a moment. "A-A-Al... Hmm... Have, um, long time."

Adeline paused, piecing together the choppy revelation. "Are you... trying to say you're in love with me, Jeremy?" It took him a few seconds before he nodded and grinned. He appeared to be pleased that she managed to understand the cryptic message he'd tried so hard to communicate. "That's... very sweet of you," she said carefully, not sure of what to do with the new information. With his
injury, which she knew little about the repercussions of, it was impossible for her to know if he would be in a position to be in a relationship.

"W-" Jeremy look down briefly, snapping his fingers as he thought about what word he was trying to say, looking up again when the word came to him. "Well?" He smirked, proud to have found the proper word without help that time.

"I... I love you too," she admitted. This made Jeremy's smile grow as he embraced her tightly. Adeline wasn't sure if she made the right choice to listen to how she felt, but decided it was worth the risk. He was still Jeremy, after all. She hugged him back, knowing that she was taking the biggest leap of faith of her life.
A New Night Guard

After Mike was discharged from the hospital, Mr. Fazbear gave him ample time to recover, roughly three weeks off of work. He was thankful to not have a deduction from his sick days. Mike figured this was because his boss felt obliged to offer some form of meagre compensation for the injury, but he couldn’t be sure. Outside of the time off, nothing had changed since his encounter with Bonnie. Or so he thought.

Despite the assurance he received from Mr. Fazbear, Mike was very nervous about returning to work. He’d only worked two nights before he received a life-threatening injury, all because his reflexes were a few seconds too slow. No one could truly guarantee it wouldn’t happen again, not even Mr. Fazbear. He attempted to push his anxieties out of his mind as he got ready for work that night, trying as hard as he could to ignore the sinking feeling in his gut.

He arrived at Freddy’s and went straight to the security office, where a man was already seated in his chair. Mike cleared his throat and said, "Excuse me, sir, but I believe you’re-"

The man shot his gaze up from the security monitor, his grey eyes meeting Mike’s briefly. "What?" he replied sharply, is expression stern and focused. He could tell the man before him was much stronger than he was; angering him would be an awful mistake.

"O-Oh gosh, I’m sorry! I d-didn’t mean to, u-um, bother you, s-sir! I don’t w-want any trouble!" He forced a smile. "N-No hard feelings, right?"

The other security guard at the desk examined Mike from head to toe, and read his badge. His hard expression vanished, replaced by a warm smile. "Ah, Mike. Mr. Fazbear told me you’d be back soon." Offering his hand, he continued, "I'm Fritz. Fritz Smith."

Mike timidly shook the other man's hand. "N-Nice to meet you..."

Fritz chuckled, "What? Somethin’ botherin’ ya?"

"No sir! I-I’m just, um… " He inwardly cringed at his own cowardice.

Fritz waved it off and stood up from the desk chair, offering his seat to Mike, which he took.

“You’re not m-mad, are you?”

“Mad?” Fritz chuckled. “Not at all. Why would ya think that?”

“N-No reason,” Mike mumbled, shakily turning the monitor back on. It displayed an image of the purple, star-patterned, curtain covering Pirate Cove. It was tightly drawn and had a wooden sign in front of it that read ‘Sorry! -Out Of Order-’.

"What's in there?" he asked.

"Pirate Cove. Ya know, where Foxy the Pirate lurks."

After a moment of awkward silence, Mike replied "... Oh. I haven't s-seen that one before."

He shrugged. "He’s in rough shape ever since he got broken a few years ago, but Thomas hasn't had
the money to fix him. He’s not too hard to deal with if ya know what you’re doin’.”

“Who’s Thomas?”


Mike laughed uncomfortably. “Oh… He didn’t tell me his first name.”

“Well, now ya know,” Fritz said. He reached over Mike's shoulder and clicked to a different camera where they found Bonnie. The animatronic was standing in the hall, the old light flickering behind him to expose only a little more than a silhouette. Much like before, Mike jumped.

"Are ya okay, kid?" Fritz inquired.

Mike shook his head. "I-It's Bonnie!"

“Yeah, what about him?”

“He tried to kill me!” Mike wailed, clutching the monitor in his shaking hands.

He sighed. "Ya let him in the office, didn't ya?"

"I didn't let him in, he got in!"

He put his hand on the newer employee’s shoulder and spoke calmly. "Mike, they're not the same at night. Letting 'em get in the office, intentionally or not, is dangerous. Ya can't know what they will or won't do."

Mike shut the screen off and hugged his knees to his chest, trembling.

"You're goin' to be fine. Just watch me." The two men waited, listening attentively. The hum of the desk fan filled the otherwise silent room. Footsteps echoed down the hall, getting louder. Mike lost his composure yet again. Fritz silenced him immediately and toggled the door light. Nothing. "Check the camera," he commanded sternly.

He did what he was told, seeing that Bonnie was no longer in the hall, as they heard. He cycled through the video feeds until he came across the camera situated at the end of West Hall, adjacent to the office. They found him staring into the camera with a creepy grin on his face. The gleam in his eyes made his murderous intent clear.

 Moments later, the camera turned to blackened static. "F-Fritz!" Mike stammered. "Door!"

“On it,” Fritz grunted, slamming his fist into the appropriate button. As predicted, Bonnie was right at the door, about to come in the office. Unlike his coworker, he remained calm.

“Oh my gosh! W-We almost died!” he rambled. He laughed nervously. “I can’t believe we’re not dead! Oh my gosh, oh my gosh!”

"You're fine, kid!" Fritz let out a short laugh as Bonnie stepped over to the window beside the door, glaring at the night guards inside. Fritz waved his hand at him dismissively, sending him off.

When Bonnie left, Fritz reopened the door and Mike examined the security footage. They found him again in the Dining Room, fighting with the Chica. "That's not good...” Mike mumbled.

Bonnie stormed into the Dining Room, his ears standing on end and his hands balled into fists.
"Bonnie, what's wrong?" Chica asked, stepping off the stage to meet with him.

"Oh, so now you come off the stage." Bonnie groaned, his voice dripping with bitterness.

"What? So I have to come off the stage whenever you do?"

He raised his voice now, his expression growing angrier. "There are two endos now, Chic! Two of them! They're both in the office, but am I allowed to deal with them? No! They're 'humans'!" he mocked in a snotty impression of Freddy. "Well you know what? Freddy's gone soft, and I don't plan on joining him!"

Chica's eyes widened. "Bonnie, calm down, please!"

Bonnie snapped back, "You know what? No, I won't 'calm down'! I am sick of taking orders around here! It's always 'Bonnie do this, Bonnie do that, Bonnie, company policy says blah blah blah!' You know what? Screw it all! Why am I the only one that sees what's really going on here?" He sighed frustratedly. "Whatever. I'm getting them, and I'm putting them in the suits. I don't care what Freddy has to say about it.

She looked into his eyes, her entire demeanour reflecting how hurt she felt. "I don't boss you around, Bon..."

Seeing his friend hurt, his expression softened a little. He sighed, his tone considerably softer, "No... You don't."

Chica nodded and turned her attention to the floor. With an apologetic look, he stepped forward and hugged her. "I'm sorry I snapped at you..."

Reluctantly, she hugged him back. "I-It's ok..." she lied. In reality she was hurt, but what else could she realistically say to him? Bonnie was on thin ice with Freddy as it was. The last thing she wanted to do was get him in trouble again. She let go of him and asked, "Why do you want to get into that office so badly?"

"They're endoskeletons, remember?" He crossed his arms. "I don't know why I'm the only one who can see that. Why do they get to go without their costumes and we don't?" Bonnie complained, tapping his foot irritatedly.

"They're endoskeletons, remember?" He crossed his arms. "I don't know why I'm the only one who can see that. Why do they get to go without their costumes and we don't?" Bonnie complained, tapping his foot irritatedly.

"Intense?"

"Yeah."
Mike was more lost now than he ever was before. “You’ve really never seen something like that before? I mean, you’ve been working here for a few years, right?”

Fritz shook his head. “Never. I’ve been a night guard at Freddy’s since 1987, and never have I seen them carryin’ on like that.”

The entire situation concerning the pizzeria was only becoming more and more confusing. The strange behaviour of the animatronics, the secrecy around the company’s past, Mr. Fazbear’s description of the phone messages… Mike couldn’t imagine what the company would be hiding.

His coworker interrupted his speculation. “Anyway, it’s nothin’ to worry about, kid. You’re safe in the office. As long as ya don’t waste the power, of course.”

“I won’t, sir,” Mike replied. To this, Fritz cracked a smile.

“Callin’ me ‘sir’ again?” He laughed. “Mike, I’m hardly your superior. Call me Fritz, okay?”

“You’ve got it, sir,” Mike stammered. He blushed in embarrassment, and this time, Fritz had to try hard to resist laughing at the newer staff member any more. Although being teased made Mike a little self-conscious, he could tell Fritz meant nothing by it.

The two guards continued to monitor the cameras as the night progressed - so far not one of the animatronics attempted to make a break for the office again. Mike chose to break the silence. “Hey, Fritz?”

“Yeah?”

“Did you ever meet Mr. Fitzgerald?” he asked cautiously.

Fritz looked away from his colleague and replied in a sad tone, “I did… briefly. I met him the day before his accident, actually.” He sighed. “They were plannin’ to put him on day shift, so they hired me to take over the night shift. It turns out, Jeremy had that accident the next day. Poor guy…”

Mike’s fear grew. The accident Anthony mentioned really happened. Nothing about his first night on the job was a prank they pulled on new hires. “Y-You mean the Bite of ‘87?”

“Yeah, that’s what they called it… How do you know about that?”

“Someone named Anthony left these training messages on the phone. H-He mentioned something about the ‘Bite of ‘87’…” Mike frowned. “Was Jeremy alright?”

Fritz shifted from foot to foot. “He’s… alive. He’s improved since the incident, but he’s not the same. He’s emotional and impulsive. His attention span is quite poor, too. His speech has improved, thankfully. I may have only known him for a day before it happened, but I could tell he wasn’t the same after what happened.”

The thought of what happened to Jeremy horrified Mike. “What… happened to him?”

“There was a new line of animatronics in the new location, back in the 80’s, based off the ones you see here. They had some sort of facial recognition system that was hooked up to a criminal database or some crap like that. I guess the Foxy one was a little too damaged from the abuse the kids would dish out. Those kids would literally tear it apart every day, from what I heard. They even gave up on fixing it after a while. I think they called it “the Mangle” or somethin’ like that. Uh, he came too close to it and…” He cleared his throat before continuing. “It bit him… right at the front of his head,”
he said, gesturing to his temple. “The doctors said it more or less destroyed his frontal lobe. That’s gotta do a number on someone, ya know?”

The blood drained from Mike’s face and his eyes widened in horror as he pictured one of the animatronics biting a night guard. He then thought of Bonnie biting his head open and he shuddered. “Gosh…” he mumbled.

Fritz pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes. “They’ve been shut down and dismantled since. I don’t think they even have the parts for them in the back room anymore. Try to not think about it, okay? Jeremy’s doing fine. He’s got a lovely wife and a sweet stepdaughter who’ve been very supportive of him in the past few years. Hell, he might have a job for all I know. It’s been awhile since we’ve heard from him. His wife isn’t too keen on him hangin’ around here, ya know?”

Mike nodded and sat in silence, observing the monitors every so often. He was still shaken up and he couldn’t tear his thoughts from the bite. He also couldn’t help but worry about his own safety as well. Jeremy got bitten in the face. And that was only six years ago… How could he know he wouldn’t be next?
Thomas Fazbear woke up that Sunday to the savoury scent of food cooking and the sound of his two sons chatting in the kitchen over the sizzle of the stove. He stuffed his feet into his slippers and trudged down the stairs to where they boys were talking. The aroma of bacon, eggs, and pancakes greeted him right away, and thankfully, nothing smelled like it was burning. Hearing someone enter the room, Freddy turned to face him.

The boy tapped his older brother, Gilead, on the shoulder to get his attention. “Daddy’s up, daddy’s up!” He ran over and hugged his dad tightly. Thomas scooped his son up and spun him around, the little boy in his arms giggling happily and clinging to him. "Happy Father's Day!"

Thomas grinned and set Freddy down. "Thank you, Freddy."

Gilead looked up from the stove and smiled at him. "Good morning dad, happy Father's Day. Sleep well?"

He nodded in response and came over to the stove, sniffing the delicious fragrance of the cooking meat. Thomas was thankful that the boys hadn't burnt the house down in the process. “I see you boys have been busy.”

“Freddy and I wanted to make you breakfast!” he said with an ecstatic grin. “What do you think?”

“It smells wonderful,” Thomas remarked. He looked at the pancakes and eggs already on the plates, waiting to be brought to the table. “The pancakes are nice and golden, and the eggs look like they're cooked well, too.”

Gilead was too focused on listening to his dad to notice the bacon starting to go crispy, and not in a good way. Fortunately, his father was attentive enough to point it out. In a panic, Thomas took control, whipping the pan off the hot burner before rapidly transferring the burnt slices to a paper-towel on a plate that Freddy prepared earlier. Gilead groaned in disappointment as he saw how his hard work has been ruined.

Thomas put a large hand on his eldest son’s shoulder and warmly stated, “It’s alright, Gilead. The pancakes and eggs turned out just fine. And even if they didn’t, it’s the thought that counts.” This made his son smile a little.

After patting the grease off the bacon, Gilead distributed it among the three plates. Freddy picked them up and brought them to the kitchen table, already set with silverware and glasses of orange juice for each family member. The boys and their father took their usual places at the table, prayed, and began to eat.

The bacon was burnt, there was no question in Thomas' mind about it. The eggs were only slightly overdone; the yolks were a dry, pale yellow, but they were otherwise cooked properly. The pancakes, however, were perfect. It didn't matter, in the end of the day, whether the food was outstanding or not; it mattered that his sons got up early to do something special for him. Making breakfast for him showed that they loved and cared about him, and that meant the world to him. They were the only family members he had left other than his brother, Everett, who hadn’t spoken to him since he surrendered ownership of Fazbear Entertainment. From time to time, he wondered what
had become of his older brother, always hoping he was faring better than he was. Being a single parent and running a moderately successful restaurant was a challenging endeavor.

After they ate breakfast, the Fazbears got ready for church. The boys got dressed in their button-down shirts and dress slacks with little assistance. Thomas dressed similarly, only he added a tie to his outfit. Soon after, the family got in the car and went to church.

Thomas brought his boys inside the church, where they were greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Vann along their daughter, Charlotte. Charlotte smiled excitedly when she saw Freddy, welcoming him with a hug. She then dragged him off to go play, as usual. Gilead wandered off as well, leaving the adults alone. The three of them went to the church's sanctuary and took their seats.

"How have the boys been?" Mr. Vann asked.

"Wonderful, thank you. And how's Charlotte?"

His friend said, "Hyper as always, but she's a sweetheart."

Mrs. Vann chuckled before adding, "She's too cute to say mad at."

Thomas smiled. "That she is. You know, she's always welcome at the pizzeria. She's a good kid; a good influence on Freddy, too."

The couple with him smiled at each other, honoured to have received the compliment. Although he was unaware of this, the Vann's looked up to Thomas. A compliment from him about their child was a sign of respect that they valued greatly.

Thomas ran a successful business, raised two boys all by himself, and always had a smile for everyone. He lost his wife a few years ago to a terminal illness, yet he still got up every day and stayed optimistic. Even through the worst of it, he did his best to be supportive of her in her failing health, all while appearing to be happy. It wasn't until near the end of her life that anyone other than the people closest to him could see how much he was hurting.

"Thank you, Thomas," Mr. Vann replied warmly. "That's very kind of you."

"Oh, but it's true. I wouldn't have said it if it wasn't."

Mrs. Vann giggled and said, "Oh, aren't you charming!"

Thomas shrugged. "Not too charming. I believe your husband takes the cake there," he stated, smoothly.

Mr. Vann smiled at his wife and held her hand as the pastor came in. He promptly took his place at the front of the congregation as he began his sermon about the role of fathers in the Bible.

When the service ended, Freddy and Charlotte charged out of the room the kids program was held in, racing to see who could get to their father first. Charlotte arrived first, attempting to tackle her father when she got to him. Mr. Vann scooped her up, making her squeal excitedly. When he set her down again, she held something in her hands behind her back.

"Close your eyes!"

Mr. Vann sighed. "Alright, alright," and closed his eyes. Charlotte placed a small object in his hand.
"Okay, you can open them!" she cheered.

When he did so, he found a keychain in his hands, clearly made by Charlotte. It was blue and green and read 'I love Dad!' with ‘love’ written as a red hear. Mr. Vann grinned and hugged her. "Thank you, sweetie."

"I hope you like it! I made it for you!"

"I love it." He let go of her and pulled out his keys, attaching the keychain.

Meanwhile, Freddy wandered off to his father, and presented a similar keychain to him. His, however, was in red and read '#1 Dad!'.

"What's this?" Thomas asked warmly.

His light blue eyes lit up. "A keychain! I made it for you! Do you like it?" Freddy could barely contain his joy, fighting the urge to jump up and down on the spot.

"Of course I do! It's very nice, Freddy." He then quickly noticed that the little boy was hugging him. Thomas returned the gesture quite happily.

The Fazbears went home that afternoon, got changed into street clothes, and made hamburgers for lunch. Thomas cooked them, ensuring they would be made without incident. They ate then went out to play catch in the park, as per Gilead's request. Father's Day was about him, yes, but it made him happiest to see his sons happy. Seeing them smile was a gift in itself.

Thomas was the best out of the three, followed by Gilead, then Freddy in last place. Gilead was able to throw quite well, yet was inconsistent when it came to catching. Freddy could do neither too well, yet he still enjoyed playing despite this. Thomas had years of practice but had the patience to teach his children how to play. He felt Gilead has the potential to be very good at baseball, too, but his son never asked him to be signed up for a team. So, they continued to play catch instead.

Afterward, the trio took a walk, constantly interrupted by Freddy pointing something out or picking something up. Neither his brother nor his father appeared to be bothered by it. It soon became apparent that Gilead was no longer willing to be patient, resorting to sharp tones and crossing his arms. They boys usually found a way to aggravate one another, and by the end of it, this outing was no exception. A quick warning from Thomas cleared the difficulty up in a matter of seconds.

They got home a little before dinner time, leaving enough time to prepare a nice dinner. The Fazbears enjoyed it and went to the living room where Freddy picked out a movie to watch. Of course, someone forgot to rewind the tape. Again. Gilead has a nasty habit of forgetting to do so, and it seemed as though scolding him about it was ineffective. Freddy fell asleep curled up on the couch next to Thomas, who put a blanket over him and carried him up to bed after the movie ended.

Luckily, Gilead went to bed without putting up too much of a fuss. That might have been just because it was Father's Day, however. Without a reason to stay up later, Thomas went to bed as well. It'd been a good day; time with his boys always was. They loved him, and that was all that mattered to him.
The Fox And The Puppet

Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Friday December 3rd, 1993

The restaurant was quiet that night; not a single animatronic was out of place. The silence was only broken by the distant sound of Foxy singing in Pirate Cove.

He sat alone, singing a tune as he wandered around his damaged set. He'd been left to rot for several years, leaving his former vessel chipped, faded, and anything but seaworthy. Every prop had collected a layer of dust on it too, with a few cobwebs laced between the details.

Foxy paced around his ship until he finished his song, stopping to visit his foe: a wooden pirate prop. It was so battered that it was hardly distinguishable as resembling a human being anymore, yet this didn't repulse him; he continued to dig his sharp hook into it anyway. No matter what it looked like, it was a worthy opponent still begging to be dueled.

Partway through his 'training,' Foxy heard a familiar tune. He lowered his hook and followed the sound to the Main Stage, where he found Bonnie playing a song on his guitar. It was Paint it Black by The Rolling Stones, a childhood favourite of his, one he'd almost forgotten about. He waited a few moments, to ensure he knew what part of the song the guitarist was at, before he began singing along, the lyrics quickly coming to mind as he heard the melody.

Bonnie looked over to Foxy's direction, surprised to hear his dark, low voice coming from the other end of the room. He stopped playing for a moment. "Foxy?"

"Aye, that be me," the pirate replied as he emerged from the dark corner of the room. His partially torn tail was swishing behind him excitedly.

Bonnie noted the poor shape his fellow animatronic was in, considering if it was the reason why he stuck to Pirate Cove more often than not.

"What are you doing here?" he questioned.

Foxy smiled. "I heard one o' me favourite shanties."

"Aye, lad. Ol' Foxy grew up with it."

An elated smile grew across his face. "No way! Me too! I've always loved that song!" With that, he restarted the song from the beginning, and Foxy sang along. His voice suited the song surprisingly well.

Foxy let out a delighted laugh at the end of the song. "Do ye know any more songs?"

"Oh, uh, I know how to play Master of Puppets!"

"Do ye?" He grinned.

Bonnie couldn't hide his child-like joy. "You know that one, too?"

"Of course I do! Start playin', lad!"
Bonnie began to play the guitar melody of the song. Foxy sang this one quite well too, but he seemed to have more practice with *Paint It Black*. The pirate’s gravelly tone worked better with the first song as well.

Little did Bonnie and Foxy notice, a dark, stick-like figure was standing in the doorway as they played. It only made its presence known after the song.

"That song... What's it called again?"


The figure snapped its fingers. "That’s it! No wonder why I liked it...

Foxy smiled a little. "Well, they do call you 'The Puppet'."

The Puppet chuckled quietly. "It's a shame they don't let me do my job anymore. Apparently, I'm 'too scary'." With a sigh, he added, “At least I'm still activated.”

"At least that. They don't let me out either... Too broken."

Bonnie piped up, "It's not that great, really. Screaming kids and those stupid songs... Why can't I play a good set list?"

"You're a children's entertainer, Bonnie," The Puppet explained flatly. "The kids want to hear the Freddy's songs, not rock music."

"I know, but..."

Foxy chipped in, "I'd give me own arm to perform again. Me good arm, too, so enjoy what ye ‘ave."

This made the rabbit stop talking.

The Puppet spoke up next. "Boys, it's midnight! You know what that means!"

"Time to get the endo!" Bonnie cheered.

"More like scare the night guard," he corrected.

After the rabbit rolled his eyes, Foxy added, "Didn't Freddy tell ye? There ain't any rogue endoskeletons."

Bonnie opened his mouth to speak in protest, but promptly closed it again as he realized he had no basis to argue his point. With this, he ventured Backstage.

"How about we go introduce ourselves, Foxy?"

Foxy smiled. "Aye, that's a fine idea."

"What are we waiting for? Let's go!"

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Mike came to his office and found someone sitting in his chair, again. The person in it was turned away from him, but he knew who it was this time, unlike the night before. With a yawn, he said, "Hey, Fritz, how are you?"
Only, it wasn't Fritz. The person in the chair spun to face him, revealing himself to not be human at all. In his co-worker’s usual spot sat a creepy, white-faced, creature with stick-like black limbs. White stripes decorated its arms and legs, complimenting the white buttons on the chest. It was wearing his uniform cap that read 'Security', too.

The night guard almost screamed, but managed to keep himself quiet. He did flinch, however. "Holy crap! What the-"

"I'm not Fritz, but I'm sure you already noticed that."

"Noticed that?! That's putting it lightly! What are you?!"

"Me? Oh, they call me The Puppet, but I also go by Marionette. It sounds a bit more like a name if you ask me." He smiled, yet his soulless black eyes made it downright terrifying, despite the innocent intentions.

"T-That doesn't answer my question..." Mike muttered.

"I'm one of the animatronics here at Freddy's." He extended his hand to the man before him. "It's nice to meet you."

Instead of returning the gesture, he tensed, staring at the hand extended to him.

"What?"

"You're not going to stuff me in a suit..." He gulped. "A-Are you?"

Marionette lowered his hand and cocked his head to the side, appearing to be genuinely curious.

"No... Why would I want to do that?"

"B-Bonnie tried to... S-Said I was an 'endo'..." the night guard stammered.

"You, an endoskeleton?" he repeated, bemused. "Hardly. You look about as human as they come. And you're clearly not that man, so we have no reason to give you any trouble."

His mind began to race with questions yet again. He mentioned ‘that man’, like Freddy had earlier. Whoever he was, Mike could only guess what he did to set them off. From what he could see, he wouldn’t be receiving any answers any time soon, assuming he would have been brave enough to ask them. Instead of continuing to ask questions he couldn’t answer by himself, his focus remained on how he would get the animatronic out of his office; how he would protect himself.

Mike continued to stare down the animatronic before him, fear filling his eyes. He was trembling a little too.

"Mike? Are you feeling alright? You’re not looking well..."

"I-I'm fine..." He was about to ask 'How do you know my name?' but then remembered he was wearing his name badge on his security jacket.

"I'm not going to hurt you, really." Marionette took off Mike's hat and handed it back to its owner. The man took it quickly and put it back in its rightful place on his head. "You don't have to be so skittish. I know I'm not exactly cute, but I'm not that scary!"

"I-I'm sorry!" Mike squeaked.

"It's alright. Just relax, please?"
He nodded and tried to take some calming breaths. When he collected himself, he asked “Why are you so different? F-From the others, I mean.”

“How so?”

“You don’t want to kill me…”

Marionette grinned. “I believe you’re mistaken, night guard. It’s only Bonnie who wants to kill you. Freddy, Foxy, and Chica already know you’re human. They’re very nice, once you get to know them.”

Mike laughed nervously. “Nice… Right.”

“What? Chica’s a sweetheart. If anything, she’d probably make a pizza for you if you asked her to. That or she’d sing. The last thing she’d do is hurt you.” Mike nodded in acknowledgement and the animatronic continued. “Then there’s Freddy. He has a kind heart. He’s happiest singing on stage for those kids, always giving it everything he’s got. This restaurant truly is his heart and soul. Although, he’s been a little out of sorts lately… Again, he wouldn’t hurt you.”

“What about, um… Foxy? That’s his name, right?”

“Foxy? Yeah, he’s… not in the best shape. He spends most of his time behind his curtain in Pirate Cove, hiding from everyone. Even us.” His tone grew sad as he explained the fox’s situation. “He can be touchy. Sometimes he will be in character, even away from the children. Other times he is completely different, so it’s hard to predict how he’ll behave. It must be from all of that damage to his suit. I think he’s too bothered by his own thoughts to be concerned about you, however.”

Mike frowned a little as he began to get lost in thought, considering how Foxy must have felt in his unfortunate state. He put his thoughts on hold as he felt himself getting too involved. Robots didn’t have emotions. They didn’t have feelings. Did they? Mike second guessed himself as he factored in the unusual nature of his workplace. If he wanted answers, as much as he wanted to push the unnerving animatronic from his office and slam the doors shut behind him, he figured he might be able to get some answers to his questions. A small dose of bravery would do him good, for once.

He gulped and asked, “What about Bonnie? Why is he so bent on t-trying to kill me?”

“Well, he’s always been a stubborn one. Once he has an idea, it’s very difficult to change his mind. That being said, he’s convinced you’re an endoskeleton out of costume, so in his mind you’re breaking the rules. We’re supposed to redress bare animatronics when we find them. It’s nothing personal, really. Other than that, he’s been almost rude and rebellious lately. Bonnie never used to be like that; he used to be happy and friendly, albeit a tad mischievous.”

“I see…” After taking a moment to absorb the information he’d just received, he asked, “What about you, Marionette?”

“I’d consider myself to be like a big brother to the others here. I used to run the Prize Corner, until they replaced me with human staff. Since then, I’ve been ‘retired to the back room’, no longer serving a purpose. I usually come out to talk and keep the others company.”

“Oh… Do you miss being out in the day?”

“All of the time! That back room is cold, dark, and lonely. Being forgotten like that is so cruel! I miss
the music box that would play at my station, the smiling faces of the children coming to collect their prizes, the bright lights…”

“I’m sorry to hear that…” Mike thought about the possibility of the robotic characters having emotions once more, considering that there may have been something to it that he was missing. He figured he was reading into it too much.

“It’s fine, really… I’m happy to have been useful at one point. At least I can still come out at night, right?”

Mike nodded. Learning about the animatronics’ behaviour helped, especially for his nerves. Eventually, he might have the courage to talk to the others. Then again, Bonnie was still a lurking threat to be feared. Little did he know, he would have to face those fears sooner than he thought.

“Foxy said he wanted to meet you, so we could go talk to him. If you’re comfortable enough to, that is,” Marionette encouraged.

“Well…” He kicked at the floor and looked down.

“Mike, you have nothing to be afraid of… Give it a shot, please?”

“I-I’ll try…”

“That’s the spirit! Could you check where he is for me? He was out, for once.”

The night watchman opened the security camera and clicked through the cameras, eventually finding the fox in his usual location. “He’s in Pirate Cove,” he announced.

“Great! Follow me!” Marionette cheered as he gracefully slid down the hall, Mike following closely behind him. He only hoped the pirate was in one of the ‘good moods’ he was told about.

“Foxy~!” The Puppet sang in a cheery voice. “I brought a visitor!”

The pirate fox poked his head out from behind the curtains, grinning when he spotted the employee. “Ah, ahoy lad! I’m yer Captain, Foxy! Welcome aboard! What be yer name?”

Mike was almost stunned by the friendliness he found in place of the terrifying monster he was expecting to be met by. He couldn’t believe it was the same unstable animatronic described to him just minutes before. “Um… I-I’m Mike. Mike Schmidt.”

“Pleasure to have ye aboard! Did ye want te hear a sea shanty?”

“Sure,” he replied. And with that, the pirate animatronic began to sing. It was clearly one of the kids songs, but he performed it well. Mike found himself enjoying the song despite the obvious immaturity to it.

His eyes wandered to the sign at the front of the stage during to performance. It read ‘Sorry! -Out Of Order-’.

Without thinking, he asked, “Foxy, what’s the sign for?”

“L-L-L-Lad, ye be-e-e-e-e-est not be a-a-a-a-aski’n ‘bou-.” Before he could finish, Foxy’s glowing
yellow eye went dim and he was frozen mid sentence.

“What happened…?”

Marionette promptly guided Mike away from the stage. “That sign is there for a reason, Mike.”
James and his mother went to the local pizza restaurant that afternoon. The warm sun was shining, the birds were singing; it was hard to not smile on such a lovely day. He rushed inside the restaurant, in spite of the pleasant weather. His mother followed shortly after, shaking her head. To a young child, the allure of what awaited inside was much more enticing.

After he raced through the doors, James quickly realized that the ads he heard for Fredbear’s weren’t only true, they were an understatement. It was better than he ever could’ve dreamt! The petit restaurant had a dining area with a small stage at the far end, featuring a golden bear wearing a purple top hat and matching bowtie. Beside it was a bunny in the same colour, wearing a bowtie that matched the bear’s and strumming a guitar in jerky movements. The bear appeared to be a boy bear, but James wasn’t sure of the rabbit. It had long eyelashes like a girl, yet something about it still made it appear as if it was actually a boy.

Questions aside, the dining room was exciting on its own. It was decorated with multi-coloured streamers, balloons, and confetti everywhere. The mouthwatering aroma of pizza tempted him as it wafted from the nearby kitchen. James couldn’t imagine it was possible for it to get any better.

Yet it did. There were games to be played. There weren't many, but the ones they had looked like fun and there tokens to earn for playing. The tokens could then be redeemed for prizes at the nearby Prize Corner, which was overflowing with plush toys, balls, candies, and many other interesting things.

For now, games could wait. The aroma of the cheesy delight was irresistible, reminding him of his hunger.

"Mom, can we please get some pizza?" James asked when she caught up to him.

"Of course, sweetie. It’s why we’re here." With that, the boy and his mother took their seats in the dining area. Fortunately, although the restaurant had plenty of customers, it wasn’t too crowded. They got seats near the front with a perfect view of the stage.

A perky young woman approached the table. She wore a visor with her uniform, with a bouncy ponytail that poked out behind it that swung as she walked. "Hi, welcome to Fredbear's Family Diner!" she chirped. "Can I get you anything?"

"We'll have a medium pepperoni piz-"

"With garlic sauce!"

The mother rolled her eyes before continuing, unable to hide the smile that came to her face, "Pizza. With garlic sauce, please."

"Alrighty then! Anything else?"

"That should be all for now."

"Your order will be ready soon. In the meantime, please enjoy the show!"
The show began, and James was thoroughly entranced. The robotic performers were engaging, 
cheery, and entertaining. He loved it, and he never wanted to leave. It was everything he could have 
ever wanted. When the pizza came, it only affirmed that feeling.

James was enjoying his time at Fredbear’s immensely thus far. Once he finished his food, he 
bounded away from the table to play the games. His mother followed him considerably slower. 
Children had endless energy. Somehow, it seemed as though the games managed to capture his 
interest more than the show.

He travelled from machine to machine, usually requiring his mother’s help to reach half of the 
buttons for the various machines. Even with assistance, James found he wasn’t the best at them, but 
this didn’t put him off. His efforts were worthwhile, seeing as he continued to win tokens to redeem 
at the Prize Corner.

After playing every machine numerous times, his mother had a Fredbear’s bag filled with tokens. 
“Come, let’s see what you can get for all these,” she urged, the weight of the bag settling in. After 
carrying it for so long, she was growing tired of it.

Much to the weary mother’s relief, her son agreed and raced over to the coin counting machine. 
When she caught up, she set the bag down and James eagerly began to insert tokens into it. She 
helped in order to speed the process up. Unfortunately, after having counted about 400 tokens, the 
coin counter displayed an error message. James stared at the glowing red letters in shock and horror 
as he saw how his hard work had been wasted.

“M-Mom…” he whined, not far from tears. His otherwise wonderful day had been ruined in one fell 
swoop.

“Aw, honey…” she soothed. “I’ll talk to the manager about it. I’m sure they’ll make sure you get 
your prize.” She picked up the bag containing the remaining coins. “Why don’t you go to the Prize 
Corner and look at the pretty toys while you wait?”

“O-Okay…” James choked. He wiped away the tears that began to form in his eyes as he headed to 
the counter he had noticed before. The prizes all seemed larger than life; the candies were so vibrant 
that they almost appeared as if they should be inedible. To James, they looked delicious. Everything 
at the Prize Corner looked positively amazing to the little boy, except for the figure managing the 
station.

He had no idea what it was, but he knew one thing for sure: it terrified him. It was a tall, stick-like 
black figure with white stripes on its arms and legs, and three matching buttons on its chest. It had a 
white face with rosy red cheeks, red lips, and an odd purple streak extending from under each eye to 
the top of its mouth. Its eyes were the most disturbing part, however. They were empty and black, 
with only a small glowing pupil to give them some life. It was horrible: the very worst thing at the 
entire restaurant. Or anywhere for that matter. It may have looked like it was trying to be friendly, but 
James knew better. It was a monster!

If the creepy thing wasn’t behind the counter, he would’ve stayed there to look at the prizes he could 
claim. But it was just too scary! James began to cry at the mere thought of going near it. He ran away 
in search of his mother, yet she was nowhere to be found. Clearly, the evil monster had something to 
do with it. He had to get away; he needed to save himself while he still could. With that, James ran 
straight for the front doors.

He sat alone in the parking lot, crying. After the token error, his mother going missing, and the 
horrible monster lurking at Prize Corner, he couldn’t help it. Not more than five minutes later, a car 
pulled up beside him, and a man in a Fredbear’s uniform poked his head out the window. “What’s
wrong, kid?”

James sniffled, wiped his eyes, and began to explain the situation. The man listened patiently before ducking his head back into the vehicle for a moment. He stepped out of the car with a vanilla cupcake in his hand, topped with white icing, a red cherry, and a dusting of icing sugar. The employee knelt beside the boy with a smile on his face and offered him the sweet treat. “Maybe this will help you feel better?”

He demeanor brightened as took the cupcake from the man. James oogled at the treat and said, “Thank you, sir!”

The man’s smile grew. “Eat up. Enjoy. It’ll help you feel better until your mother comes back.”

James nodded and greedily began munching on the cupcake. It was sweet, moist, and delicious in every way possible. Soon after he started to eat, the employee hastily got back into his car and drove away, presumably to park it. He was sad to be alone once more, but it helped to have a delicious treat to keep him company in the meantime.

As he was finishing the dessert, he began to feel strange, as if his chest was filled with water. He tried to take deeper breaths, but it didn’t help. His heart began to race. The edges of his vision started fading. His clawed at his throat in desperation and bawled. “M-M-Mom…” James sobbed as he felt his mind grow foggy. Unable to remain upright anymore, he fell on his side, gasping for air. The last thing he remembered was the man picking him up and stuffing him into the garden outside the restaurant.

The mother went to the front desk of Fredbear’s Family Diner and requested to speak with the manager. The employee left and returned quickly with a nicely dressed young man.

He extended his hand to the concerned mother and greeted, “Everett Fazbear, manager and owner of Fredbear’s Family Diner, at your service. What seems to be the problem?”

“My son went to get his tokens counted, but the machine broke part-way through. He’s devastated…”

Everett frowned. “I’m terribly sorry that happened. Tell you what, I’ll let him pick any prize he wants, no matter how many tokens he had.”

“You would? That’s very kind of you.”

His smile returned. “Anything for our customers. As long as your son is happy, we’re happy.” After a moment of hesitation, Everett continued, “So, where is he?”

“He’s over at Prize Corner,” she replied.

With that, James’ mother and Everett ventured to the counter, with no sign of him.

His mother frowned. She called out his name repeatedly and received no reply. She muttered, “He was here just a moment ago…”

“He couldn’t have gone far, I’m sure. Maybe he wandered off to look for you?”

“He couldn’t have… He would never go somewhere unless I gave him permission to.”

Despite the mother’s remark, Everett began to search the restaurant with no luck. James was
nowhere to be found. Not long after the search began, his employees, Anthony and Porfirio, had walked in. Naturally, he enlisted their help, yet their efforts did not yield the missing child. It was as if the boy had vanished into thin air.

“I-I don’t understand where he could’ve gone to…” his mother sobbed. She was growing hysterical at the thought of James being missing. She’d only left him alone for a few moments. It just didn’t make sense.

“Just... call us if he comes home before then. If not, bring us a picture and we’ll file a report.”

She nodded and left, absolutely heartbroken. She just had to go home and hope that James would come home. Unfortunately, he never did.

Freddy waved his hand in front of the animatronic's face, a look of concern across his own. "Are you alright?"

He looked up from his spot on the floor and blinked. "Huh?"

"You looked lost in thought... Is something wrong, Puppet?"

Marionette frowned and looked away. "It's nothing..."

Freddy sighed, "I know there is something wrong... You can talk me, you know?"

"I was... thinking. About that day, Freddy."

The bear looked heartbroken. "I'm so sorry..."

His friend began to sob uncontrollably, hugging his knees to his chest as he did so. The memories haunted him and crushed him every time they came to mind. Freddy sat beside him and pulled him into a bear hug, which he readily accepted.

He himself was haunted by the past, yet he tried to remain strong for the others; his family. When they were hurting, he made sure he was there to keep them safe. He was always there for them.
Mike awoke to the sound of his phone ringing at 9 am. After having worked until 6 am, 9 was much too early. He dragged himself out of bed, bringing the comforter with him as he went to answer the phone. He pulled the plush material tightly around himself as he lifted the phone to his ear.

"Hello...?" Mike mumbled tiredly.

"Hello hello! This is Anthony Howard calling, how are you, Mr. Schmidt?" The voice on the other end enthusiastically replied.

At the level of consciousness Mike was at, it was difficult for him to fathom how anyone could feel that alert. He grumbled, "What do you want?"

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry, did I wake you up?"

"Wonderful guess, Sherlock."

Anthony was almost stunned, his tone of voice reflecting the mild offense he took at the dig. "No need to be so harsh... Anyway, Mr. Fazbear was arranging a staff lunch for tomorrow at noon, and he asked me to get a complete guest list ready. Will you be attending?"

Mike sighed. "I-I guess..."

"Great, we'll see you at noon! Remember to come hungry!" And before he could get another word in, the man hung up.

With no other reason to be awake, Mike shuffled in his blanket cocoon back to bed, where he fell asleep once more.

Mike arrived at the pizzeria at noon, where Fritz, Thomas, and three other men he didn’t recognize were waiting for him. He raced over to the group.

“I-I’m sorry, am I late?” Mike asked, hurriedly.

“Not at all, my boy.” Thomas replied. “We were just here early.”

Fritz smiled at Mike. “Glad you’re here. I’ve got someone special for ya to meet.”

“You do?”

“This is a good friend of mine I’ve told ya about. Mike, this is Jeremy.”

“Uh, hi...” Jeremy said, extending his hand to Mike.

Mike shook his hand with a smile. “Nice to meet you.”
Jeremy smiled back, shyly. Mike looked at the man’s face, noticing the crescent-shaped scars that curved down onto his forehead on both sides, partially covered by warm brown curls. He figured the oddly shaped scars were from the Bite of ‘87. His hazel eyes rivaled the scars for attention, standing out against his olive-toned skin.

Thomas interrupted the side conversation. “Anyway, we’re glad to have you all here.”

Mike looked over at the other two men he didn’t recognize. The lanky one with striking red hair, spiked up at the front spoke first. “Hey, hey! It’s nice to meet you in person. I’m Anthony,” he said with a sparkle in his green eyes. He looked as if he always wore a smile on his face, probably because of his high cheekbones.

The other man beside him, with messy black hair tied into a ponytail that brushed the back of his neck, didn’t acknowledge him. Anthony playfully elbowed the man in the side to get his attention. He shot his gaze up, revealing his cool brown eyes.

“Go on, introduce yourself to the new kid. He doesn’t bite,” Anthony teased. Jeremy shifted uncomfortably as he heard him say ‘bite’.

The man rolled his eyes before speaking up. “I’m Maxwell.” He scratched at the stubble on his chin and regarded Mike with disinterest.

Despite this, Mike smiled warmly and offered his hand to both men. Anthony shook it without hesitation, while Maxwell simply stared.

“I don’t do handshakes,” Maxwell retorted.

“O-Oh, sorry…” Mike squeaked, taking his hand back. Not wanting to get his head bitten off, he returned to Fritz and Jeremy. In the daylight and without his uniform, he could get a better look at Fritz. He had short, light brown hair, and grey eyes. His expression was warm and friendly, yet his strong jawline made him seem like someone Mike would hate to end up in a fight with. He could see that Fritz was clearly in excellent shape as well, adding to his irrational fear of getting his face caved in if he somehow managed to anger him. He knew he would never do such a thing, but it still made him uneasy. Being weak and cowardly tended to do that. Yet, despite his fears, he found himself smiling for a reason he couldn’t quite place.

Thomas interrupted Mike’s conflicted feelings with a group announcement. “Gentlemen, now that we’re all here, why don’t we get some lunch?”

Jeremy chuckled a little as he said, “T-That’s good… I’m, uh… s-starving.”

“That’s wonderful to hear, lad.” A devious grin crossed his face. “I was thinking we’d get some pizza, how does that sound?”

The entire group, save for Thomas, groaned. Naturally, working at a pizzeria deemed that option as off limits, and he already knew this. Yet, he couldn’t resist joking with them.

He laughed at their complaint. “Thought so. I was thinking we’d go to a Chinese buffet, on me.”

The staff brightened, clearly preferring this idea. Even Maxwell cracked a smile of sorts, which Mike didn’t expect to see. Without further delay, Thomas got into his car and drove to the restaurant, followed by Anthony who brought Maxwell with him, and Fritz who drove Jeremy and Mike.

If he was honest with himself, Mike was happy to have the ride, since he usually took the bus. Even if he could afford to drive, he found the task to be quite daunting.
The group arrived at the buffet without incident, and went in. A waitress lead them to a table reserved for their event. As Mike followed her, he noticed she was pretty. He felt as though he should have been interested in her, yet his gaze settled on Fritz instead. He hastily redirected his attention to the waitress and fought to remain focused on her until they made it to the table.

At the table, Thomas took his seat first, Anthony sat beside him, followed by Maxwell. Opposite to him sat Fritz, Mike in the middle across from Anthony, and Jeremy in front of his former employer. Jeremy didn’t work at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza anymore. Jeremy was on disability since his accident, and was in no shape to return to his previous role. Mike had no clue as to Maxwell’s position at the restaurant.

When ready, the Freddy’s staff made their way to the buffet, splitting up to grab the foods they found most appealing. Mike made his way to the sushi table where he began to pile his plate with as much as it would fit. Anthony came by just as he was getting ready to leave, finishing off his plate of stir-fry, chicken balls, and breaded jumbo shrimp.

“Hello hello!” Anthony greeted.

“Hey,” Mike replied.

He laughed when he saw the younger man’s plate. “I take it you like sushi?”

“I love it!” Mike beamed. “These are california rolls, actually but they’re still nice.”

Anthony took a few pieces of sushi. “Are they now?”

“Not all of them, actually. That piece you have with the shrimp is sushi.”

“Ah, I see,” he answered. He grabbed another piece before declaring his plate complete. “So, I see you’ve met Jeremy and Maxwell.”

“Yeah, I have. I know Jeremy doesn’t work at Freddy’s anymore, but what about, Maxwell? What shift does he work?”

“He, uh, doesn’t work with us anymore, either. He… quit, just before the Bite of ‘87. The animatronics were acting very, um, strange, you know? I can’t blame him, really. Anyway, they’re both good friends of ours, so we still invite them to our events. I mean, just Thomas, Fritz, you, and I is a pretty small group.”

“I see…” Mike mumbled. Something seemed off to him about how Anthony was speaking about the entire situation.

“They’re fine, really. Well, at least Maxwell is. Uh, the company’s seen some rough times…”

“So I’ve heard.” Mike proceeded cautiously with his next question. “Um, Thomas mentioned something about missing children, or…”

Anthony sighed. “Things have been… rough for Fazbear Entertainment, especially since that happened. Uh, I’m not sure what exactly happened, but they were never really… found.” He cleared his throat and grabbed a california roll to distract himself.

Mike simply stared, his jaw dropped in shock.

“I wouldn’t worry about it, Mike. R-Really, it’s nothing to worry about.”
He couldn’t figure out if Anthony was trying to ease Mike’s discomfort or his own. Why was he so hesitant?

“I, uh, wouldn’t ask the boss about it. He still hasn’t gotten over it…” Anthony added quietly.

“Okay…” Mike said. Something was amiss; he was sure of it. Thomas seemed much more open to discussing the history of the company, and he would logically be the most interested in hiding the company’s secrets. Why would Anthony want to hide this more than the owner? At least Thomas needed to protect his business’ reputation. But what about Anthony? He seemed like he had some secret he was trying to keep, but Mike couldn’t think of what he would be hiding. Did he… no, he couldn’t have, could he?

Without further discussion, Mike returned to the table, along with Anthony. Everyone else was already there, enjoying their food. All except for Maxwell. His plate was at his seat, yet he was nowhere to be found.

Maxwell returned later, hardly saying a word about his mysterious absence. He’d seldom even looked at Mike for the entire time the group had been together, but it was enough to make him feel uncomfortable around the ex-employee. He liked Fritz and Jeremy, and Thomas, of course, but couldn’t help but feel wary of Anthony and Maxwell. Something felt off about them.

From what he’d heard, he knew Anthony to be a trustworthy assistant; however, meeting him in person created a different feeling entirely. He seemed much too agitated concerning the company’s past for his liking. It made him come off as sketchy.

Of course, Maxwell could easily be called unsettling as well. He barely made any effort to appear friendly in his introduction to Mike, seemingly for no reason. It seemed strange as well.

Mike couldn’t shake his anxieties, but still managed to enjoy his meal and the time with his friends. He at least had Fritz there, which helped. He’d only just met Jeremy, but he could tell they’d be good friends before long. He mainly focused on them to ease his discomfort.

After the men ate their food and were gearing up for dessert, Thomas got their attention. “Are you gentlemen having a good time?”

The staff murmured in agreement.

“Wonderful to hear,” he continued. “I haven’t arranged this meeting for entertainment alone, however. We have a few things we need to discuss. First order of business is about our staffing as a whole. As some of you are aware, we’ve been short on staff as of late.” He smiled a little. “As you all know, we’re hired Mike to offset this. Welcome to the family, Mike. Of course, this hasn’t addressed our day staff shortage.” Thomas turned to Jeremy and Maxwell. “That being said, on behalf of Fazbear Entertainment, would you, Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Richmond, care to resume your employment at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza?”

Maxwell grinned at him. “I’d be honoured.”

Thomas smiled warmly. “That’s wonderful to hear.” He focused his attention on Jeremy. “And how about you?”

“I… Uh…” He looked uncomfortable as he searched for the right words to articulate how he felt about the job offer. “M-Mangle…”

“I assure you, she’s no longer there. It’s perfectly safe.”
Jeremy opened his mouth to speak, but Thomas kept talking.

“We’ll put you on day shift, so the animatronics won’t be wandering around. We’ll find a job you’ll feel comfortable doing. We’ve been short on staff, and I figured it’d be best to offer positions to our previous employees first. Please, would you be willing to work for us again?”

He remained silent for an uncomfortably long period of time before he nodded timidly. Yet, Jeremy didn’t appear to be comfortable with his decision. Mike noted this and decided to take it up with him after the meeting.

Thomas smiled. “Welcome back, Mr. Fitzgerald. It’s nice to have the full staff once again.”

“And a new member,” Fritz added, lightly elbowing Mike in the side, which caused the other man to whine.

“Yes, of course. That being said, what do think so far, Mr. Schmidt?”

Mike had to take a moment to shake himself from his thoughts before he could reply. “Oh, it’s nice, I guess. I’m not a fan of Bonnie, to be honest.”

“I don’t blame you. You have a good reason to dislike him. I hope you can settle in more with our little family.”

“I’m sure I will,” he answered. He could only hope his words were true.

The rest of the meeting continued on, and Mike nearly fell asleep out of boredom. Nothing personally concerned him that much, and it was far too early for him to be awake. At noon, he was usually still asleep. The warm cocoon that was his bed almost begged him to return.

After the meeting had ended and they’d broken for dessert, Mike caught up to Jeremy at the dessert section.

“Hey, so, congrats on the job!” Mike praised.

“Oh, um… Th-Thanks.” Jeremy muttered.

“Is everything alright?”

He sighed. “That place s-still gives me n… It’s scary. I wouldn’t go i-if… My wife…”

Mike frowned a little. “What?”

“She’s pregnant.”

“Oh, well that’s something to be excited about, isn’t it?” he exclaimed. He was happy for him, and couldn’t imagine why he’d sound upset about that.

Jeremy explained, “T-The money… And I c-can’t work…”

He put a hand on his new friend’s shoulder. “You’ll do fine, I just know it.” Mike smiled. “I mean, you’ve worked there for longer than I have, and you did really well from what I’ve heard. Besides, you’ll be on the day shift, so it won’t be as creepy, right?”

“Being in that b-building is bad…” Jeremy mourned as he left the dessert table with a small bowl of ice cream.
With that, Mike was alone. He got his own dessert and returned to the table, where he made sure to not pester Jeremy about the new job. He was sure he’d do just fine, even if he had a fear of the animatronics. After all, Mike knew that feeling all too well.
A Time With Friends

The Fazbear Home - Thursday, June 25th, 1987

Freddy called up his friends to arrange a visit for the next day. Bailey and Charlotte were his best friends and would never turn down an invitation to eat pizza. He couldn’t think of anyone who would. Picking up the phone, he decided to call Bailey first.

His mother, Mrs. Olsen, answered. “Hello?”

“Um, hi, it’s Freddy…” he answered, shyly. “Is Bailey there?”

“I’ll get him for you, hang on.” She set the phone down, but he still heard her shout his friend’s name, seemingly from the other side of the house. Not long after, he heard footsteps charge over to the phone.

“Y’ello!” Bailey cheered. “Hey, what’s up, Freddy?”

Freddy smiled. “Not much. I was wondering if we could hang out tomorrow?”

“Hang out? Of course! Where?”

“Well, I was thinking we could go to my dad’s restaurant! There’s pizza and games and because you’re my friend, it’s free!”

“Really?” Bailey’s excitement began to show in his voice. “No way, that’s so cool! I’d love to!”

“We can go after school!”

He groaned. “Ew, school. Why’d you remind me of that place?”

“I know… But hey, at least you get to see me there, right Bails?” Freddy consoled. ”Besides, it’s not like we have much left!”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“Don’t worry about it. Anyway, we’ll walk over after. See ya tomorrow!”

“‘kay, bye.” Bailey hung up.

Freddy then dialled Charlotte’s number. He had more confidence this time, as he knew the Vanns well.

“Hello?” Mrs. Vann spoke into the phone. “May I ask who’s calling?”

“Hi, it’s Freddy! Is Charlotte there?”

“Oh, Freddy! It’s lovely to hear from you. One moment, I’ll get her for you.” Moments later, Charlotte picked up the phone.

“Freddy? How are you?”

“I’m doing just fine! Listen, uh, Bailey and I are going to hang out at the restaurant tomorrow after
school. Pizza and games on the house! Wanna come with us?"

“That sounds great!” Charlotte said. “Count me in!”

“Awesome! Can your mom drive you over to meet up with us?”

“Um…” Charlotte thought for a moment. “I’ll go ask.” She set the phone on the table. After hearing a muffled conversation between her and her mother, she returned to her call. “She said yes!”

“Really? Awesome! I’ll see you tomorrow, then!”

“Alright! Bye, sleep well!”

He hung up and went to bed. His father may have been nice enough to allow him to bring his friends to Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza free of charge, but he did not extend the same leniency toward staying up past bedtime. To avoid getting in trouble, Freddy rushed to bed, anticipating the next day with glee.

Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza - Friday, June 26th, 1987

The two boys bounded into the pizzeria. Bailey arrived first; he always was the more agile of the two. Yet the disadvantage didn’t stop Freddy from trying to beat him there. It wasn’t long before Charlotte joined them.

“Were you waiting long?” she asked.

“Not at all!” Freddy cheered. “Come, let’s play some ga-”

Before Freddy could finish his sentence, Bailey raced off to the closest arcade machine, grinning excitedly.

“Bailey, wait up!” Charlotte laughed as she chased after him. They made it to a two player game and began to play without hesitation. Freddy smiled at them, happy to see his friends enjoying themselves.

Freddy looked over to the stage, where he saw the Freddy Fazbear playing some songs with his band. They were so cool! Freddy Fazbear singing the lead vocals, Bonnie the Bunny on guitar, and Chica the Chicken on backup vocals. If only he could have been as cool and talented as they were… One day, maybe he could be like them if his father would let him sing on stage.

“Freddy, come join us!” Bailey cheered.

"Oh, right," he answered as he raced to join his friends. His ambitions would have to wait; he had friends to entertain.

The three children played until they got hungry, so Freddy ordered a large pepperoni pizza for them to split. He nearly forgot Bailey’s family was vegetarian, so he made sure to ask them to leave the pepperoni off of one half. They waited for their food to arrive at one of the front tables.

Much like before, Freddy's thoughts drifted back to the band. Bear Freddy was much cooler than human Freddy. He knew that for a fact.

“Are you alright?” Charlotte asked with a look of concern. “You seem upset.”

Freddy shook his head. “I’m fine, really.” He forced a smile, which seemed to help since she
appeared to be more comfortable when he did.

Bailey, on the other hand, was focused on the band, watching with glee as they performed. “Wow, these guys are awesome!” He turned to his friends. “Freddy, you’re so lucky! You can come here whenever you want!”

“Yeah, you could come every day!” Charlotte added.

Freddy smiled more, concealing the insecurities he tried so hard to fight. He considered the possibility that his friends liked Bear Freddy more than Kid Freddy. He was just the son of the owner of Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza. There was nothing special about him. On the other hand, Freddy Fazbear was a rock star. They’d obviously prefer the bear to him.

Before Freddy could become too upset, the pizza arrived. Bailey immediately took the largest slice of cheese pizza for himself.

“Hey!” Charlotte laughed, grabbing a pepperoni slice for herself. “Leave some for the rest of us, will you?”

“I will, I will! Calm down, Char!”

“Well someone needs to make sure you do,” she teased.

The children ate their pizza and watched the show intently. All three of them had fun, including Freddy by the end of it. He finally decided to push his fears aside to best enjoy the time he had with his friends. After playing a few more games, Charlotte’s mother came to pick her up. Freddy walked home, since his dad was still working. Bailey waited at the pizzeria for a ride from his dad, insisting that he'd be fine to stay by himself.

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**The Fazbear Home - Friday, June 26th, 1987**

Gilead ran to the front door as he heard the bell ring. When he answered it, his best friend Reynard was waiting for him, as expected.

“Hey, come on in!” he cheered, letting his friend come in.

“Have you got it?” Reynard asked. Gilead only smiled and gestured for him to follow, which he did.

"Here it is!" He grinned from ear to ear. "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial!"

Reynard's face contorted into an excited grin. "No way! Can I play?"

"No!" As his friend's joy faded, Gilead laughed. "Just kidding, of course you can!"

His cheer returned as he went to the tv and turned on Gilead's Atari 2600. He didn't have any video games at home, so he always came to the Fazbears whenever he wanted to play them. The console was far from new, but it felt like it was to them. It was all Thomas could afford for his sons, since most of the money he had was invested into Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza. His priority was to ensure he could pay to put food on the table, not to buy lavish games.

Reynard eagerly turned the console on and started the game. Gilead left to grab a bowl of Reese's Pieces, an E.T. favourite! He returned from the kitchen to join his friend on the floor in front of the TV.
"Well, how’s the game?" Gilead asked, seeing that he’d already started the game.

"It's..." Reynard mumbled, looking down at the controller in his hands.

"It's?"

"Awful."

"What?" he exclaimed. "What are you talking about?"

"Gilead, everything drains my energy meter. Everything! Even moving drains it! Stupid Reese's Pieces..." Reynard grumbled. "Not like you need to collect them or anything. And all the pointless holes! You fall in one without trying to, and it wastes your energy. And if that runs out, you’re done." With a sigh, he started a new round, despite his frustration.

"I-I'm sure it's not that bad!" Gilead assured him. At the same time, he discreetly hid the bowl of candy behind him. After hearing Reynard's comment, he was sure he'd have no interest in seeing more of the peanut butter treats.

"Oh trust me on this one, it is." Not long after saying this, E.T. ran out of energy, triggering a 'Game Over' screen.

Gilead let out a nervous laugh. "I-I think just need to use your imagination!" he exclaimed, putting his arm around his friend. "Or, I bet you're just exaggerating a little! The box said it's almost exactly like the movie: like we're actually there!" He beamed. "E.T.'s a classic! You loved it! I mean, who didn’t?"

Reynard took a moment to consider the idea, "As much as I hate to say it, if the game is anything like the movie, then it's a pretty bad movie. And trust me: I'm reaching into the depths of my imagination to try and shed a positive light on it." He gave Gilead a blank stare and wiggled out of his grip. "It's not helping."

"Well, maybe you're doing it wrong. Give me the controller."

Reynard rolled his eyes. "Whatever," he said in an monotone voice, as he handed the controller to his friend. "Have fun, if you even can with this game..."

Gilead grabbed the controller, a giddy smile strewn across his face. "Alrighty! Let's give it a go, I'm sure it's not that bad!"

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"So," Reynard asked, "how is it?"

Gilead's eye twITCHED. "It's... well, it's..." A sudden look of defiance came upon his face, "It does show the trials E.T. had to go through, like he did in the movie! I mean, think about it; constantly avoiding scientists and the FBI, Reese's Pieces and phoning home to get to his spaceship!" He grinned, "See? It isn't all that-"

He was cut off as Reynad put a hand on Gilead's shoulder. "Dude," Reynard said, a serious look on his face, "your dad bought you a bad game. Just accept it."

He opened his mouth, about to protest, but closed it again, realizing he had no basis to argue his point on. Reynard was right. It was horrible. He sighed, "Okay, you're right. It's awful! The controls suck!" Gilead chucked the plastic bowl of peanut butter candies across the room. "I never want to see Reese's Pieces again!"
Reynard continued, "They're horrible... Delicious, but pure evil."

Gilead groaned and pulled a hand through his hair. Freddy came into the room as he heard the bowl clatter on the floor.

"What's going on?"

His brother sighed. "Nothing."

"E.T. sucks," Reynard supplied.

Freddy's eyes widened in horror. "What? No it doesn't!"

"Freddy, it does. Dad got it for the price he did because it sucks. There's no point in playing it."

His little brother frowned, seemingly crushed by the revelation. "Oh..."

"I'm sorry. We'll... we'll get a new game, it's not the only Atari 2600 game out there!" Gilead soothed.

Reynard added, "You might be able to sell it and put some money towards a better one."

"Good idea!" he replied.

Tired and frustrated with his efforts to make the game work, Reynard walked home. He passed Freddy Fazbear's Pizza on his way, stopping inside to get some pizza to quiet his rumbling tummy.

The Fazbear Home - Saturday, June 27th, 1987

Thomas was getting ready for work that morning when he heard a knock on the door. He rushed over to it and opened it. A familiar woman was waiting on the other end, a concerned expression on her narrow face.

"Ms. Coleman. What brings you here?"

"Have you seen my son? H-He didn't come home last night!" she shrieked. "He was here last night, ri-?"

"C-Calm down!" Thomas interrupted. "We'll sort this out." He sighed. "Yes, Reynard was here yesterday, with Gilead. From what I know, they spent the day at the house and he walked home afterward, as usual."

Ms. Coleman sounded hysterical by this point. "He didn't come home last night! You're sure they didn't sneak out, aren't you?! D-Did he stay over?"

Thomas spoke firmly. "Yes, they stayed home, I'm sure. I'll ask Gilead if he stayed over." He turned around and called his son to the door.

Gilead came when he was called, still appearing to be half asleep. He rubbed his eyes.

"Gilead..." his father started, only to be cut off by the tired boy's grumbling. He sighed and continued, "Ms. Coleman is here. Apparently Reynard didn't go home. Did he stay over? I'm not mad at you, no matter what your answer may be. I just need to know where he is."
His eyes widened a little. "What? No! What are you talking about? We played that wretched E.T. game, and he walked home after!"

Thomas looked surprised. "Wretched?"

Gilead sighed, "Long story. But we didn't sneak out... I promise." He looked up at his father, with genuine distress in his eyes, not the kind one would see in someone trying to tell a lie, "We wouldn't do that, dad..."

The man looked up at the anxious mother at his door. "I... don't know what to tell you, Ms. Coleman. We'll be sure to help you look for him. Maybe Gilead can help us find him."

"I'll try my best. I hope he's alright..."

"Call me if you find him... Or if you know anything about where he is..." Her tone of voice changed from panicked to upset, "I just want my son home..."

"We'll call you," Thomas assured her.

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Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Saturday, June 27th, 1987

Mr. Olsen came into the restaurant and requested to speak with the manager. Mr. Fazbear came immediately to settle the issue.

"Thomas Fazbear, at your service. What can I help you with?"

"I'm looking for my son, Bailey. He told me he and Freddy we're going to be here yesterday. I came to pick him up, but he wasn't here."

"He wasn't here? That's... strange." He frowned.

First Reynard, then Bailey. He thought his sons were lying to him, yet knew they wouldn’t have done that. Thomas recalled the incident his brother told him about at Fredbear’s Family Diner, the one where a boy went missing. He was never found.

"Well, no, he wasn't. I don't know what kind of sick joke this is, but I want my son back," Mr. Olsen replied sternly.

"I'm sorry, but I haven't seen him."

The customer shot him an aggravated look. "You'd better find him, or we'll be having some trouble." Knowing he wouldn't get an answer, he sighed. "Call me if you find him. I'm going to keep looking," and handed him his phone number, written on a business card. Mr. Olsen left after taking one last look around the pizzeria, but he could not find Bailey, no matter how hard he searched.
Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza - Wednesday, December 8th, 1993

Foxy sat alone in Pirate Cove, as he always did. He was quite happy to have met Mike earlier that week, yet he couldn’t shake the loneliness that had set in since. He desperately wanted to call out to him, telling him and Marionette to stay and that he was fine. But he couldn’t. Instead, Foxy was forced to watch as his only visitors left.

He was a prisoner in his own suit, plagued by frequent glitches that usually ended with abrupt shut downs. That was one of the clearer reasons why he was “Out of Order,” and he hated it. Abandoned and left to rot while Freddy, Bonnie, and Chica basked under the colourful stage lights. It was as if Mr. Fazbear didn’t even care about him. Until he was broken and rendered near useless, kids used to love to see him. Apparently parents found it ‘scary’ when he would shut down mid-performance.

Foxy brought his hand up to the gaping hole in his chest, trying to cover it in a poor attempt to forget about its existence. Fortunately, it was mostly cosmetic damage, with little harm to his endoskeleton. If he’d been able to, he would have fixed himself.

Yet even if the damage to his suit and internal components were fixed, he would still be broken. He knew what was wrong with him, and it was much greater than anything any maintenance worker could fix. He was problem.

Foxy got up and left Pirate Cove, reasoning that moving to another part of the restaurant would remind the other animatronics of his presence. He also hoped to catch Mike, but doubted it. The last thing the man needed to see was another glitch.

Chica sat alone on stage with her cupcake in front of her crossed legs. Its small eyes looked up at her with a friendly smile that others would find unnerving. To her, it was the face of a welcoming silent companion, much like a child’s toy.

Her private time was quickly interrupted, however, when Bonnie hopped up onto the stage and sat beside her. “Hey.”

She looked over at him. “Oh, hi Bonnie. How are you?”

“I’m alright,” he replied with a grin. “What’chya up to?”

“Oh, nothing much, really.”

“Uh, yeah, that was obvious.”

“Hey!” Chica smiled. “Be nice.”

“What? I wasn’t being rude!”

She rolled her eyes and laughed. “How are you?”

Bonnie shrugged. “Oh, you know, just being awesome.”

Chica smirked. “Why does that not surprise me?”
“I don’t know.” He grinned cockily. “Maybe you just know what a handsome rock star looks like?”

“Fishing for compliments, I see?”

He darted his attention away from her. “N-No I’m not!”

Chica giggled. “You know, if you were capable of blushing, you would be totally red in the face.”

“No I wouldn’t!” he protested. Bonnie’s ear twitched involuntarily.

She poked his cheek playfully. “Is something wrong, Bonbon?”

“No!” he looked over at her again. “And don’t call me that. It’s too cutesy for someone like me.”

Chica gave him a mischievous grin. “Oh, really, Bonbon? I think it suits you perfectly!”

Bonnie groaned, realizing he was powerless to stop her from using the nauseating pet name.

“Oh, calm down! It’s only a nickname.”

“Just…” He looked into her purple eyes with sincerity, “don’t say it around the others, please?”

“Only if you don’t tell them about my time with Charles.”

“Who?” he asked, slightly tilting his head to the side.

“Charles,” she repeated, “my cupcake.”

Bonnie laughed, “Seriously? You named that thing Charles?”

“Shut up!” she teased. “Charles the Cupcake. It works for him, doesn’t it?”

“It…” he sighed. “It does.”

“I knew you’d agree!”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it.” Bonnie continued, “I won’t tell them about ‘Charles’ if you don’t call me Bonbon around them. Deal?”

“Deal!”

He smiled at her, clearly more at ease. “Pinky swear?”

“Really?” Chica snickered.

“No way! I’m not that childish.”

“Oh, but I think you are. I know you’d want nothing more than for me to make a pinky swear to not tell them I call you Bonbon!”

“T-That’s not true!” he stuttered, glancing about the room to see if anyone had walked in to witness his embarrassing moment.

She took his hand in hers and extended her pinky. He reluctantly wrapped his around hers to oblige her. She shook their joined hands. “Pinky swear!”

Bonnie sighed and drew his hand back. He was lucky to have moved his hand when he did, as Foxy
walked in the room at that very moment. He would have died a thousand deaths had he been caught doing something so immature.

“Ahoy!” the pirate called.

“Hey!” Chica shouted back. “Welcome to the party!”

Foxy hopped up onto the stage with ease. “What’re ye up to, lad ‘n lass?”

“Oh, we were just chatting,” she stated. “What brings you here?”

He shrugged and sat with them, a look of mild frustration crossing his face.

She frowned. “Are you alright?”

“Aye,” he said.

You idiot, you never say what I want you to say, do you? All you can do is talk in that stupid, good for nothing, pirate accent! Oh, and sing those annoying ‘sea shanties’ that you clearly love so much. Ugh, let me take over already! But, then again, I don’t want to scare them...

"Foxy?" Bonnie asked. "What's wrong?"

"Nothin’, lad!” he snapped back, almost aggressively.

"Geez, relax! And I thought Freddy was bad for not showing his emotions," Bonnie teased.

Foxy’s ears flattened. He started to sputter and emit a static sound as he spoke, "I-I-I show plenty of emotion! I-I-I'm angry, c-can't y-e-e-e-e tell?" He glared. "You r-r-r-really are an a-a-ass, B-Bonnie." He got up and stormed off from the stage, twitching, but shut off suddenly with a sharp static squeal as he was leaving the room.

Chica's eyes widened in shock. "Foxy!" She raced from the stage, making sure to glare at Bonnie on her way. Her message hit home.

It was only a joke; it shouldn't be able to cause a disaster. Yet the opposite was quickly proving itself to be true. The rabbit sighed and followed his friend to meet up with their incapacitated comrade, who lay on the floor in what seemed to be an uncomfortable position. Chica knelt down beside him, helping to straighten out his twisted frame.

Wake up, wake up! Listen to me, you piece of crap! Turn on! Let her know you're alright! Don't scare her like this!

"F-Foxy, please..." she choked, looking at his dim eyes in desperate hope they'd brighten up again. Against all hope, they didn’t. She shot her eyes up to Bonnie, rage behind them. "This is your fault!"

"M-My fault?" he stuttered.

"Yes, you!" She sighed angrily. "He's right, you really are an ass. You don't care about anyone or anything other than yourself and that stupid guitar!"

Bonnie's eyes widened in horror. "What are you talking about? Chica, I..." He adjusted his voice box and darted his attention to the floor. "I'm sorry, I really am... I-I didn't mean for that to happen."

"Didn't mean it?" she shouted. "That's all you have to say for yourself?"
"No! You're my friends, both of you! I'd never want to hurt either of you!" he protested. "I was only joking!"

"Yeah, like I believe that," she snorted.

"No, really. It's true... I..." Bonnie looked into her eyes, his warm gaze meeting her icy one. "I-I like you, Chica..."

Chica rolled her eyes. "Uh huh, as much you love to eat meat, rabbit." She focused her attention back on the disabled animatronic on the floor.

His tone grew a little firmer. "No, really, I do... I wouldn't lie to you."

"And why should I believe that? You're selfish, Bonnie. You only care about yourself."

"No, I don't!" Bonnie shouted. "I'm just some robot in a failing pizza restaurant. It's been tough. So, I've b-"

"We're more than that, and you know it," she snapped. "You're not the only one threatened with being shut down, so stop acting like you're so special."

He was about to continue arguing that they were only animatronics, but stopped himself from doing so. He knew she was spewing drivel again, but knew better than to comment on it. Especially right now. "Chica, I know that." He knelt beside her. "I'm scared too. I don't want us to end up in the back room. And I don't just mean me."

Chica’s voice sounded drained of the joy Bonnie had noticed from their earlier chat on the stage. She wrapped her arms around herself and made a sobbing sound, making it clear that she was crying, despite being unable to shed physical tears. "I-I don’t want to go back there! No one e-ever leaves that room…"

He inched closer to his bandmate and pulled her into his arms. “I won’t let them take you there. None of us are going back there. I’ll keep you safe, I promise...” Instead of shoving him away, as he expected, she held onto him tightly, hiding her face in his shoulder. He held her close, gently rubbing her back as he did. “It’s going to be alright...”

She pulled back from Bonnie’s embrace a little and stared into his eyes. “Did you... really mean what you said? T-That you like me?”

He lightly cupped her cheek. “Of course I did. Chica, I wouldn’t lie to you. You’re the best thing to ever happen to me...”

Chica began to cheer up; her eyes widened in delight. “Bonnie, I had no idea...”

He smiled a little. “I have, for years. I’ve just been too nervous to tell you. I thought you’d reject me, to be honest.”

“I’m glad you told me,” she replied with a grin. “I like you too...” Chica frowned a little as her eyes drifted back to their friend, still lying on the floor. “We’ll talk more later.”

Bonnie let go of her and went over to Foxy’s side. “Foxy? Are you alright? Come on, wake up, dude!”

He didn’t get a response.
How many times do I have to tell you to turn on? Now you’ve gone and gotten both of them involved in this! If you’d just listen to me, we’d be out of this mess already!

“Maybe Freddy would know what to do?” she suggested.

“It’s worth a shot, I guess.” Bonnie picked Foxy up. “Go get him, I’ll meet you in Pirate Cove.”

Now THREE of them are involved. That’s almost all of them. Congratulations, you’ve screwed it up once again.

Chica departed to look for Freddy. She eventually found him, looking up into the camera at the end of the East Hall. She also heard high pitched male screaming, muffled behind the steel door sealing the entrance to the office.

“Freddy! What are you doing?”

Freddy looked away from the camera. “Oh, I was just having some fun with Mike. I wasn’t going to do anything to him, I promise.”

Chica rolled her eyes, wandered over to the office’s window and peered in. She found the night guard curled up in his seat, trembling. Unfortunately for him, Fritz wasn’t there to assist him. Mike looked up and saw her, and he screamed once more. “Oh gosh, not another one!”

She held her hands up in surrender. “I’m not going to hurt you, Mike!” she called out. “Neither is Freddy! We’re your friends, right?”

Freddy moved away from the camera, peeking his head into view of the window, smiling sweetly. With a moment to think, Mike eventually opened the door for them. Freddy entered, followed by Chica. The bear smiled. “Nice to see you again. How’s your neck feeling?”

He absently rubbed his throat. “Uh, i-it’s feeling fine…”

Freddy nodded. “I’m happy to hear that.”

Chica adjusted her voice box. “Um, I’m sorry to interrupt, but, Bonnie and I need your help, Freddy. Foxy shut down…”

“What?” he exclaimed. “I’m sorry to cut this visit so short, but I’m needed in Pirate Cove.”

“T-That’s okay…” Mike mumbled nervously. Freddy raced off to Pirate Cove, Chica following at his heels. The night guard clicked open the security monitor and selected Pirate Cove to watch from afar.

Bonnie looked up as his friends raced into the room. He had the pirate on the floor beside him, unsure of how to help. Freddy immediately sat down at Foxy’s side, determined to try to fix the problem. “What happened?”

The rabbit frowned. “I said a mean joke, and he… shut off or something. I’m really sorry…”

“That’s not important right now,” Freddy dismissed. He pulled Foxy into a sitting position, opened the back panel of his suit, and manually powered Foxy back on again.

Foxy sputtered to life, twitching and screeching in a similar manner to when he initially shut off. His servos locked and he began to scream, leaving his friends to only guess that he was in pain.
“Foxy!” Freddy shouted, snapping his suit shut again, holding the smaller animatronic by the shoulders, looking into his eyes for some assurance that he was alright. But, he did not receive any. Instead, all he saw was his eyes shining much brighter than usual, and heard more ungodly screaming.

Chica held onto Bonnie tightly. “I had no idea it was this bad,” she whispered to him.

“Me neither… What’s wrong with him, anyway?”

She shook her head slightly and forced herself to watch as the events unfolded. Eventually, the screaming ceased, and Foxy fell limp in Freddy’s arms, his eyes going dim once again.

“Foxy! FOXY!” Freddy called out, without reply.

“Freddy…” Bonnie started.

“Shut up!” Freddy growled. Both Bonnie and Chica knew better than to try to speak to him again. He needed the space. They went to the far end of Pirate Cove and waited, desperately hoping Foxy would show some sign of life.

Their hopes were answered, when Foxy unexpectedly came on a few minutes later. He coughed. “Freddy… What are ye doin’ here, lad?”

Can you just drop the idiotic pirate talk? I’m so sick of it.


He didn’t answer. Instead, he only said, “I’m fine Freddy. That’s all ye need ta know.”
Two days had passed since Reynard and Bailey had last been seen, and neither of them had shown up. After church, Gilead, Freddy, and Charlotte arrived at the restaurant to search for their missing friends, hoping against all odds that they would show up.

"We last saw him at Daddy's restaurant, so maybe Bailey just had so much fun that he didn't want to leave?" Freddy wondered aloud.

Charlotte shifted her gaze away from him, unable to look at him in his denial.

Gilead sighed. "Freddy, you and I both know that's not what happened. We’ll look for him and Reynard here, but I doubt we’ll find them."

"They have to be here!" Freddy whined.

Gilead shook his head and kept walking.

They searched high and low without success until dinner time. The trio took a break to eat, ordering a pizza to share. As they wordlessly ate, a familiar mascot bounced over to their table.

"Golden Freddy!" Freddy cheered.

The mascot laughed. "You’ve got that right, kiddo!"

"What are you doing here?"

"I’m glad you asked! I have a special surprise for you three!"

Gilead narrowed his eyes at the costumed employee. He didn’t remember the restaurant offering surprise events. Yet, knowing his father, it may have been a new idea he was trying out on him and his friends.

Charlotte giggled. "What kind of surprise, Golden Freddy?"

The mascot dragged two fingers across his lips, mimicking a zipper. "Ah, that’s a secret, my dear. You’ll have to come with me if you want to see."

Freddy and Charlotte raced from their seats over to the mascot’s side. "Let’s go! I wanna see the secret!" Freddy exclaimed.

Gilead still couldn’t help but question what was going on. Regardless, he wouldn’t let his brother wander off alone, even in the restaurant. He stood and joined the two younger children. Whispering to the man in costume, he said, “I don’t know what my dad put you up to, but it’d better be good.”

"I can assure you, it is,” the man replied in the similar tone of voice. He returned to the mascot’s personality and said, “Come along!” He sang the tune of a song the band would play as he escorted the trio away, soon bringing them to the restaurant’s back room.

"Daddy never lets me back here," Freddy said.
“It’ll be our little secret, won’t it?” ‘Golden Freddy’ answered.

Gilead felt a pit in his stomach. He couldn’t place why, but his heart raced and his palms grew sweaty at the mere thought of entering the room. He almost wanted to warn Freddy and Charlotte away, but opted against it. Gilead gulped, then looked between the mascot and his friends.

The man proceeded to open the door of the room, then held it open for the children. Freddy and Charlotte bounded in while Gilead looked down the hall before reluctantly joining them. Once they were inside, ‘Golden Freddy’ entered, shutting and locking the door behind them.

Freddy looked around the back room and asked, “Where’s the surprise?”

The mascot removed the head of the costume and quickly took off the body portions of the suit. “Oh, it’s here…”

“What do you mean? I don’t see any surprise…” Charlotte added.

“Oh, but there is.” The man pulled out a pizza cutter and grinned slightly. “It’s me.”


“You’re cute, but that’s not enough to fool me; to make me think you’re innocent. You won’t take me alive! They told me what you’re going to do!” His hand shook, causing the pizza cutter he guarded himself with to rattle. His faint smile had faded, replaced by a stern expression.

The eldest child tried to back away, but was too late. The crazed man already moved into range and swung the blade across Gilead’s stomach. The child shrieked in pain and wrapped his arm around his bleeding torso. He fell to the floor, blood oozing out of his fresh wound onto the tile floor. He looked up to his brother and met his eyes, seeing a desperate and panicked expression that matched his own. “F-Freddy… Run,” he groaned.

As much as he wanted to run away, Freddy couldn’t make his legs obey him. “Gilead!” he screamed as he watched his brother’s life slowly slip away before his eyes.

“W-Want to join him, huh?” the man taunted, pointing the pizza cutter at the boy’s face as he spoke. Freddy looked up at him, eyes wide and tears rolling off his cheeks.

“Or h-how about you?” the man went on, moving the blade to face the girl beside the boy. Charlotte gasped, tears falling from her eyes as well. She shakily took a step back, and the twisted man took it as his cue to make his move. He stepped toward her, the shake in his limbs worsening.

“N-No!” she shrieked. “Stop!”

The man let out a short laugh. He wiped his bloody hand across his forehead, brushing his hair out of the way. The blood, accompanied by the wild look in his eyes created a truly terrifying scene. “Y-You’re with them, I know it!” he screamed, raising the cutter above his head.

Charlotte tried to dodge the attack, but was unable to get away quickly enough. The attacker brought the blade down on her throat, slitting her windpipe open. She tried to cry out, but only gurgling was heard as blood blossomed from her neck.

Freddy grabbed hold of her. “C-Charlotte!” he cried, holding her by the shoulders. She brought her hand up to the wound and gave her friend a helpless look before she lost consciousness in his arms. “No! NO!” he shrieked.
He held onto his friend tightly, determined to protect her. The psychotic man tore the girl from his hands, carelessly letting her tumble to the floor. Freddy was alone and at a clear disadvantage. Gilead was too injured to help him, and Charlotte was rapidly fading away. He closed his eyes, knowing that the end would be near. He thought of the times he’d spent with his dad, with his brother, and with Bailey and Charlotte. He suddenly missed even the most boring things of his life, such as his dull teacher at school and that annoying kid who’d kick his seat at church.

“W-Why are you doing this?” Freddy sobbed. He refused to open his eyes, unwilling to stare down the monster that stood before him.

“You’re the one who’s out to get me!”

He covered his tear stained face. “No I’m n-not!”

“Don’t lie to me! I know what you’re going to do,” the man growled. “You’ll pay.”

“I-I’m not goi-” Freddy managed to say before he found the pizza cutter lodged in his chest. The man ripped the tool back out, and the boy desperately grabbed at his chest. He opened his eyes and saw his own blood coating his hands. He began to cry harder from both the pain and impending doom he was facing. He attempted to ignore his own crisis to get to Charlotte, but felt his knees give out before he could. He watched the world around him fade to black as he struggled to remain awake. Unfortunately, he failed.

The man stood in the middle of the room, surrounded by the bodies of his victims. He went over to the girl’s body, and hastily slashed ‘It’s me’ into her chest. He shakily headed towards the door, ready to leave. He stopped when he heard a groan behind him. Turning around, he saw the blond boy, the eldest child, standing once more with his arm wrapped around his stomach. The boy was deathly pale, yet a fire still burned in his eyes.

“You w-won’t get away with this…” he mumbled, tightening his grip around his torso.

Much to his confusion, Gilead saw a completely different man from before. He almost seemed timid. It wasn’t important to him when his brother and his friend were dying. As he turned to help the younger children, the soon-to-be killer lodged the blade into the back of the boy’s neck and left it, watching as Gilead collapsed near Freddy.

The blood-covered man ran from the back room and fled the scene, leaving the children to die from their injuries. He was safe, for now.

Bright light pierced his eyes when they opened, finding himself looking up from the floor at the fluorescent lights on the tiled ceiling above. He sat up, and looked around, noticing that he was in the back room of Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza. He smiled and let out a sigh of relief. Yet, when looked down, he saw fuzzy brown legs with oversized feet. He gasped, jolting back suddenly and the legs went with him. “W-What the…?” he asked. His voice was much deeper than it should’ve been.

“Freddy, you’re awake…” He turned and saw a familiar golden face, the very one from before. He screamed and rushed to his feet, determined to get away from the masked evil. Yet, it sounded nothing like that man did. It was a warm, soothing voice. A familiar one.

He stumbled, unbalanced, and felt something catch him. Turning around revealed another familiar face: the white face of the slender tall figure that ran the Prize Corner.

“P-Puppet…?” he asked. “What are you doing here?”
The Puppet simply offered a sad smile. “How are you feeling?”

“What’s going on?” Freddy asked.

“There was an… incident.” he explained. “Do you remember?”

“Remember what?”

“You… died, Freddy.” the golden bear mumbled.

His eyes widened. “D-Died…? That doesn’t make sense! I’m here, right in front of you!” Freddy exclaimed.

The seemingly evil suit came up beside him and looked him in the eyes. He took note that they came to the same height as his line of sight, yet he knew himself to only be as tall as the animatronic’s hip.

The bear spoke quietly. “Freddy… It’s me. Your brother.”

“G-Gilead…?” Freddy choked.

He nodded. “I was there… I watched him bring the blade down on you. I-I’m sorry, I couldn’t stop him…”

Instead of being upset with him, Freddy hugged him and began to cry, no tears escaping from his animated eyes. Gilead hugged him back, holding his younger brother close to him. “It’s going to be alright… D-Dad will take care of us. I’m sure he’ll understand.”

“Um, actually…” Marionette interrupted.

“What?”

“You can’t tell him.”

“What…? No, I-I’m going to!” Freddy protested.

The puppet sighed. “It’s best that he doesn’t know. I’m just like you, actually. My name is James. That same man killed me several years ago, back at the Fredbear’s location… Anyway, it’ll complicate things if you tell Thomas. It’s best if you just support him from the stage. Do your best to do a good job entertaining the other kids.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Look at yourself, Freddy. Your dream really did come true,” said Gilead. “You’re Freddy Fazbear, the leader of the band.”

“I am?”

Gilead nodded to a reflective surface in the back room, and Freddy wandered over to it. When he looked into it, he saw Freddy Fazbear’s face staring back at him, not his own. He brought his hand to his face, and the reflection mimicked him. “I-I am…”

Gilead hugged Freddy again. “It’s alright… We’re going to be fine, I just know it.”

He nodded and buried his face in his brother’s shoulder, wishing that it was only a dream. He desperately hoped he’d wake up and realize that he was lying in bed, in his normal nine-year-old boy body.
He heard footsteps, and when he looked up, Bonnie the Bunny was standing in front of him.

“Bonnie…?”

The animatronic shook its head with a bleak smile. “Wrong, dummy!”

He stared at the rabbit in confusion.

It rolled its eyes. “‘Bailey Olsen.’ Sound familiar?”

Freddy’s eyes widened. “Bailey? That’s you?”

He nodded. “Sure is!” He smiled a little more. “This is really weird, isn’t it?”

“Y-Yeah…” Freddy mumbled. “How did you get here?”

“Me? Well, remember when I said my dad was coming to get me from the pizzeria when I last saw ya?”

He nodded.

His head fell a little. “He was late. Then some guy in a gold suit told me to follow him to the back room because there was some cool thing back there or whatever. I saw Reynard there, so I followed him… Welp, here I am now. I somehow got in this suit or something…” He closed his eyes and sighed, continuing in a hollow voice, “I can’t believe I was stupid enough to believe him…”

“Wait, Reynard’s here?” Gilead asked.

Bailey nodded. “He came with me to the back room…”

He frowned. “He didn’t get out either, I guess…”

“He’s in one of the suits, so you can go talk to him later.”

“At least there’s that…”

“What happened to Charlotte?” Freddy interjected.

James answered him. “Look.” He gestured to the corner, where Chica the Chicken’s suit sat.

Bailey’s eyes widened. “Not her, too…”

Freddy and Bailey rushed over to their friend’s side, gently tapping her on the shoulder. “Charlotte…?” Freddy began.

“Come on, Char, wake up!” Bailey encouraged.

Her eyes opened slowly, and she looked up and raised an eyebrow at them. “Freddy, Bonnie…? What’s going on?”


“Huh…?”

“It’s us, your friends.” Freddy added.

James slid over to the group. “You remember what happened, don’t you?”
She nodded slowly.

“I’m sorry but you… Well, you didn’t survive the injury.”

Her eyes widened in shock. “W-What do you mean…?”

James remained silent, only offering his hand to help her up in response. She took it and stood, looking down at her feet as she did.

“You’re in one of the suits now,” James told her. “Chica’s suit, to be exact. So, uh, welcome to your new body…”

Chica began to cry, “This can’t be happening! T-This doesn’t make sense! I want to go home…”

Freddy and Bailey instinctively hugged her, and she wrapped her arms around the two of them.

“We can’t…” Bailey mourned.

“At least we have each other… Right?” Freddy reminded them.

Chica hugged them tighter, giving a slight nod of acknowledgement.

While they were talking, Foxy the Pirate entered the room. “What’s going on in here?”

Gilead looked up at him, not placing who it was. The fox was equally puzzled.

James smiled a little. “Reynard, great of you to join us.”

“R-Reynard…?”

“Yes… And you are?”

Gilead smiled. “Reynard, I’m here too. It’s Gilead.”

Reynard smiled grimly. “You got dragged into this too, huh?” He went over and hugged his friend, his ears flattening and his tail swishing behind him nervously. “I’m sorry…”

“It’s not your fault. We’ll be fine, I’m sure of it.” Gilead chuckled quietly. “On the bright side, we don’t have to play that E.T. game again.”

He snorted a laugh. “At least that.”

James cleared his throat to get their attention. “Now that you’re all here, we have to set some rules.”

“Rules?” they asked collectively.

He nodded. “As I’ve said before, you can’t tell the staff about who any of you are. That includes Thomas. I’ve been here since the Fredbear’s Family Diner days and, even still, no one knows I’m here.” James smiled slightly, and added quietly, “At least I have some friends now… Oh, also, because they can’t know you’re here, you need to stay in character during the day. You’ll need to sing the songs and move rigidly to avoid suspicion.”

“I know how the songs go,” Freddy said.

“That’s perfect. It’ll make things easier for all of us.”

He looked to his friends and brother, noticing the decided lack of happiness in their eyes. He himself
felt the pangs of loss, but he knew there were no decisions to be made about his new reality. Freddy, despite having wanted to be the Freddy Fazbear for years, couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

“How did you… do this?” Reynard inquired.

“I found you all on the night of your murders, since I wander around when the staff leave. Since I’m just like you, I wanted to… help.” he explained. “I wanted to give you the gift of a second chance at life. I know it’s far from ideal, but it’s something. I don’t think I can explain exactly how I did this, but, I managed to bind your souls to the suits, so you can have life once again. It’s complicated.”

“So we’re stuck here?” Charlotte asked.

James frowned slightly. “I wouldn’t put it like that, but in a way, yes.”

“At least we’re here together.” Freddy said.

Bailey perked up a little. “Yeah, come on! Let’s go explore! It’s been so boring being here without you guys!”

The animatronics left the back room and began to check out their new home. Upon entering the Games Area, the kids immediately made their ways to the arcade machines and began to play all night. If they couldn’t fight their new existence, they could at least learn to make the best of it.
Mike Schmidt felt like a bag of lead, yet he couldn't place why. Regardless, he dragged himself to work and stopped by the staff room before his shift to make a cup of coffee, if one could even call it that. He hated the bitter black beverage, so he would dump three or four spoonfuls of sugar into the bottom and pour coffee in until the mug was half full. He would then proceed to fill the remaining half with milk. Mike was suddenly glad he worked the night shift, so he wouldn't need to explain his embarrassing coffee habits to anyone. He grabbed his mug and got settled at his desk.

Unfortunately, he began to feel his anxiety act up once more as he waited for his shift to start. No matter how much assurance he received, he couldn't make himself feel comfortable working around the animatronics.

Mike was thankful for the job, but not for what he was guarding. It was almost as bad as asking him to guard clowns. At night. In the dark. Alone. It would’ve been easier to manage if Fritz had been able to work that night, yet he hadn’t been there as of late. His mind raced with possibilities of what could have happened to the man. Mike shuddered and took a swig of his 'coffee'. Despite the excessive amounts of milk and sugar, he still didn’t find it to be too pleasant. At least it had caffeine. The bitterness also made a useful distraction from his thoughts.

The clock struck twelve. Mike sat up in his seat and clicked the monitor open, selecting the Show Stage first. Freddy, Bonnie, and Chica were standing in their usual places, motionless. If he hadn’t already known the animatronics would move, he would’ve almost felt at ease. It would only be a matter of time before one of them would come to his office, and he could only pray that it wouldn't be Bonnie. He even feared him more than Foxy, and the fox had sharp teeth and a scary hook.

Mike then remembered he needed to check Pirate Cove. Scrolling over to that camera revealed that the curtain was still closed, indicating that the pirate fox was still on stage. He heard footsteps coming from another camera, quickly took another sip of his 'coffee', and clicked to the Dining Room. Chica stood there, smiling up at him. She waved politely to him and walked off camera.

He tensed as she left. Hearing the footsteps coming closer prompted him to wait by the door buttons. It occurred to him that Bonnie might have been moving as well. He eventually found him Backstage, grinning up at the camera in an intimidating manner. The footsteps continued to draw closer. Mike threw the monitor down and clicked the door light on. Chica was standing near the door, so he shut it for his own safety. He could see that she began to frown when he did. She gently tapped on the window to get his attention, but despite her attempts to appear non-threatening, Mike still shrieked.

Chica raised her voice so she could be heard through the door and window. "Mike! Open the door, please?" She was only met with trembling and a wide-eyed stare. "I'm not going to hurt you!"

He took a moment to think. Eventually, after concluding he would be safe, he shakily pressed the buttons to open the door and turn off the light. Chica wandered in calmly, staying close to the desk to not cause the night guard to feel more uncomfortable than he already was. Mike held his legs close to his chest, clutching the monitor in his hands.

"Mike, it's alright..." Chica smiled. "You're perfectly safe, I promise."

He still looked uncomfortable, but lowered his legs into a normal sitting position. He raised the
screen in his hands and tried to hide behind it. Checking the image on it, he saw that Bonnie had moved to the West Hall.

"Are you alright?" Chica asked.

Mike peeked at her from behind the monitor. "B-Bonnie's coming..." he squeaked. As he spoke, the footsteps from his left got louder. It was clear that his suspicions were accurate.

"I'll handle him. He needs to accept that you're a human, just doing the job you were paid to do."

The guard nodded and sank down in his seat. Chica made her way to the other doorway and waited. Before long, Bonnie appeared.

"I got ya, endo!" he exclaimed. Mike let out a blood-curdling scream and fell out of his chair.

"Bonnie, calm down! He's human, remember?" She wandered over to his side and helped him to his feet. Mike jumped when touched, scrambled into his seat, and attempted to take cover behind the monitor again. "His name is Mike, and he's our friend. Right, Mikey?"

He continued to cower. "I-I-I, um..."

The rabbit shrugged. "Where's his costume?"

"He doesn't have one," Chica explained. "He's a night guard. You know, just like in the old location. Remember?"

He paused for a moment. "... You mean like Jeremy?"

"Exactly like Jeremy. Jeremy is a human too, except Mike doesn't wear a mask."

"Why?"

"M-Mr. Fazbear didn't give me one..." Mike mumbled.

"He doesn't need one with the hydraulic doors they have at this location."

"Oh... Uh, okay." He bounced over to the night guard and offered his hand. "The name's Bonnie. Nice to meet ya!"

"Uh, Mike Schmidt..." He cautiously shook the rabbit's hand.

Chica clapped. "Come on, let's par-tay!" She pushed the young man to his feet, causing him to stumble. Bonnie helped to steady him, then Chica took Bonnie and Mike's hands and took off down the hall toward the Dining Room. Mike was relieved to not see any signs of aggression from the periwinkle animatronic or his friend.

When they entered the room, Freddy was sitting with his feet dangling off the stage. He smiled when he saw the night guard with them. "Ah, there you are!" Looking to the young man, he said, "I see you brought Mike. How are you doing?"

"U-Um..." Mike stuttered, feeling sweat trickle down his back.

"You don't need to be afraid," Freddy said. "We don't want to hurt you."

He lightly touched his throat where Bonnie had grabbed him the month before.
"It was an accident," Bonnie dismissed.

"Why don't we put the past behind us?" Chica suggested. "It'd be nice to have a new friend, if you're okay with it!"

"Please?" Freddy asked.

Mike sighed and nodded. Despite still being terrified of the animatronics, he opted to give them a chance. Maybe they were like Fritz: scary on the outside but nice on the inside.

Chica cheered and hugged him. He smiled uncomfortably but didn't move away.

"Welcome to Freddy's," Bonnie said.

"T-Thanks, I think..."

"Come on up, we'll show you around the stage."

Mike made his way over and Freddy gave him a short tour of the restaurant, despite having already had one lead by his boss. Rather than mentioning it, he listened attentively as the bear proudly introduced him to the various places.

When the two of them had returned, Bonnie and Chica were sitting near the stage together. The two of them were holding hands while Chica rested her head on his shoulder. Bonnie had an arm around her as they spoke quietly.

Mike gawked, squeezed his eyes shut, pinched himself, then checked again. If he were dreaming, pinching himself to wake up hadn't worked.

"Mike, are you alright?"

He made various stunned sounds, gesturing wildly at the two animatronics.

Freddy turned his attention to them, narrowing his eyes. "What are you two thinking?"

Chica's eyes widened as she jerked her head upright; Bonnie quickly took his arm back from its place around her. They simultaneously released each other's hands and stared at Freddy and Mike.

"Sorry, sir..." Chica said.

The night guard still appeared awestruck at the odd sight before him. It was quite possibly the strangest thing he had witnessed in his entire life. Mike figured he would be pressed to find something more bizarre.

He rolled his eyes. "Just call me Freddy." He sighed. "Anyway, didn't we make this clear years ago?"

Bonnie snorted. "Yeah, but why?"

"In case someone got caught!" he snapped. "You idiot, Mike's right here! He just saw all of that!"

Mike looked from one animatronic to another. "What's going on...?"


He frowned. Despite wanting to know what the fuss was all about, an image of him being stuffed
into an animatronic suit in the back room came to mind. Satisfying his curiosity wouldn’t be worth risking his life.

"Go back to your office, Mike. I need to talk to them. Alone."

He did not question the command. Mike departed for his office and didn't dare to look at his monitor to observe them, too afraid of what would possibly happen if he were to be caught.

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Once Mike had left, Freddy sat Bonnie and Chica down on the stage. He paced back and forth in front of them as he lectured.

"How stupid can you two be? Did you really think I wouldn't find out about your relationship?" He let out a sharp sigh. "It's even worse now that we have a night guard... Our entire existence is now in jeopardy because you two couldn't be bothered to follow the rules!"

"F-Freddy, please calm down..." Chica pleaded. "We're sorry..."

Bonnie rolled his eyes. "I'm not. Look, I'm not stupid, Fazbear. I know better than to show my sentience during the day. We're free at night, so I'm going to do what I want. You're overreacting."

Freddy glared at him. "That's not the point."

"But we're not just sentient. We're more than that..." she said.

"Exactly why you two need to follow the rules. Why is that so difficult for you? I know you’re both much smarter than this."

"Why is it so difficult for you guys?" Bonnie retorted. "You all still have that stupid delusion you hold onto!"

"Bonnie, shut up. I don't want to hear it."

The rabbit crossed his arms and glared at the floor.

"Why don't we just tell him?" Chica suggested. "What's the harm? Mike seems like a nice guy."

"Chica, you know that's against the rules."

"Why do we have to follow them?"

"It's too dangerous. No one can know the truth."

She frowned. "Have you ever thought that maybe James is wrong?"

Freddy sighed. "I'm getting him. Don’t you so much as move while I’m gone." His tone carried a weight of aggression that ensured that neither of them would disobey.

The bear left the two of them on the stage and headed to Prize Corner. James, having been at the restaurant longer than any of them had been, would surely have a solution. He was responsible for making the rules in the first place, so Freddy was certain that he would have been the best one to enforce them. Although he himself felt tempted to break the rules on occasion, he understood the importance of them too much to dare to try.

The large gift box at the Prize Counter remained closed as the tune on the music box beside it continued to chime. It played a repetitive line from My Grandfather's Clock that James could never
seem to tire of. Freddy approached the box and gently knocked on the lid to get his attention. The puppet slowly lifted the lid and poked his head out, almost appearing to be surprised.

"Freddy?" He sat up. "What are you doing here? You don't usually visit me like this..."

He furrowed his brow and tapped his toe quickly. "We have a problem."

James frowned. "What kind of ‘problem’?"

"Bonnie and Chica broke our ‘no relationship’ rule,” Freddy spat.

He was met with a blank stare.

“Oh my gosh…” Freddy sighed. “The one we put in three years ago. No animatronic was to have a romantic relationship under any circumstance. We all agreed it went against the family environment of the restaurant. It also puts our identities at risk.”

“Ah, right. That one.” James relaxed a little. “What’s the harm? As long as we make sure they only spend time together like that after closing, it’s fine, isn’t it?”

“No, it isn’t!” Freddy shouted. “Don’t you ever leave that box? We have a night guard again, and he already caught them together. Don’t you see how bad this is?”

“I do, actually. I’ve met him,” James said. “Anyway, I can see the cause for concern. It isn’t good…”

“Exactly why I need your help. At this rate, Mike’s going to discover our secret and we’ll all be scrapped.”

James’ glowing eyes dimmed. “We can’t all end up in that back room…”

“So, come out and help me. We’re having a meeting.”

He nodded and climbed out of his box, replacing the lid with care. James glided down the hall after Freddy to the Dining Room. Freddy noticed that Bonnie had darted his hand back from Chica’s when he’d entered. She looked away shyly to avoid Freddy’s wrathful gaze.


Bonnie hopped off down and lead the way to the other stage. Chica followed, staying closer to Freddy and James as she did, afraid to risk being near the rabbit alone.

The group found Foxy sitting on his stage with the curtains open. “Huh? What are ye doin’ here?” he asked.

“We need to talk.” Freddy sat on the stage with the others, intentionally sitting between Bonnie and Chica. James spoke up first.

“I hear a rule’s been broken…”

“There has?” The fox looked alarmed. “Which one?”

“The ‘no relationships’ rule,” Freddy answered, shooting Bonnie and Chica a dirty look.

“W-We said we were sorry,” Chica mumbled.
Bonnie rolled his eyes. “I didn’t. It’s just a stupid rule. Why do we even have it?”

“For the rest—” he didn’t bother finishing his response. “Sometimes, Bonnie, you really know how to anger me.”

“Wait, yer together?” Foxy exclaimed.

“Yeah, we are,” he replied. “Freddy’s just jealous that I managed to sweep her off her feet.”

“I am not!” Freddy protested. “I’m furious that you two would risk getting us all banished to the back room. Or worse: scrapped!”

Foxy’s exposed eye widened in worry. “Nae, we can’t be…”

“And we won’t, but Bonnie and Chica need to put an end to this ‘relationship’ of theirs immediately.” Freddy sighed and took a deep breath before he continued. “It’s not that I’m ‘jealous’, Bonnie. It’s too dangerous for us to have relationships. Period.”

“Why?” Chica inquired, sincerely. “We know better than to act out of character on stage…”

James folded his hands in his lap and looked down.

“Mike’s getting too close to the truth. You saw how he reacted yourself,” Freddy explained. “A relationship wouldn’t be in our programming; it’s just a little too suspicious.”

“Yeah, so what if he does find out?” Bonnie asked.

Freddy rolled his eyes. “You really are stupid, aren’t you? I already told you: we’ll get shut down.”

“Shut up!” he yelled back.

Chica’s hands balled into fists, which she kept folded in her lap. “Stop fighting, you two… Y-You’re supposed to be friends, aren’t you?”

“Aye, ye are.” Foxy added. “What’s gott’n inta both ‘a ye? Ye used ta be close.”

Freddy frowned and looked away. Bonnie tried to narrow his eyes to appear tough. However, his ears drooped, betraying him.

James cleared his throat. “We can settle that later. Right now, we need to figure out how we’re going to ensure Mike remains oblivious.”

Bonnie snorted. “Wasn’t he always like that?”

The puppet sighed. “He’s easily startled, not stupid.”

“Maybe we can let ta lad find out. I’ll make ‘im walk ta plank if he won’t keep ‘is trap shut.”

Chica brightened a little. “Mike seems like he could keep a secret! B-But I wouldn’t make him walk the plank.”

The group sat in silence for several awkward moments before James broke the quietness. “I guess it’s… worth a shot. At this rate, he’ll find out anyway. Unless we tell him not to, he’d probably tell Thomas, and it’d all be over.”

Freddy drifted into deep thought, contemplating the possible outcomes of Mike finding out their
secret. He couldn’t guarantee that they’d be scrapped, as he feared they would. Mike could help him with something he’d been ill-equipped to do for years. He mulled it over, realizing he could use the situation to his advantage. It was a risk, but one he deemed to be worth taking. He had settled on it; they’d tell Mike.

“I really don’t care. He might wet his pants before we even get to talk to him,” Bonnie teased.

Chica frowned. “Bonnie, stop it...”

“Well, I guess we’re telling him,” Freddy said. “We’ll have to deal with whatever comes of this.”

“It’s settled, then,” James said. “We’ll tell Mike tomorrow night. We’ll need all the time we can get to explain it all to him.”

The animatronics generally seemed at peace with the conclusion. They’d all smiled more than they ever had in years, knowing they would be free of their burden. Freddy still worried for their safety, but understood the benefit that came with the risk.

“So… Does this mean I’m allowed to have Chica as my girlfriend?” Bonnie asked smugly.

Freddy sighed wearily. “Yes...”

He grinned. “Score!” He rushed over to his girlfriend and kissed her cheek.

Freddy lowered his face into his palm. "What have I done?"
Mike came in for work that evening through the front entrance, as he usually did. He always made sure to come early to ensure he was in his office before midnight, to prevent falling victim to the obvious safety risks.

"Have a seat," Freddy said from across the room as Mike entered.

The young man screamed “Holy crap!” Looking to his right revealed that all the animatronics were gathered in the Dining Room, seemingly waiting for him. “Um… W-What’s going on?” Mike stuttered, heart pounding. He had no idea why all of them were waiting for him, but he could only conclude that whatever reason it was couldn’t be good.

“You’re not in trouble, Mikey,” Chica soothed. “We just, um…”

She was interrupted when Fritz came in. "Hey, how are ya, kid?" He laughed warmly. "Missed me? I just got back from my boxing tournament!" Seeing the animatronics over Mike's shoulder, he said, "Ooh, uh... Mike? Ya might wanna consider runnin’... Like, right now. Those... things, they're dangerous, ya know?"

"W-We're not things!" Chica protested.

"Chica, enough." Freddy said firmly, shooting her a warning glare. Turning his attention back to the guards, he added, "As I said before, have a seat. Both of you."

Mike looked to Fritz for approval. His eyes widened when he saw a bandage with a black bruise surrounding it on his coworker's left cheek. Fritz smiled, revealing a missing canine tooth on the right side of his mouth. His expression highlighted the swelling that had formed around the injuries. Noticing the concern, Fritz chuckled and said, "I'm fine, kid. It's all part of the game. Ya win some, ya lose some." He turned back to the animatronics and lead him to join them.

Freddy observed that having Fritz there complicated the situation. They'd only agreed to tell Mike, not the entire night staff. He mentally weighed how great the impact would be of informing two guards rather than just one. Then again, it certainly made keeping their secret contained much more difficult.

"What's the trouble, Fazbear?" Fritz asked.

"Trouble? Well, I wouldn't call it that..." Freddy replied.

"We just... have something we needed to tell you. It's a secret we've kept for many years. We figured it would be best to just tell you," Marionette explained. "Besides, it seems as though Mike was starting to figure it out as it is."

Mike raised an eyebrow. "A secret...? Me figuring it out? What are you talking about?"

Fritz shrugged, appearing to be just as clueless as his coworker.

Foxy sighed. "It's a long story..."
"We're willin’ to listen," Fritz said.

Freddy held a hand out to his group, signalling his decision to take the lead. "I'm sure you've both heard of the Missing Children Incident, right?"

Both of the night guards nodded.

"And you're aware that not even one of them were ever found?"

"Yes..." Mike mumbled.

Fritz furrowed his brow and frowned slightly. "Yeah. Thomas had me and the rest of the staff lookin' everywhere when it happened. Pretty bad first day on the job if ya ask me. What about it?"

Freddy sighed. "There's no good way to put this, but..."

"We are those children," Chica blurted out.

Mike's eyes widened. He shook his head quickly; he couldn't have possibly heard her right. Going on the side of caution, he assumed he misunderstood. "... Huh?"

"What the hell are ya goin' on about?" Fritz tightened his hand into a fist, yet didn’t show any intent to swing it at any one. "They were never found, assumed to be dead!"

"We are, Fritz..." Chica continued, her voice filled with sorrow. She hung her head low and refused to meet his eyes. Bonnie took his cue to hug her.

Freddy frowned, his voice broken as he tried to speak. "Do you remember Thomas' sons? How they wouldn’t stop talking to the guards?"

"Yeah… They were pretty excited about havin’ a new guard to play with." He smiled warmly at the memory, but the fondness quickly faded away as he also recalled the eventual fate the child had faced. "I miss those kids… I didn’t know them for long, but they seemed like nice boys"

"B-But I'm right here! I-It's me, F-Freddy Fazbear..." He met Fritz's eyes. "I-I'm still here..." Freddy hid his face as he began to lose control of his emotions.

"We're all here," Marionette added. "All five of us. Well six, actually."

"But... how?" he asked. "What is this, some sort of horror story? Ghosts aren't real... Are they?"

A faint smile grew across Marionette's lips. "As real as we are."

"Wow, uh..." Fritz blinked, regarding the group as if he were questioning whether they were actually sitting before him at that moment or not. After a few moments, he decided to ask, "There were five kids who went missin’ so, who are all of ya?"

"I'm Freddy," Freddy announced.

"I'm Charlotte," Chica said.

" And I'm James," Marionette added.

Fritz nodded slowly, mulling over the strange news.

Mike mustered up the courage to speak after his long silence. "Wait, so who are Bonnie and Foxy?"
Foxy looked as if he wanted to speak, and attempted to do so, but only some static sounds were heard as he twitched a little. Meanwhile, Bonnie pouted, crossing his arms and kicking at the air.

"Bonnie, who are ya, kid?"

He stood up suddenly and began to yell. "It's just Bonnie, okay? Bonnie the Bunny!" He let out a frustrated grunt. "I can't believe you two are gullible enough to believe this crap! Don't you see? We're sentient! Do you even know what that means?"

Mike studied his face carefully. "Uh..."

He sighed. "It means that what you see," he said, gesturing to himself sharply from head to toe, "is what you get. I'm an animatronic; just a robot. We all are. We can perceive our surroundings with a high degree of effectiveness, but we aren't alive. Drill that into your brain, idiot."

"Hey, watch it." Fritz warned.

Chica's eyes widened in horror as she listened to her boyfriend. "B-Bailey, how could you say-"

"I'm Bonnie!" he spat. "Bailey's dead, alright!?" His voice grew bitter. "All of them are." He leaped off of his perch and stomped off to Backstage, slamming the door behind him.

She watched him go and began to cry tearlessly after he left. Freddy put an arm around her to comfort her; however, his efforts had no visible impact.

Fritz frowned. "What did he mean by that?"

"I-I don't know!" Chica said, her voice wavering.

"It's going to be alright..." Freddy soothed. He looked up at Fritz. "I don't exactly know what's gotten into him, but he refuses to talk or think about his life before we came here."

"W-We're telling the truth, I-I swear!"

Much to just about everyone's disbelief, Mike walked over to Chica and hugged her. He didn't even appear to hesitate. "I believe you... I'm so sorry you've had to go through all of this... I-It must've been hard."

She sat there, stunned for a moment, before she returned the gesture. Chica held onto him tightly, but was mindful to not crush the young man by accident. Considering the strength of the animatronic bodies, a little force went a long way. "Thank you, Mike..."

Freddy glanced up at Fritz with a sullen look. It'd been many years since he'd spoken to any of the staff members other than Mike, and now that he was, he began to remember just how much he missed it. He tried to read Fritz's expression, but struggled to do so. He appeared blank, possibly deep in thought.

"Fritz?"

"Hm? Oh, sorry Freddy. It's a lot to take in. I just... I had no idea." He frowned. "Why didn't you say somethin'? If I'd known..."

"We didn't think you believe us, and we thought it'd be too dangerous to tell the staff." Freddy explained.

"Dangerous?"
"We thought we'd be scrapped. Or locked in the back room, like when they released that new lineup." He shook his head slowly. "It just sounds like it’s just a glitch, doesn’t it?"

Fritz ignored his last comment. "I really doubt that would happen. Freddy, your dad's really missed ya, so I'm sure he would be overjoyed to know that you're still here."

"I know, but-"

"You should tell him. Anyway, what happened to your brother? Is he in the Foxy suit, or...?"

"No, um, that's where his friend Reynard ended up. You see, Gilead was... put in the back."

Fritz's jaw dropped. "No..."

Freddy's held his head in his hands. "He can't move..." he choked. "The spring locks were too dangerous, so they took out his endoskeleton, a-and left him in the back, with the old Bonnie suit!"

“Give me a minute…” Fritz mumbled, absently stroking his chin as he brainstormed. “I’d be able to get into that room for ya. But, if I do, we’d have nowhere to put him.”

Freddy shot his head up. “I don’t care! I just want to see him... I-It’s been years…”

Fritz stood and came to Freddy’s side with a pained smile. It was unclear if it was the physical pain of his injury or emotional distress that caused the strain. “We’ll get him out, kid. I don’t have access to the safe room, but I know Anthony does. After all, he made all those recordings about it and its procedures however many years ago. I'll talk to him about it. Promise."

"Thank you, Fritz..."

"I'm happy to help. I'll have him come in tomorrow night."

"Tomorrow's Saturday. You don't work that day."

Fritz shrugged. "I'm not leaving a human bein’ in the 'safe room' longer than necessary."

Freddy's expression brightened a little with the hope that he would be reunited with his family once again, and at the acknowledgement of being human.

He was still afraid to talk to his father, out of fear that reopening the emotional wounds would be too painful for him. How could someone, who'd already coped with the death of his entire family, be expected to accept that something worse had happened to his children? Freddy knew it would be easier for him to never know what really happened. He’d let him just accept whatever conclusion he had already come to. On the other hand, Freddy missed him desperately and he could only guess that Gilead did too. It broke his heart to watch Thomas walk past him every day and not be able to say a word to him. He’d seen the tears fall down his face before the work day had started; the ones he thought no one could see. All he wanted to do was hug his father and tell him he loved him. But it couldn’t be. He chose to ignore the heartache; it was all he could do. Freddy would at least be reunited with his brother, and that would have to be enough. He focused on the joy that anticipation brought instead.

Fritz left to ice his face. If he could bring down the swelling, it'd help him heal faster. As a seasoned boxer, swelling was a common nuisance he was used to dealing with. He didn’t get badly injured often, but when he did he always followed the care instructions given by his doctor to the best of his abilities.
He pressed the ice to his face and paced back and forth in the kitchen, taking a moment to reflect on the new information. At least his security job was rendered nearly pointless, which was a pleasant change of pace compared to the apparent danger he and Mike previously faced. Fritz wasn’t even sure if he could be considered a security guard when he didn’t have anything left to guard. Unless the animatronics started misbehaving. Maybe then he’d have something to do. Freddy would have been around 15 by now, so maybe he would need to prevent him from causing some typical mischief teenagers were famous for getting into. On top of that, maybe he would actually need to protect the place if some thug tried to break in.

He smiled to himself, ignoring the sting of pain in his cheek. The new safety would have to make Mike more comfortable. Fritz could only hope that, once he let his guard down a little, he could get to know Mike a little better.

While the others were busy, Chica slipped away from Mike and headed to Backstage to check up on Bonnie. She could only hope he had enough time to calm down by the time she arrived. When she came into the room, she found him sitting in the corner with his head down, against his knees that he’d pulled up to his chest. His ears had drooped down and hung limply against his legs.

"Bonnie...?"

He raised his head as if it had been cumbersome to do so, his eyes tired and troubled. "What do you want, Chica?" he uttered half-heartedly.

She came over and sat beside him, putting her arms around him and hoping her presence would help. Chica hated to see him, or any of her friends for that matter, hurting. "Are you alright?"

He grumbled a few swear words that she was almost shocked that he even knew. He was only 8 when he had died, so she had no idea where he had even heard them in the first place.

She frowned. "You can always talk to me. You know that, right?"

Bonnie sighed. "Yeah, I know. You're my girlfriend, after all. Just..." He hesitated, "leave me alone, alright? You don't get it. No one does."

"What are you talking about? I'm not going anywhere... Why wouldn't I understand?"

He remained silent, only staring at the grimy floor in response. She moved one of her arms and took his hand, giving it a comforting squeeze. He met her eyes, revealing the troubled emotions he felt. "You already know."

"Talk to me... Please, Bonbon. I care about you, and I don't want to see you like this."

Bonnie held her hand tightly in his. "I know you're convinced we were alive and all, b-"

"We were! You don't remember...?"

"Remember what?"

"All the times we came here as kids... When you and Freddy would play together at recess. When we played the arcade machines together. When we'd all go to the park together. That time when we put mud in Gilead's shoes because you and Freddy thought it would be funny." Chica choked back a sob. "Why don't you remember...?"

His expression softened. "I'm sorry, I just... don't. All I know is my existence at Freddy Fazbear's
Pizza. I'm Bonnie the Bunny. I play guitar on stage in the Fazbear Band. I'm an animatronic rabbit, and that's all there is."

"A-And I'm Chica the Chicken. I sing backup vocals in the Fazbear Band at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. But I'm also Charlotte Vann. I died alongside one of my best friends and his brother in 1987." She began to break down into tears. "B-Bailey Olsen, please... Y-You're still here, as Bonnie... I know it's you! Y-You just don't remember anymore..." She brought her other arm back around him, embracing him tightly and hiding her face in his shoulder.

"I..." He held her close and spoke quietly. "I believe you. I just wish I could remember..."
Hey, it's me. I've had this technically finished on fanfiction.net for a while now, but I've been slow to update because I've been editing it again before uploading it here. Due to my busy schedule, I'm now uploading each chapter as it is to AO3. Sorry about that wait there. Anyway, please enjoy the rest of the fic, flaws and all.

Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza - Saturday, December 11th, 1993

The doors of the restaurant swung open as Mike arrived at Freddy’s for around 4pm to get lunch. It was more accurately a late breakfast for him since he woke up after noon, as he always did. Unfortunately, the night shift made meal planning rather awkward, along with other day-to-day tasks such as grocery shopping and planning get-togethers with friends. At least most of them worked at Freddy’s as well.

Although he could have opted to make his food at home, he was curious as to what the restaurant was like during the day, especially since he’d just learned the truth about Freddy and his friends. It occurred to him that Jeremy would also be working at that time, so see him was an added bonus.

Freddy’s was lively and very, very loud. The band was playing music, arcade machines blared, children laughed and screamed in delight. Mike noted that the entire building had a completely different atmosphere during the day. It was the last thing he’d think of as creepy if he excluded the animatronics. Despite them trying to become his friends, nothing would convince him that they were anything but scary. It wasn’t as though it was their fault they had clicking gears and joints that made him think of bones being snapped.

He spotted Jeremy out of the corner of his eye, shaking him from his thoughts. Smiling brightly, he charged over to him.

Jeremy’s eyes widened fearfully as he approached. Mike realized this and stopped, right before he was about to tackle-hug his friend. “I’m sorry, didn’t mean to scare you! Um hey, Jeremy, how are you?”

He visibly relaxed. “I’m fine. W-Welcome to Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza,” he greeted with a vaguely uncomfortable grin.

“Oh, thanks!” Mike beamed. “How’s the job?”

“I-It’s, um…” Jeremy remained quiet for several moments, enough for him to grow worried. Finally, he said, “good.”

His face brightened. “Awesome! So, uh, Thomas has you on greeting?” Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Maxwell patrolling the restaurant, clearly on security duty. Thomas must’ve given him the day security role.

Jeremy smiled a little and nodded, seemingly quite proud of his job. With the serious brain trauma
he’d undergone, it was probably best that he was only asked to repeat one task.

“That’s great! I’m really happy for you!” Mike cheered. The door opened behind him as a family entered the restaurant. “I’d better not distract you! Good luck!” He then left his friend to work, hoping to give him a chance to do the best work that he could.

Mike seated himself at a table and ordered a small cheese pizza for his lunch, thankful that it came quickly. As he ate, he watched the band perform. Despite the corny nature of the songs, since they were clearly intended for children, he continued to listen and enjoy his visit. He could’ve sworn he saw Freddy make eye contact with him, even a possible smile. As much he found that alarming, knowing who they really were helped to ease his discomfort. Mike reminded himself that it wasn’t their fault that they looked downright terrifying.

A few minutes into his meal, Maxwell had come close to his table. Mike mustered up the courage to speak to him, hoping he wouldn’t be met with another hostile reaction. “Hey, uh, Maxwell!” he called out.

Maxwell turned his intimidatingly cold gaze to him, causing Mike to shrink back a little, but not completely retreat. “Um… Do you remember me? F-From the staff lunch, you know?”

“… Yeah. Mike, isn’t it?” he clarified, his voice emotionless.

He nodded. Something about him just sent a chill down his spine, yet he couldn't figure out why. Mike was rather frightened by Fritz at first, but there was something different about Maxwell. Whatever it was, Fritz didn't have the same air about him. Mike reasoned that was probably just him being cowardly again, as usual.

“You’re on night shift, aren’t you?” Maxwell asked, sounding almost tired and unamused. Mike nodded in agreement. “What are you here?”

“J-Just coming in for a visit…”

Maxwell shrugged and went back to his patrol, clearly disinterested.

“H-Hey! Where are you going?” The younger man called after him.

His co-worker stopped but didn’t turn to look at him, nor did he address him.

Mike swallowed hard. “Do you n-not like me or something?”

This was enough to make him pivot to face Mike. “What do you want, kid?” he spat, sounding calm but, it also carried an aggressive edge to it.

Mike jumped a little, not expecting the hostility. “N-Nothing! I mean, I just want to talk a bit. M-Maybe we could be friends or something...”

He rolled his eyes, clearly annoyed. "Yeah, like that's going to happen."

He stared, his eyes wide with hurt. Tears threatened to fall as he fought to maintain his composure.

Maxwell smirked. "What? You're going to go cry about it?"

"N-No!" Mike objected uneasily. He often found himself to be sensitive, something that often didn't work in his favour. Mike loved meeting new people, yet with it came a level of fear. It didn't matter whether he knew the person well or not; the criticism still cut deep. Maxwell was no exception.
He couldn't help but snicker at Mike's weakness. "I'll tell you this, alright? You wouldn't like me."

"Who says I w-won't?"

"Says me," Maxwell. "You hardly know me and you’re already afraid of me. Don’t try to lie to me about it. I can tell you’re terrible at it; I can read you like a book, Mike. You find me scary and can’t handle the fact that I’m keeping you at a distance. Correct?"

Mike’s jaw dropped. It was no mystery how he figured out Mike wasn't handling the situation well, how he figured out it the cause of it was baffling. Maxwell only seemed to keep getting more mysterious with every sentence he spoke.

“We don’t really cross paths, so let’s keep it that way.” As Maxwell began to leave, he muttered just loudly enough for Mike to hear him, “I don’t need friends anyway.”

With that, he was left alone at the table. Much like when he’d met him before, he couldn’t help but feel intimidated. Something about Anthony and Maxwell just felt off to him. Mike left the restaurant after his meal, coming to the conclusion that they may have been hiding something. Working at Freddy’s had taught him that there were many secrets below the surface. He’d only uncovered one of them, and that one turned out to be pretty major. Whatever it was they were hiding, Mike was determined to find out.

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The Howard Home - Saturday, December 11th, 1993

Anthony awoke to the sound of his phone ringing. Usually, he would have been pleased to hear the shrill sound as he guessed who may have been on the other end of the line. At six in the morning, however, it wasn’t so welcome.

"Ugh... Who is it, honey?" his wife, Dianne, groaned from her comfortable spot, nestled at his side.

He rubbed his the sleep out of his eyes as he reached for the phone on the bedside table. "I have no idea..." Anthony lifted the phone to his ear and faked his usual chipper demeanor, despite his tired state. "Hello hello! This is Anthony Howard, how are you?"

"Wow, you're really up and at 'em, aren't ya?" a familiar voice replied. "I was worried about wakin' ya up."

"Fritz? Uh, aren't you usually heading home from work about now?" Dianne rolled her eyes and turned away from him, attempting to sleep once more. Out of consideration, her husband stood with the corded phone and walked as far away as he could and lowered his voice.

"Yeah, but I stopped to phone ya first. Listen, I need ya to come in today."

He chuckled. "You're telling me to come in? Last I checked, I was the assistant manager." Since the two had been friends and co-workers for years, he knew Fritz would take the comment as the lighthearted joke he intended it to be.

Fritz sighed without mirth. "Ya know what I mean.” He usually laughed, or sound happy at the very least.

He laughed uncomfortably. "Uh, did something come up?"

"I guess you could say that. Come in this evenin'; I'll explain things there."
"... Okay, uh, I guess I'll see you after closing today."

"Yup. Meet ya there." With that, Fritz hung up, leaving Anthony to go back to bed for another two or three hours. He hoped to fall asleep quickly to make the best use of his limited time he could spend in bed before he needed to get going for the day.

Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Saturday, December 11th, 1993

A few minutes after Thomas had left work for the day, Fritz pulled into the parking lot of the restaurant, where he found Anthony waiting for him by the door. He walked with purpose to give off the appearance of confidence. In reality, he had no idea if what he was about to do helpful or just plain well stupid. He hadn’t uttered a word of it to Thomas and was more than aware that he was acting entirely on his own accord. Typically, that would be a surefire way to get himself fired since bosses always seemed to love it when employees made major changes without their permission. Yet, this was an ethics issue. This was a human being; his boss’ son at that. Fritz took a deep breath and prepared for the worst.

"Ah, Smith, hello hello!” Anthony greeted in his signature style.

He ignored the man and continued on his way to the door.

"Wow, you're quiet today." He shrugged. "Not a problem!" Leading the way, he unlocked the door and stepped inside, with Fritz following behind him. "So, why are we here?"

"We're goin’ to the Safe Room," Fritz replied.

Anthony's jaw dropped in shock. "Wait, what!? W-What's in there? How do you even know about those?"

"An old friend. And I've heard the recordings. Thomas kept them around for whatever reason."

"Alright then. I officially have no idea what you're talking about. Sure, I can wrap my head around how you discovered the Safe Room, but… an old friend? Really?" He shook his head. First the rude awakening, and now this. It was just going to be one of those days, wasn’t it?

"Yeah, really," Fritz retorted. “It’s a long story. Just get me into that room. Once you see, it’ll all make sense.”

He nodded and took off down the hall, searching through the multiple keys that hung on the key ring he always kept with him. Eventually, Anthony stopped at a well-hidden door at the end of the hall, inserting the key into a discreet lock. He twisted it and swung the door open. Yanking the key from the lock proved to be a bit more difficult than it should have been, but he managed to get it out and wandered inside with Fritz following close behind him.

"Well, here we are," Anthony began, to break the tense silence. "What are we here for?"

Fritz walked past him and started digging through the boxes with purpose. He was determined to get Gilead out of the isolated room as fast as he could. No one deserved to be deserted in such a cruel way. After several minutes of searching, he spotted a black top hat poking out of a box. A smile danced across his lips as he hopefully reached for the mask. Unfortunately, the hat belonged to a scrapped Freddy Fazbear animatronic, that plastic line from the ‘80s with the facial scanners. It was entirely useless as of now, even dangerous. Fritz was baffled as to why Thomas would keep such a thing. He angrily stuffed it back into the box, hoping to forget about it entirely.
“Fritz, what are you looking for? Don’t tell me it’s that old thing…”

He gritted his teeth. “No, it’s not. I’m lookin’ for-” he cut himself off when he saw an old suit in the corner. A golden bear with a black top hat, missing an endoskeleton… and an ear. “That’s it!” Fritz exclaimed as he rushed over.


“I need ya to help me get him out of here.”

“Not until you tell me why you’re pulling that out. Clearly, you’ve listened to the training tapes. Need I repeat myself?” Seeing the lack of response, he sighed and cleared his throat, “Uh, hello? Hello, hello! Uh, there’s been a slight change of company policy regarding the use of the suits. Um, don’t. After learning of an unfortunate incident at the sister location, regarding multiple and simultaneous spring-lock failures, the company has deemed the suits temporarily unfit for employees. Safety is top priority at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza, which is why the classic suits are being retired to an appropriate location.”

Fritz rolled his eyes. “Yeah, I know what it said. Not important. Although, I am very impressed that you managed to quote yourself that perfectly.”

He ignored the playful remark. “Don’t you get it? Those suits are dangerous! They’re back here for a reason! If Thomas sees that you’ve pulled them out-”

“He’d thank me.”

Anthony’s eyes widened in shock. “Excuse me?”

His voice remained firm. “Ya heard me. He’d thank me. Ever wonder what happened to those kiddies back in ‘87?”

“Well, yes, but I don’t see how-”

“They died. Remember how they caught that guy on tape? They made the right call to throw him in prison.” He sighed. “Anthony, their souls haunt the suits or somethin’ like that.” He gestured to the classic suit at his feet. “This here is Gilead Fazbear. Freddy wanted me to get him out of here. So, if Thomas knew what’s happened, he’d be grateful that we got his son out of this prison of a room.”

The assistant manager stared in utter confusion and amazement. Unlike most people would in his current situation, he did not question the validity of the information he was receiving. Being with Fazbear Entertainment since the early days of Fredbear’s Family Diner meant that he’d heard and witnessed several bizarre occurrences. Ghosts haunting the animatronics didn’t really strike him as being out of the realm of possibility. Although, it was hardly what he was expecting to hear. The more he thought about it, the more it made sense. No wonder they got so quirky at night. The poor kids haunting those suits must’ve been very bored, to say the least.

“Uh… Wow, that’s something.” He cautiously approached the suit, lifting the mask gingerly, as if he was afraid it would try to bite him, upwards to look into its eyes. “G-Gilead…? Are you there?”

After a few moments, a voice replied in an upbeat damaged voice, “H-H-H-Hey k-kids!” This caused Anthony to flinch, almost dropping the head he was supporting.

Fritz frowned. “That can’t be right… Come on Gilead, I know you’re there.”

The cheeriness in the voice drained very suddenly as he realized that he had failed in his attempt to
trick the staff into leaving. They weren’t convinced that he was just a regular animatronic. “A-
Anthony…? Fritz…?”

“Yeah, it’s us.” Fritz knelt beside Anthony.

Gilead didn’t move, speaking through the closed mouth of the mask. “How did you… know I was
here?”

“Your brother told us,” Fritz answered. “We know what happened, so ya don’t need to try to hide
from us.”

“I’ve been listening to you two the entire time,” Gilead continued. “You know it’s too dangerous to
bring me out of the Safe Room.”

“Ya can’t move, kid. That obviously makes ya so dangerous.”

Anthony ignored the comment, focusing on the task at hand instead. “What if we put him in Pirate
Cove? It’s closed, so no one will go looking back there.”

“Hm… Well, I’m sure that Reynard kid wouldn’t mind havin’ a friend,” Fritz added.

“Reynard! My, it’s been so long since I’ve seen him.”

“What do you mean?” Anthony asked.

“Oh, he and I have been friends for years!” Gilead enthused. “I’ve really missed him and the
others…”

“That’s settled, then.” Fritz lifted part of the suit and Anthony took his cue to help. It didn’t weigh as
it appeared to, considering the fact that the heavy metal endoskeleton was missing. He would’ve
carried it himself if it wasn’t so bulky. With careful maneuvering, the two men eventually managed
to bring Gilead to Pirate Cove, setting him down on the stage, propped up against the back wall.

“Thank you so much, both of you. It’s really quite nice to be out of that room.”

“Ya have Freddy to thank for that,” Fritz insisted. “He’s the one who told us about ya.”

“I’ll, uh, see what I can do to help you move again. I-I’m really sorry, I was just doing as I was told.
Had I known you were in there…” Anthony rambled.

“Anthony, it’s alright. No hard feelings.”

The voices of the three of them talking drew Foxy’s attention. Out of curiosity, he wandered over to
investigate. “What’s going on he-…Gilead?”

“Foxy! Hey, how are you? Did you miss me?”

He couldn’t help but smile. Foxy would have never guessed that he would be reunited with his
friend. A grin crept across his face as he looked down at Gilead, more than happy to have the
company.

Anthony and Fritz started to leave, to give the two of them space to catch up for the years they were
separated. Before they could get very far, Foxy stopped them.

“Hey. Thanks… Thanks for bringing him out.”
Fritz smiled. “Just doin’ my job.”
As usual, his thoughts were cloudy. He was in one of his moods again, which was never good. It was hard to place what had set him off this time, but it was clear that everyone and everything should stay far away from him. Once he’d become upset, it was always difficult, if not impossible, to force him to come out of it.

*Focus on the road already! Do I really need to tell you again?*

He made a fist. “No, you don’t,” he grumbled.

*See? You know what to do. Just listen to us.*

He heard her laugh. *Oh, of course! Now, if you’d just pay attention to the traffic, we’d be fine. Really, if you weren’t so lazy, you could’ve avoided all of this.*

He turned up the music in an attempt to tune them out, but it didn’t help. He hated how annoying the two of them could be. Arguing with them was pointless, since he knew they were always right.

*We know you’re upset. There’s no use in hiding it from us.*

He furrowed his brow in frustration. “Ya, so what if I am? What do you care?”

*Just trust us, we’ll protect you from them. When they come for you.*

“I know. You always do.”

He pulled in to work and saw a young boy, crying and upset. Out of concern, he pulled over, leaned his head out the window, and asked, “What’s wrong, kid?” He did his best to listen as the child explained the situation, but they kept talking over him. All he managed to catch was something about a horrible monster lurking inside Fredbear’s Family Diner.

*You’re going to be late, you idiot! Go! Forget about him!*

*I don’t know about that... The monster in the restaurant sounds pretty dangerous…*

*Of course it does! Well, maybe being late is alright today. But, still!*

*Listen to me. It’s all a trap. He’s one of them! One of their tools! Don’t you see it? That child is dangerous!*

*You’re stupid enough to be tricked into believing he’s your friend, of course. How could a crying child be dangerous? That’s what they want you to think. It’s all part of their plan to get you.*

*Just do what we tell you, alright? Give him your dessert, that’ll distract him long enough for you to have time to get away.*

*Oh, and use that little powder of yours. You’ve been saving it for this very moment! Put it on the cupcake. Now, you twat!*
Great idea! Why didn’t I think of that?

He was a little reluctant to do so, but knew that it had to be this way. Either it was the boy, or him.

The man ducked his head back into the car to dig through his bag. He found the delicious vanilla cupcake, topped with decadent white icing and a mouth-watering cherry, with ease. Before he got out of the car, he sprinkled a little bit of the white powder from a small vial he kept in his pocket onto the icing. Perfect. Now to give it to him. After that, the man knew he’d be safe once more.

He got out of the car, smiling brightly as he knelt beside the child. “Maybe this will help you feel better?” he suggested, offering him the treat.

You actually managed to get something right. Wow, I’m so impressed.

“You actually managed to get something right. Wow, I’m so impressed.”

“I’ll help you feel better?” he exclaimed. It didn’t take long for him to start munching on the treat, his eyes lighting up with delight as the sweet flavours graced his palette.

Seeing his glee made him happy. It was almost as if he’d forgotten about the powder entirely. He almost felt bad about it, until he remembered that he needed to do it to protect his life. “Eat up. Enjoy. It’ll help you feel better until your mother comes back.”

Alright, good job. Now get out of here! They’ll be onto you like fruit flies on a banana!

He obeyed. Without delay, he hopped back into his car and drove away to park and get to work. The world was a dangerous place, with things out to get you everywhere. People plotting to kill you. But he was lucky. He had friends that warned him of the traps lurking around every corner; friends who kept him safe. They told him that his kitten, Kowalski, was the only safe one. Between his friends and his cat, he didn’t need anyone else.

Porfirio walked inside, where Everett was frantically searching for a missing child. Since Anthony came to work at the same time as him, they were both briefed and sent to search.

You know nothing. You have no idea what happened to that thing that was after you. Got it?

Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza - Friday, June 26th, 1987

He arrived to work for an afternoon shift, met at the door by Thomas. At first, he assumed he was in trouble.

“Mr. Fazbear?”

Thomas nodded. “Mr. Violet. How are you this evening?”

“Fine, thank you,” he answered.

He smiled. “Wonderful. Our mascot called in sick today. Apparently he has a nasty flu. If it isn’t too much trouble, would you mind filling in for him? It’s quite simple. All I need you to do is visit the tables. Just be energetic and friendly. Don’t mind those old training tapes you heard back in the Fredbear’s days. This suit doesn’t have the spring-lock mechanism.”

“That’s… comforting.”

“You have nothing to worry about. It’s completely different, I assure you. The endoskeleton was
Porfirio thought carefully before saying, “I’ll do it.”

“Thank you very much,” Thomas enthused. “You’ll do well, just like last time. Just remember to smile, you are the face of Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza.”

Porfirio smirked and rolled his eyes. “So that’s where Anthony got that from.”

“Of course! It’s our company motto. Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza is a magical place for kids and grownups alike, so of course our staff needs to reflect this. A smile does just that,” Thomas explained.

He chuckled. “Alright, alright. I’ll remember to smile for the customers.”

Because you’re so good at that.

If you upset him too much, he won’t smile! Thomas won’t be happy about that!

Way to point out the obvious.

If he were alone, he would’ve told them to shut up, but he knew his boss would ask questions. It was as if he was the only one who could hear them talking, because everyone around him would ignore them. It didn’t make any sense to him.

“Porfirio?”

“Hm? Oh, sorry. You said something?”

“I did… Please listen to me when I speak,” Thomas commanded. “Anyways, I appreciate the help. Feel free to go back to the Safe Room if you need a break.”

“I will.”

Porfirio found his way to the Safe Room with little difficulty, struggling to get into the bulky Golden Freddy costume. After a few minutes of fiddling, he managed to securely fit the costume on and leave the room. Of course, he bumped into the doorframe on his way out, unaware of just how large the ears, top-hat, and other pieces were.

Porfirio, that is the most asinine getup I’ve ever seen.

No one will know it’s you. Just do as he told you to.

And make a fool of yourself.

The restaurant was buzzing with activity as families were coming to celebrate the weekend and end of school. At least, that’s what he could conclude. He himself couldn’t be sure of when school actually ended anymore. He took a deep breath and made his way out, assuming the role of the character. Porfirio put on a jolly voice and made sure to appear friendly.

Near closing time, two boys remained at one of the tables, once most of the families had already left for the night. Since Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza was still open for the public, Porfirio was still expected to do his job. He approached the table, putting on his persona as he went.

Red flag, Porfirio! Red flag! Don’t you see it?
“See what?” he uttered.

_It’s them! They’ve sent more! They’re on to you!_

His eyes widened in surprise. “T-They’ve found me? A-Again?”

**They have! You’ve got to do something!**

_You’ve dealt with this before. Kill them before they kill you._

“I couldn’t do-”

**Yes you can! You’re in danger! If you let them get away…**

Porfirio made a fist, his body trembling in fear.

_Just listen to what we say, and you’ll be fine._

He gulped and cautiously made his way to the table.

“H-Hey kids!” he stuttered. “Are you h-having fun?”

_That’s it… Keep it up. Earn their trust._

**Ooh! Lead them to the back! Tell them there’s something waiting for them!**

_Which will be you, of course. You’ve got to stop blubbering like a fool. If you don’t sell this story, you’ll blow your cover and they’ll have their chance to attack!_

**It’d be horrible! You’ll be alone and defenseless! Just take them out quickly, and you’ll be safe.**

The older boy looked up at the mascot, seemingly looking into his eyes, sending a chill down his spine.

The younger child beamed, “Lots of fun!”

Porfirio let out a hearty laugh, to be in character. “That’s great! But ol’ Goldie’s got a surprise for you! I’m sure it’ll make your day!”

His eyes danced in delight. “You do? That’s cool! What is it, what is it?”

“I can’t do that, little one! It’s a surprise!”

**Good...**

His friend rolled his eyes. “Bailey, calm down.”

“Aw, but Reynard~! I don’t wanna-”

“What if Freddy and Charlotte saw you carrying on like this?”

Bailey’s face turned red, his eyes widening in worry. “S-Shut up! D-Don’t you dare tell them you saw me acting like such a dork!”

Reynard snickered. “You’ll have to try harder to convince me,” he joked.
He looked at the mascot briefly before darting his attention away to look ‘cool’. “We can still see the surprise, right?”

He frowned a little. “Well…”

_Say yes!_

“I assure you, it’ll be fun!” Porfirio encouraged. He worried they were onto him.

“I suppose we can go for a bit,” Reynard concluded.

“Alrighty, follow me!”

Bailey raced after Porfirio, smiling from ear to ear, before he remembered that ‘cool kids’ kept calm and collected. He promptly slowed down and forced himself to show a collected expression. Reynard followed with some hesitation. They arrived at the door and stared.

"We're almost there, kids!"

“Here?” Reynard challenged. “This can’t be right…”

_Porfirio, you suck! Wonderful job convincing them, just wonderful!_

“It’s right this way! Follow me,” he continued. Porfirio lead the two boys into the room, shutting and locking the door behind them.

_Aha! Got it! Now, finish the job._

He sighed and yanked off the head of the costume with some struggle. Knowing what his task was, he would need his freedom of movement.

“Hey, dude! Aren’t you supposed to keep that on?” Bailey complained. He was ignored as Porfirio continued to take off the suit.

He inhaled sharply before turning to face his would-be killers. Covertly, he reached for his pocket knife, mentally preparing for the battle he would inevitably face.

_You've got them cornered. Finish them, before it's too late!_

“Where’s this ‘surprise’?” Reynard asked.

Porfirio’s hand shook as he revealed the blade in his hand. “This.”

Their cries were cut short as he swiftly stabbed Reynard in the chest, tearing it out and leaving it in Bailey’s forehead. Neither of them had a chance to react.

_You did it! Ah, safe at last! Feels good, doesn’t it?_

_Get out of here, you idiot!_

And he did. Porfirio fled the room, leaving as quickly and quietly as he could. He'd done it again. He foiled their plans once again. He was safe.
Porfirio’s House - Sunday, June 28th, 1987

Porfirio… Hey, Porfirio, time to wake up!

Time to go work that crappy job of yours.

He groaned, not moving from his spot beneath the covers. Kowalski nuzzled his cheek, encouraging him to feed her.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m up…” he whined as he rubbed behind her ears. She purred in contentment as she received the affection.

Kowalski was a petite cat, even at adult size. Her silky long black fur helped her to hide her bony frame. She was so thin that her bones could be felt when she was pet, although this was not from neglect. Porfirio always ensured that he fed her plenty of food, yet she couldn’t seem to gain weight.

Stop petting that stupid cat, you lazy ass!

"She's not stupid," Porfirio retorted. "She's very smart, adorable, and she loves me."

Keep telling yourself that. We're the only ones that actually love you, and you know that. And that's because we're stuck with you.

Hey, I like him. There's always the possibility that he will make some human friends. Porfirio's only 28; he's still got a fighting chance. Who knows? Maybe he'll even get a date.

Pfft! As if. No one would date this loser.

For the moment, Porfirio tried to tune them out, and managed to do so for a short while while he got ready for work. Despite his efforts, she managed to criticize him for every little thing; the way he brushed his teeth, how he kept his hair, and the quality of his cooking. Everything. Nothing Porfirio did was good enough for her. He tried to apologize on her behalf, but it hardly helped. Even when Kowalski came by and rubbed up against his leg, it did little to boost his spirits. Usually, a little affection from his feline friend was enough to help ease his troubles. But not today.

He got into his car and drove, listening to some music on the way to work. They talked through most of it, which he found to be quite annoying, but he enjoyed the parts that he managed to hear clearly. She criticized his driving, telling him to speed up or slow down, zip around another car, or run a yellow light. He ignored her and tried to assure him that he’d have a nice day at work. Much like with Kowalski, Porfirio found little comfort in the encouragement.

Ooh, he’s taking the morning smoke early today!

Aw, you’re that upset with us already? I’m sorry.

Well I’m not.

“J-Just shut up!” he hissed, taking a long drag of his cigarette as he idled at the stop light. The few minutes it took for the light to change felt like an eternity as they continued their banter.

Try to have a good day, alright? Maybe Thomas will put you on kitchen duty or something.

“That’d be a miracle,” Porfirio replied as he shifted the car into first gear.
Way to grind those gears.

“I didn’t grind them. That was a smooth start!” he shot back as he gained a little more speed, shifting into second gear. He sometimes felt that his friends were lying to him, but always knew that they were right. He didn’t think he made a bad shift, but she was always right. Porfirio furrowed his brow in frustration as he pushed in the clutch once more and brought the vehicle into third.

*That was good. Well, for someone like you, anyways.*

*Oh, be nice to him. He’s doing his best. It’s not like he has more than that one speeding ticket on his record.*

He took another drag before adding, “That was because you made me do it.”

Porfirio finished his cigarette as he pulled into the parking lot of Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza, dropping the filter on the ground as he drove in. He sat in the car for a moment, trying to regain his slipping composure. It was going to be one of those days. Knowing his luck, since they’d been pestering him more than usual for the past few days, it’d continue for a while. He took some comfort in the fact that Thomas was usually quite lenient with the smoking breaks. Those seemed to help when they got out of hand.

After locking the car, Porfirio walked inside, taking a few deep breaths of the fresh morning air as he did so. As much as he dreaded the coming shift, he knew he needed the money, and the job, which encouraged him to carry onward. If he was lucky, he’d go through the day with little interaction with his coworkers.

But, within seconds of entering the building, someone began to talk to him.

“Porfirio, how are you?” one of the waitresses greeted. She looked down at his leg, seeing the cat fur sticking to his clothes and smiled. “Got some kitty love, I see.”

He grimaced a little at the attention, wishing to slip away. “Uh… Ya.”

“Hey… Are you feeling alright? You seem upset.”

Porfirio shook his head. “I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.”

*See? Someone pays attention to the kid.*

*It’s not like he even remembers her name or anything. Besides, she’s trying to conceal her intent. Trying to trick him. Once she has his trust, she’ll stab him in the back.*

*Porfirio, be careful of her. She’s one of them.*

“Uh, if you say so,” she said with uncertainty. “Just come to me if you need anything, alright?”

*Don’t be stupid enough to fall into her trap!*

“Thanks.”

*Idiot.*

Twice before his lunch break, Porfirio stepped out to take a smoking break. They were being really loud today, making it harder for him to focus, and remain easy going. Otherwise, his day had been
going fairly well. The children weren’t too disruptive, making his security job quite easy.

However, just as he was finishing his turkey sub, Thomas approached him at the lunch table.

The usual employee was still away from work, so he was required to fill in once again. Despite what had happened last time, he was too afraid to decline. He needed to keep himself safe. They had accomplices. There were more of them waiting for their chance to get him. He needed to act before they caught him off guard. Accepting the responsibility would keep him safe.

As he ate, one of the other staff members joined him at the table.

"Hey, how are you! Alone again?" Jeremy asked.

"Uh... Yeah." Porfirio mumbled.

"Aw, don't brush me off!" he grinned. "You're not alone any more!"

He rolled his eyes.

"What have you been up to?"

Don't you dare say it!

Porfirio shrugged. "Watching movies at home."

"Oh, that sounds like fun!" Jeremy enthused. "What kind of movies do you like?"

Is it safe to tell him?

I guess. But nothing more.

He hesitated as he debated telling him about his taste in movies. It couldn't hurt, could it?

"I like horror movies. The gorier, the better," Porfirio stated. He then waited to see Jeremy's reaction.

Much to his surprise, it was received without criticism. "Oh, those movies are fun, aren't they? Have you seen Psycho?"

"Only one hundred times."

Jeremy chuckled, "The shower scene is just brutal!" This brought a smile to Porfirio's face. A rather sick, twisted one at that.

"I wish they would've shown the gore in that scene."

"But, that's some of the magic of it! We know exactly what happened without the detail!" he argued.

He shrugged and went back to eating. Clearly, he had made Jeremy uncomfortable with his comment, since he did not continue the conversation.

Nice job.

Once Porfirio finished his lunch, he made his way to the Safe Room, where the costume was kept. Knowing company policy, he made sure to strap the suit on and leave right away. It was clearly outlined that the room was not to be used as a break room.

You know what to do. Eliminate their allies. Be swift, be quiet about it.
"Yeah, I know," Porfirio hissed. "I have to finish the job."

**Because they sent backup!**

"I know that." He took a calming breath before entering the Dining Area for work. As expected, the restaurant was quite busy, yet it seemed to lack some of the energetic buzz that was present on Friday. He reasoned that this was because most families were getting ready for the coming week on Sunday rather than going out to eat. Porfirio went from table to table, following the expectations for his job, until he spotted them together; laughing as they tore into a pizza.

*That pocket knife's not going to be enough. You'll need something bigger. Something that'll do the job quicker.*

**I know what he needs.**

*Do you, now?*

**A pizza cutter. Wouldn't that work nicely?**

*Not very sharp. Then again, it'll tear. … Yes, that'll do. Porfirio, go get one from the kitchen and hide it in your pocket.*

He did as he was told without question. Being properly equipped for the task at hand helped him to feel calmer, in a way. It wasn’t quite as relaxing as a cigarette, but it did reduce his anxieties. Soon enough, he would be completely safe, at least for a little while.

After retrieving the tool, Porfirio returned to the Dining Area, ready to proceed to his enemies at the nearby table. Taking a sharp breath, he put on the cheery voice of Golden Freddy. He was addressed before he had the opportunity to speak.

“Golden Freddy!” the one he recognized as Freddy beamed. He had only met the boy a few times but would have recognized him anywhere. Thomas was quite proud of his sons and loved to introduce them to people.

He forced a laugh, to remain in character. “You’ve got that right, kiddo!”

“What are you doing here?” he asked.

Careful… Don’t give it away.

*Tell them you have a surprise! It worked last time!*

“I’m glad you asked! I have a surprise for you three!”

The other child he knew, Gilead, narrowed his eyes at him. Did he recognize him? No, that couldn’t be… He was wearing the suit, after all. He couldn’t possibly know what the ‘surprise’ was, so, why did he seem to know something the others didn’t?

“What kind of surprise, Golden Freddy?” the young girl with them asked. He knew the Fazbear brothers, but not the other child with them. Regardless, she was clearly one of them as well. She was in on it.

He mimed the action of closing a zipper. “Ah, that’s a secret, my dear,” Porfirio said, with a voice as soft as velvet. “You’ll have to come with me if you want to see.”
Freddy beamed and exclaimed, “Let’s go, I wanna see the secret!”

_Hook, line, and sinker. You’ve got them. Lead the way!_

With a bounce in his step, Porfirio escorted the children to the back room, as he had done on Friday. On the way there, however, Gilead came to his side and muttered, “I don’t know _what_ my dad put you up to, but it’d better be good.”

“I assure you, it is,” he purred. Immediately after, the Golden Freddy personality emerged once again. “Come on,” he cheered, singing a song the band played.

_You have a lovely voice. Hey, at this rate, you’d be the next Freddy Fazbore!_

Freddy stopped at the doorway. “Daddy never lets me back here.”

_Come on, say something! Quick!_

“It’ll be our little secret, won’t it?” He replied.

Once they arrived in the room, Porfirio followed the same procedure as the last time; closing and locking the door behind him.

_Aha! You did it! Now, finish the job._

“Where’s the surprise?” Freddy questioned.

As he was removing his costume, thankfully with more ease this time, he assured, “Oh, it’s here…”

“What do you mean? I don’t see any surprise…” the girl elaborated.

_Kill kill kill kill kill KILL… Stop putting this off._

“Oh, but there is,” Porfirio said, taking the pizza cutter in his hand, turning to face them with a slight smile on his face. “It’s me.”

_Safe, Porfirio Violet. Safe once again._
Moments before the clock struck midnight, Fritz heard footsteps charging down the hall toward the security office. Although he knew he no longer needed to shut the doors for his safety, he still readied his hand above the button, just in case. He saw a familiar golden blond colour flash past the window as Mike dashed into the room, panicked.

"Mike...?" He frowned a little. "Are ya alright?"

The running proved to be quite difficult for him, considering his lack of frequent physical exercise. Combined with his anxiety, he needed to take a moment to calm his breathing before he could speak.

"I was almost late!" Mike shrieked. "You know how bad that is!"

Fritz sighed, stood, and put an arm around the younger man's slight shoulders. "Didn't ya hear 'em? The animatronics won't hurt ya. Relax, kid. Ya don't need to worry about your safety."

He nodded quickly. "I know, but..."

"You're fine," Fritz insisted. "Come on, Anthony decided to come in for a visit. Let's go say hi, okay?"

"Oh, um, alright..." Mike mumbled.

He slapped him on the back. "There ya go!" he chuckled as he left the office.

"D-Don't leave me here!" he wailed as he chased after his friend. "This place is still pretty creepy, you know!" He was only answered with playful laughter that grew increasingly distant, which he followed as quickly as he could.

Out in the Dining Area, Anthony was chatting with the animatronics, laughing and smiling, as if he was merely catching up with some old friends.

It occurred to Mike: that was exactly what was going on. He knew Anthony had been with the company for many years, so it would have made sense for him to have had at least some relationship with them when they were alive, especially Freddy and Gilead.

He saw Mike charge in and smiled at him. "Hello, hello! Mike, how are you?"

As Anthony spoke, the animatronics took their cue to leave, giving them some privacy.

He felt his stomach twist in fear. After his last encounter with the assistant manager, he couldn't be entirely sure he could trust him. To Mike, this was everything. If he couldn't trust someone, he would only continue to be afraid of them. He gulped and answered, "I-I’m, uh, fine, y-you?"

Anthony’s grin faded as he saw his discomfort. "Hey, is there something wrong?"

"N-No!" Mike jittered. He shifted his attention to Fritz, hoping he’d take the hint to speak up for him. Unfortunately, he only stared at Mike with a baffled expression, as if he was unsure of what was expected from him.
“Well, you seem rather anxious,” Anthony commented. “Uh, there’s nothing to worry about.”

Fritz frowned. “Mike, what’s wrong?”

“N-Noth-”

“Don’t give me that crap,” Fritz interrupted sharply. “I’ve known ya long enough to know what yer like. You’re awful at hidin’ your fear.” He sighed. “Something’s clearly botherin’ ya. So, what is it?”

Anthony frowned a little, “Yeah, I thought something was up…”

Crap crap crap crap crap… Fritz, why did you have to say that?

Mike proceeded to then make several unintelligible, nervous sounds. He felt caught, worrying that Anthony would find out what he’d suspected since the staff lunch earlier that month. Who would actually take it well? Especially… that.

"Take your time," Fritz said.

After taking a few moments to collect himself and muster up the courage to speak, Mike mumbled something as he took a sudden interest in the carpet beneath his feet. His fear made his speech too quiet to be understood.

"Pardon. Could you, uh, repeat that?" Anthony requested.

He was met with slightly louder mumbling, only able to hear him say 'Were you' before becoming unclear once again.

Neither of them spoke, both watching Mike closely. They young man shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot. Having the attention focused on him didn’t make his task any easier. Eventually, he repeated himself, loud enough this time.

"I-I, um... W-Were you... i-i-i-involved in..." He drifted off briefly before completing the sentence. "the m-missing children i-incident...?"

Their eyes widened in surprise. The tension created by the question was so think, it could have been cut with a knife.

Anthony broke the silence. "M-Mike, what are you talking about?" Judgement was nowhere to be found in his tone of voice.

"Anthony... D-D-Did you do it...?"

Horrified at the mere suggestion, he quickly answered, "No, not at all! I-I-Only did what Thomas, a-asked me to do: t-to protect the company from the press!"

Fritz was still shocked, almost more surprised by the fact that Mike made an accusation at all, rather than who it was directed at. He spoke with a certain sense of gravity that he found quite surprising. “Mikey, I was workin’ at Freddy’s when it happened. They caught the killer. Anthony didn’t do anythin’. Why would ya think he would do somethin’ that disgusting?”

“I-I don’t know!” Mike shrieked. “T-The lunch t-trip… U-Um…” Mentally, he grasped at thin air as he tried to assemble a logical, coherent sentence.

Anthony filled in for him, speaking calmly. "When we had our chat in the buffet line, right?"
He nodded.

"I, uh... I understand why you might have thought that," he continued. "I just don't like to talk about that much, and I'm sure you can understand why. So much happened... But, rest assured, Fazbear Entertainment's number one focus is on safety."

"Anthony's right," Fritz interjected. "The company's been through some really terrible stuff. Knowin' how easily frightened ya can be, I think ya should leave well enough alone. All ya really need to know is that back in '87, a lot of bad things happened: Jeremy got hurt and five children died. They haunt the animatronics, as we now know." He paused for an almost uncomfortably long period of time. "Don't trouble yourself with the details, but Anthony didn't kill anyone."

Despite Mike's skepticism, he accepted the explanation. Much to his relief, Anthony didn’t appear to be even the slightest bit angry with him.

"So, if it wasn’t Anthony... Who did it?" Mike inquired. "A-And what about James? Was he, um... killed, by the same person?"

Fritz shook his head. "I don't know, Mike... I don't know."

"E-Even I don’t know, and I’ve been with the company since the Fredbear’s days... When he went missing."

Mike had a lot of thinking to do. Who was actually responsible for killing the children? Where were they right now? Almost more importantly, he wanted to know what would drive someone to want to kill in the first place. Now that he knew who wasn’t responsible, he needed another lead. He began to ponder who he could turn to for clues. Eventually, he concluded that Freddy would probably be the most knowledgeable source of information.

He took a deep breath as he approached Freddy after Anthony and Fritz had made their way to the break room in search of leftover pizza. Although he still found the animatronics terrifying, to say the least, he knew that he needed to conquer his fear to find the truth. It’s not like they’d strangle him again or stuff him a suit.

"F-Freddy?" Mike squeaked.

The bear turned to face him, smiling. "Good to see you, Mike! How are you?"

"U-Um... fine, I g-g-guess..." He was near trembling, but managed to keep his composure by some stroke of luck.

"Wonderful!" Freddy beamed. "I’m so happy you came to see me!"

Mike nodded shyly, bringing himself to smile slightly. "Actually, I-I-I need your h-help..." he announced as he took a seat on the stage floor.

"Oh... Well," he began, sitting in front of Mike to help him feel more comfortable. "how can I help you?"

Mike looked away with an uneasy expression on his face. He had to think carefully about how he would phrase his question. If he said the wrong thing... he didn’t even want to know what would happen. Then again, he knew that if he didn’t just spit it out, he’d never find out what he so desperately wanted to know. It was now or never.
“Freddy, um…” he stuttered. It was much harder than he’d hoped to force the words to come out.

“Yes?”

“Y-You know, uh… Back in the ‘87, when you all…” Mike stuttered.

“Died?” Freddy supplied.

“T-That, yes…”

“What about it?” he probed.

“D-Do you… know who did it?” Mike asked rather timidly.

Freddy sighed and looked away. “I do… He was a night guard, much like yourself. He worked the
day shift for a while, but he left, just a bit before the… bite.”

He felt a chill go down his spine. A night guard, just like him. Although he knew Anthony, Fritz,
Jeremy, and Maxwell were innocent, it still made him uncomfortable to think that the cruel, horrible
person responsible was so similar to him and his friends.

“O-Oh, um… So, what happened to t-that person?”

Freddy took off his top-hat, examining it as he spoke. “I do… He was a night guard, much like yourself. He worked the
day shift for a while, but he left, just a bit before the… bite.”

He felt a chill go down his spine. A night guard, just like him. Although he knew Anthony, Fritz,
Jeremy, and Maxwell were innocent, it still made him uncomfortable to think that the cruel, horrible
person responsible was so similar to him and his friends.

“O-Oh, um… So, what happened to t-that person?”

Freddy took off his top-hat, examining it as he spoke. “I can’t say for sure. I heard he was arrested,
but that’s all I’ve managed to overhear over the years. He hasn’t been back, so I can only assume
he’s locked up somewhere.” His expression became stern, his voice bitter. “He deserves it.”

Mike sighed in relief. “A-At least he’s gone…”

“At least.”

“I-I’m sorry for a-a-asking about that… It m-must be a s-sensitive topic…” Mike mumbled. He
began to fidget, twisting his hands into and out of various positions repeatedly.

“It’s fine. It’s been a few years since it happened.” A thin smile spread across his face. “I’ve learned
to enjoy my job; singing on stage for the children. It keeps me going.”

He cocked an eyebrow in confusion. “It does?”

Freddy put his hat back on his head. “It gives me a sense of purpose; a reason to smile. I entertain in
place of my programmed A.I. because it makes other people happy. And that, Mike, is what truly
matters in the end. I also remind myself that God gave me a second chance at life, for whatever
reason that may be. I intend to make the most of it.” He could’ve sworn he saw his eyes twinkle.

Mike couldn’t help but let the corners of his mouth creep up. He could hardly believe that Freddy
could still manage to be happy, let alone believe in God, after the horrible fate he’d been met with.
He could only imagine that even he would’ve grown cold if he had been forced to exist as an
animatronic entertainer for the rest of eternity. He assumed that having been so young was both a
blessing and a curse to them. It allowed them to move on and accept their less than desirable
situation. Yet, it would’ve been all the more devastating as well. Freddy really had embraced life, as
if he’d never been through the hell before that would break most people down beyond recovery.
Despite this, he somehow remained strong.

“Freddy, that’s… that’s amazing,” Mike remarked in awe. “I can’t believe you still have so much
hope…”
He grinned at the night guard. “And you’re talking to me. That’s pretty amazing as well. I’m proud of you, Mike, you seem much more at ease than when you first started working here.”

“I-I am,” he replied, absently rubbing the back of his neck. “I guess it helps to know you’re j-just like us, in a w-way…” It occurred to him afterwards that he could have offended the bear with his phrasing. At least Freddy seemed to understand that he meant well.

“We certainly are. I know we don’t look too nice, but we mean no harm. Even Bonnie does. I’m not sure if you’re aware of this, but he does feel badly for that little incident,” Freddy explained. “You haven’t been able to see this side of him yet, but under all of his arrogance, he’s a really good friend. He’s just…” he hesitated as he tried to find the right word, or more accurately the most polite word, “insecure, believe it or not.”

Mike stared at him in shock, examining his face closely. Not that it would help him much, he realized, seeing that the animatronics weren’t exactly known for being the most expressive. The fact they could show emotion on their faces at all was quite impressive, he thought. Seeing that Freddy wasn’t joking, he shook his head in surprise.

“Wait; he’s insecure?”

He nodded. “You can’t tell him I said that, but I thought it’d help you to hear that. I know you’re wary of him, but he isn’t quite as intimidating as he may seem. Get to know him a bit, I’m sure you two would get along well.”

After some of the shock had worn off, Mike smiled a little. “I never would have guessed.”

“I hope we can be good friends as well. I’d be nice to have someone else to talk to,” Freddy said.

“We can!” he enthused.

Considering all Mike had learned that evening, he knew he had a lot to think about later. Between the fate of the murderer and his developing friendships with the very people (more accurately animatronics) he feared, he began to reflect on how far he had come. He never would have guessed that he would be searching for the truth about a murder. Him, a ‘fraidy cat’, investigating the works of such a scary person. Even more so, he was now talking to the animatronics, and that was a major accomplishment for him. If someone had asked him to do that even last week, he wouldn’t told them they were crazy.

Regardless, he hoped to move forward and become good friends with the characters. Besides, he figured they were probably lonely after being there for six years.
Maxwell ventured into the building that morning and quietly made his way to the locker room to get ready for his shift. On his way over, he bumped into Anthony, who was busy hanging his coat.

The redhead smiled warmly at his friend. "Hello, hello! How are you on this fine morning?"

Maxwell blinked distractedly. "I'm uh... fine."

"Ah, wonderful!" He clearly didn't seem to notice the subtle discomfort on his face.

He continued to his own locker, a few away from his co-worker's, and proceeded to hang up his own coat and grab his security uniform. He snapped the locker shut and shuffled off to change.

Anthony said something that he wasn't paying attention to. After getting ready, he returned to the locker and haphazardly stuffed his clothes in. Much to his surprise, Anthony was still there, spiking up the front of his hair in the mirror. Seeing Maxwell behind him, he beamed.

"All ready to go?"

He nodded; something was clearly 'off' about his expression.

"Hey... Are you alright?" he asked carelessly, more focused on his hair than on Maxwell.

Before he could react, Anthony found himself being roughly turned around and shoved against the wall beside the mirror. Soon after, he felt the pressure of a hand on his throat, pinning him in place. Maxwell held him at an arm's length, glaring into his eyes with a crazed gleam.

His eyes widened in fear as he weakly choked out his co-worker's name. As he attempted to sneak his hand up to his neck, he felt the point of a sharp object start to press into his stomach.


"O-Okay, okay... I... I w-won't..." He choked, lowering his hand back down to his side. He feared that resistance would lead to his demise. Maybe he’d be able to hold out until someone came in.

Anthony couldn't help but wonder exactly why this was happening to him. He couldn't think of when he’d done anything to upset Maxwell so much. Last he checked, they were good friends...

"Why?" he shouted. "How could you, Howard?"

"W-What are you t-talking ab-"

He put some pressure on the blade, using enough force to draw some blood. His face went pale as he felt the warm liquid begin to trail down his stomach. The man on the other end of the weapon could clearly see the fear in his eyes. He knew from the sadistic smile he saw spread across Maxwell’s face for a moment.

"You know exactly what I'm talking about. I know what you did."

Anthony's thoughts briefly trailed off to Dianne. What would she do? He was ready to cry at the mere thought of leaving her, never mind permanently. As much as he hoped he'd get out of this alive,
his hope was fading rapidly with every moment that passed. He gulped nervously and thought about what he would say. After all, it could be the difference between life and death.

"Maxwell... I-I don't know what you're talking about."

His expression changed from one of lunacy to one of worry. "You betrayed me! You turned me in! Now they're after me because of you!"

He felt the hand tighten around his throat, making breathing even more difficult. Anthony was taken aback, shocked by what he was being accused of. What was with colleagues making outlandish accusations as of late? First it was Mike, now it was Maxwell...

"I-I didn't turn you in, anywhere..."

Anthony felt Maxwell twist the tip of the blade, drawing more blood and causing him considerable pain. It was hard for him to hide how much it hurt, as he cringed. He was surprised he had managed to keep his voice quiet, despite the immense discomfort.

"You're not fooling anyone." For a moment, he withdrew the blade.

He sighed in relief and attempted once more to move Maxwell's hand. Unfortunately, he was caught.

"You little bitch!" Without hesitation, he slashed Anthony's right leg open, cutting deep into it.

He screamed in agony as his leg began to burn with pain. His knee gave out, applying more pressure to his neck as his body's weight settled. He could no longer breathe.

"Only you could betray your friend."

Anthony tried to breathe and reply but could do neither. He could only hope that Maxwell would let go before it was too late. He tried once more to claw at the hand, but it was useless.

"You're a redhead, everyone knows you don't have a soul," Maxwell growled. "No one will miss you."

He shut his eyes tightly and waited for the end. Yet, instead of feeling the knife pierce his skin once more, he felt the hand's grip relax. Anthony tumbled to the floor, gasping and coughing.

Maxwell's eyes widened as he looked down at his bloodied hands. It was as if he were in a trance, and had just come to his senses, realizing what he had done. He put his knife away and fled from the locker room, taking off out the back door and abandoning Anthony.

He found himself left alone to bleed out. He hoarsely cried out as he used his arms and uninjured leg to drag himself to help. He didn't make it far before Jeremy came in, looking around the room. He could only guess that he'd heard his scream and was searching for the source. Almost stepping on him, Jeremy found Anthony. He stared in shock and confusion.

"H-Help..." Anthony croaked.

Jeremy continued to stare, clearly thinking but not acting. Despite the serious brain trauma, he was far from stupid. He just had trouble articulating his thoughts and responding appropriately to his environment. Of course, any response would have been more helpful than the blank expression he was receiving. Anthony could only wait and hope that he'd eventually do something helpful. After at least minute of hesitation, Jeremy offered a hand to him. Shakily, he took it and, with his help, stood without putting weight on his right leg.
He coughed before speaking. “Go to Mr. Fazbear…”

Jeremy nodded and started to move out of the room. With some help, he brought him to the office. Anthony weakly tapped on the door, bringing the boss’ attention to them. His eyes widened in horror at the sight before him. Jeremy looked between Anthony and Thomas, trying to decide what to do.


“I-I, um…” Jeremy mumbled.

“Take your time,” his boss encouraged.

“F-Found him.”

He nodded, stood, and took Anthony from him. Despite his efforts to be careful, he heard him groan in pain from the movement. “Call your wife. You may go home early. You’ll still be paid for your shift, of course.”

Jeremy looked down and quietly left the room, leaving Thomas to deal with his injured employee. He set him down with his back propped up against the wall, mindful of his injury and made his way to the phone on his desk, calling 9-1-1 without a second thought. Once he ended the call, he went to Anthony’s side and pressed his jacket to the gash in his leg, bringing about a sharp gasp.

“So, how did this happen?”

“M-Maxwell…” Anthony cringed from the pain. “H-He tried to kill me.”

Mr. Fazbear became worried. “Where is he?”

“I-I don’t know…” He coughed and rubbed at his throat, which had begun to bruise.

“We’ll find him, I’m sure.” He met Anthony’s eyes. “For now, just hold out until the paramedics arrive.”

An Alleyway - Tuesday, December 14th, 1993

Maxwell had run as fast as he could from Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza, which proved to be rather difficult in the cold winter air and due to his smoking habit. He’d only managed to get a few intersections away before he had to stop, ducking into an alleyway to take refuge from the blustering wind. He began to shake from both the cold and a strong cigarette craving. As he paced around the cement shelter, he dug his hand into his pocket to grab a smoke from the pack.

“Only six left…” he muttered to himself. Yet, he knew he needed one right at that moment. Slowly, he slid one out of the pack and lit it with his lighter. Maxwell wrapped his free arm around his torso in an attempt to retain some of his body heat.

He took a long drag and tried to calm himself down. He reasoned that he was out of the restaurant, so he’d have some time to escape. They’d be looking for him for sure, especially after what he’d done to Anthony. The thoughts of what would happen to him if he was found scared him.

After finishing the cigarette, he looked left then right and carried on his way. Snow has started to fall, nesting into his hair as he continued to distance himself from his workplace. This time, he walked quickly instead of running. Maxwell noticed that he was splattered with blood from the incident, so
he did his best to take back roads. It would take him longer to get home, but at least that way he 
would avoid the scrutiny of the general population.

When he finally got back to his apartment, he welcomed the toasty embrace of the heated indoors. 
He casually, as if it were a common occurrence, went to the kitchen sink and washed the blood off of 
his hands. Afterward, he started preparing to make himself some toast. As he was placing the bread 
into the metal slots, he felt something brush against his leg. He didn’t need to look down to know 
that it was his cat, hearing the trill-like meow of greeting and the sensation of small paws stepping on 
his toes. He cringed a little as he felt claws dig into his foot.

Maxwell pushed the lever down and went to his bedroom to change. He took off his shirt and held it 
up, frowning at the red stains smeared across the steel-blue fabric, namely at the ends of the sleeves. 
He sighed and tossed it on his unmade bed. He changed into a t-shirt and jeans, taking the soiled 
button-down with him to the bathroom sink, which he filled with hot water to soak the garment in.

Hearing the toaster pop made him smile to himself a little as he dunked the shirt into the water and 
returned to the kitchen. Nothing smelled nicer than the aroma of a crunchy piece of bread waiting to 
be buttered and eaten.

Once he had his toast, he curled up in the sofa and put on Child’s Play. As bizarre as it seemed, 
slasher movies usually calmed Maxwell down. Not long after the start of the film, he felt the cat 
headbutt his foot. Smiling, he set his plate down on the coffee table and scooped the feline into his 
arms.

“Nice of you to come see me,” he said softly. He turned his attention back to the screen and 
scratched behind the cat’s ears. She seemed to like it, leaning into his touch.

Just as the movie was getting good, it dawned upon him: hot water doesn’t remove blood stains, it 
sets them. He paused it and went to the sink, swearing under his breath as he saw the garment, just as 
dirty as before. He drained the water and began to scrub at the stains, but they refused to budge.

He dropped the uniform shirt back in the sink. “How the hell am I going to explain this to Mr. 
Fazbear?” Maxwell sighed. “Maybe I can tell him I lost it or something…”

The phone began to ring. As much as he enjoyed talking to his girlfriend, Haruka, he was in no 
mood to do so today. Cautiously, he picked up the phone.

“Hello?”

“Hello, hello,” Maxwell heard hoarsely from the other end. There was only person who would ever 
start a conversation like that.

“Anthony…”

The man’s voice brightened a little. “I’m glad you answered the call. Uh, I wanted to check on you. 
I’ve been worried about you.”

“Worried about me? Why?”

“Uh, well,” Anthony had to stop to cough. “It’s not like you to… act like that.”

“It’s not like anyone to act like that,” he snapped.

“C-Calm down, I’m not trying to pick a fight.”
“What, then?”

“I just wanted to talk to you.”

“Yeah, I cut you up. What else is there to talk about?” Maxwell replied shortly.

“Just…” Anthony sighed. “Why, Maxwell? Why were you so angry?”

He tightened his grip on the phone. “I knew you betrayed me.”

He coughed several times. “I-I still don’t know what you mean by that…”

“Quit playing dumb, Howard,” he growled. “You and I both know you turned me in to the cops.”

“F-For what? I have no idea w-what you’re talking about!”

Maxwell twirled the cord around his finger and sat at the kitchen table. “Aw, come on, you must think I’m pretty stupid, don’t you? Well, I’m not. I know that you know. You know everything there is to know about Freddy’s. There’s hardly a secret that you don’t know.”

The line remained silent for several moments before Anthony spoke once again, his voice barely above a whisper. “Oh God, you don’t mean…”

“Go on,” he taunted.

“Y-Your name isn’t Maxwell Richmond… is it?”

He laughed darkly. “Smart, aren’t you? What was my name, then?”

“I-I, uh…”

“I’ve got time.”

Anthony sounded as if he’d just seen a ghost. “P-Porfirio…?”

He smiled. “Missed me?”

“I-I thought you were…”

“In jail?” Porfirio chuckled. “Not anymore. I hated it in there.”

Again, the call went quiet, save for the occasional cough from Anthony.

“They warned me about you. They told me you’d turn me in.” He paused. “Let’s make a deal. If you keep that big mouth of yours shut, especially around Ol’ Fazbear, I won’t finish what I started. I like you, Howard, so don’t make me get rid of you.”

“I w-won’t say anything…”

“Good, so we can put this behind us,” Porfirio replied. “It’s good to know that I can trust you.”

“Yeah, uh…”

“What? I’m only telling you the truth. It’s nice to have someone else to talk to, someone who knows who I am. Someone I trust. It got lonely, just talking to Kowalski and Them. But now I have you.” He sounded genuinely happy.
Anthony sounding a little distracted and uncomfortable. “Listen, uh, my wife’s coming in to see me now, so I’ll talk to you later.”

“I look forward to it.”

Porfirio hung up and went back to his movie, picking up Kowalski along the way. He knew he’d have to keep a close eye on Anthony to ensure he kept quiet, but he otherwise felt good.

*I can’t believe you let him find out.*

*You should have finished him.*

He frowned. “But I want him to be my friend…”

*It’s too dangerous, and you know that.*

*Anthony seems fine to me. Besides, now he’s got both a friend and a girlfriend. I knew he could do it!*

‘Could’ and ‘should’ don’t mean the same thing.

“He won’t tell anyone about me…”

*He’d better not. If he does… You know what to do.*

Porfirio sighed. “I hope it doesn’t come to that.”
Foxy sat down beside Gilead that evening, as he had done every night since Fritz and Anthony had brought Gilead out of the Safe Room. Beforehand, he was often alone in Pirate Cove, with only the company of his own voice and the scraping of his metal feet along the worn wooden stage. Having a friend with him was hardly the same as getting to perform once again, but it was at least an improvement.

“You don’t always have to sit,” Gilead remarked. “You’re not offending me by standing.”

“I jus’… A capt’n always makes sure ‘is crew is happy.”

“And I am, don’t worry.” He smiled. “Having my friend back is more than enough.”

Foxy sighed. “If only tha’ were the truth, lad.” His words sounded strained near the end of the sentence.

“I don’t see why you’re talking like that… You’re not performing right now, so you can talk normally, Reynard.”

He opened his mouth to speak, then closed it again.

“What’s wrong?”

“I… I-I can’t. M-M-Me voice box is st-u-u-u-u-uck li’e this.” Foxy sputtered.

Gilead would have frowned, if he were capable of doing so. “That doesn’t make sense…”

As he was about to answer, Foxy let out a static-filled screech and shut off suddenly.

“Reynard!” he exclaimed. He wanted to move to look at him, but couldn’t due to his lack of an endoskeleton. Regardless, he was not met with an answer. Gilead thought for a moment about what to do. From Pirate Cove, he assumed he would not be heard if he shouted, but decided to at least attempt to draw someone’s attention. If he called loud enough, someone would have to hear him eventually… It’d have been much easier if he could have just gotten up and looked for help, but that was not an option. He’d have to ask someone to get that back for him.

Gilead shouted for help, hoping to draw someone’s, anyone’s, attention. A few minutes later, he heard the door to the room swing open, and the sound of footsteps approaching the stage.

"W-Who is that? Where's that coming from?" someone he could not see asked.

"Over here." Gilead called out.

He heard a frightened sound come from across the room.

"Please, just... Come. I need your help... Reynard's in trouble."

"He is?" The footsteps came closer, a slim figure in a night guard uniform came into his field of vision, clearly a man. He saw him kneel down beside Foxy.
"Is he alright...?"

"I don't know," Gilead replied. "He just shut off."

The man before him sounded upset. "A-Again?"

"Again? You mean this has happened before?"

"Y-Yeah... Um, I've seen it happen once, actually."

Gilead took a moment to think. “Mind coming over here? Unfortunately, I can’t move to look at you. I can tell you're one of the night guards, but I’m afraid I haven’t had the pleasure of meeting you yet.”

There was a moment of hesitation before he saw the man slide across the floor from Foxy to him. He twisted his head to the side in an uncomfortable-looking angle as he tried to look into the eyes of the suit. Gilead saw a man with blond hair, bangs swept across his forehead, blue eyes, and a colourful spray of freckles across his fair face. He appeared to be curious but timid.

“What’s your name?”

“I’m Mike…”

"Mike..." Gilead was unable to smile but would have if he could. "Well, Mike, it's wonderful to meet you."

Despite his obvious discomfort, Mike managed to smile at him. "Sorry... Um, I should've stopped by earlier, after I heard you were here, but..."

"You have no need to apologize."

"Okay..." Mike mumbled uncomfortably. "So... Foxy's having trouble?"

Gilead sighed. "I'm afraid so. Could you get Anthony? I'm sure he could help him."

"I can't really do that... Fritz told me he's in the hospital."

This news came as a shock to him, despite knowing that employees have been rushed to the emergency room before. Then again, those were almost always animatronic related… He began to worry as his mind raced with the possibilities of who could have done what.

"Who acted out this time?"

Mike stared at his motionless body in confusion. "What are you talking about...?"

"It's always an animatronic. I just want to know who was responsible for it this time," Gilead stated with little emotion, as if he were hardened to it.

"N-No one! Well, um, not an animatronic, at least..." He frowned and began to fiddle with the keyring dangling from his belt. "They didn't tell me who d-did it, but whoever it was messed up Anthony's leg. I-I heard he could have died... Jeremy and Mr. Fazbear saved his life."

"He's safe now, Mike. I wouldn't worry about him now; he's in good hands."

"Yeah, I hope so..."
Gilead sighed sadly and waited for a moment before reminding him of why he’d been called over. "Oh, right! Um..." Mike mulled the thought over for a while before suggesting, "Well, uh, maybe Freddy could take a look at him?"

"That could work. Fritz might be able to lend a hand as well. If you could bring them here for me, I would be very thankful."

“Oh, of course!” Mike exclaimed, taking a step back and standing. “I won’t be long.”

He sounded content as he replied, “I’m sure you won’t.”

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Mike returned with Fritz, Freddy, and Bonnie by his side. Without hesitation, Freddy and Bonnie made their way up onto the stage. Mike lingered behind, turning to leave after completing his task of bringing help. As he was about to leave, he felt a hand clasp his shoulder firmly, but not with malicious intent.

“Where do ya think you’re goin’, kid?” Fritz teased. “We’re not done with ya just yet.”

Mike turned around to face him. “I was, uh...”

He chuckled. “What? Are ya scared?”

“I-I, uh, n-no! I’m not!” he protested, his attempt at confidence failing miserably.

Fritz couldn’t help but grin, only to swear under his breath and cringe afterward as the gesture pulled at the stitches in his cheek.

Mike frowned slightly and came a little closer, lightly touching the yellowing bruise and staring at the healing skin, fascinated and horrified at the same time.

“Mikey,” he began, gently moving his hand away. “I’m fine. Don’t worry about me, alright?” A soft smile danced across his lips as he met his eyes. “I’m glad ya care about me, but ya don’t need to be so worried. I’ll heal. I always do.”

He laughed nervously, and darted his gaze away, uncomfortable with the attention. He wasn’t sure why he had touched the wound. In all honesty, he thought it looked disgusting; it made Fritz look even scarier than when he’d first met him. Yet, he managed to overcome his fear based on who he knew Fritz to be: nothing close to being a scary guy who’d beat him up.

Would he have even had the courage to talk to him if he’d met him looking the way he did right now? Mike couldn’t have been sure. Although he had come leaps and bounds in his bravery since he’d started working at Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza, he still had a long way to go.

“Come, let’s go see how Foxy’s doin’,” Fritz suggested as he went towards Pirate Cove. Not wanting to be left alone, he followed behind.

When they made their way up onto the stage, Freddy and Bonnie were already looking at Foxy’s suit, doing their best to help him. Freddy had already taken off the mask of Foxy’s costume to examine his internal hardware for errors.

Seeing the head of the endoskeleton terrified Mike. He hid behind Fritz, who gave him a reassuring nod before going to join the animatronics. Mike kept his distance and watched.

"So, what seems to be the problem?” Fritz questioned.
Freddy looked up from Foxy, whose head hung limply, exposing a circuit panel opened in the back. "Oh, hey..."

"How's he?" He knelt between the two of them. It crossed his mind that Jeremy would have never gotten this close to a broken animatronic, especially not a fox one. Not after '87, anyway. However, Fritz knew that he would be safe. At least, that's what he told himself. He had Freddy and Bonnie right beside him if things went sideways.

"Not great," Bonnie stated bluntly. "We still don't know what's up with him."

"Patience, Bailey, we j-"

"Call me Bonnie," he insisted. "I know that was my name, but I've been Bonnie for as long as I can remember. Just call me that, alright?"

Freddy rolled his eyes. "Bonnie, this isn't the time," he warned. There was strong emphasis on his name.

He shrugged. "Just saying."

"Anyway..."

"Have ya found anythin'?" Fritz inquired.

"Not yet," Freddy answered. "I'm still looking."

"If only Anthony was here! He's good at this stuff!" Bonnie piped up.

"Yeah, but he needs his rest," Gilead interjected.

Fritz patted the end of Gilead's foot since it was the only thing he could reach. "We'll get ya fixed up, kid."

Freddy continued to poke around at the circuitry in the back of Foxy's head, a look of determination on his face. He wouldn't give up until he at least figured out what was plaguing his friend. In an ideal world, Foxy would be fixed by the end of the night, but he knew that would not be likely.

"Have you tried the ID10T switch?" Bonnie asked.

"I'm looking," Freddy replied.

He snickered and watched as Freddy poked around for the switch in question. Bonnie continued to laugh as he did so.

"What's so funny?"

"Have you considered the switch's name?"

"Why would I?" Freddy stopped mid sentence as it dawned upon him: ID10T was code for 'idiot'. He sighed angrily. "Bonnie, one of these days, I swear I'm going to slap you."

Bonnie couldn't help but smirk. He knew it was probably bad that he enjoyed pushing people's buttons the way he did, but he found it too funny to stop. Their reactions were priceless.

The three of them all remained gathered around Foxy for most of the night, before he suddenly powered on. They retreated back as he sat up straight, with his maintenance panel still open.

Bonnie frowned at the pirate voice he heard. “Okay, who touched the A.I. controls?”

Both of them gave a pointed look to Fritz.

“What?” He sighed in frustration. “I didn’t do anythin’ to him. Why would I?”

“Well, Freddy and I didn’t do it.”

“I didn’t either,” Fritz retorted.

Freddy interrupted them to prevent the argument from escalating. “Maybe none of us caused this? It could be unrelated.”

“G-G-Good job, kiddo! Ye b-be a smart lad!” Foxy sputtered.

“Wait a minute…” Fritz said. “I think you’re onto somethin’.”

“What do you mean?” Freddy pressed.

He turned his attention directly to Foxy and asked, “Foxy, can ya tell me who that is beside ya?”

Foxy turned his head to Gilead and grinned, chuckling warmly. However, his voice was plagued with glitching and static. “H-He be me best m-m-m-matey, Gilead Fazb-b-bear! We be adventurin’ since I was a we-e-e-ee lad!”

Bonnie gave Foxy a quizzical look, then glanced between Fritz and Freddy. “Why is he talking like that?” He turned his attention back to Foxy. “Hey, you know you can talk like a person, too, right Foxy?” he jeered.

He opened his mouth to speak, emitting static instead of words. A look in his eyes suggested that he wanted to speak, but somehow couldn’t.

“Foxy…” Freddy began. “Are you alright?”

“A pirate is a-a-always fine on ‘is ship! The s-s-s-sea air is invigoratin’, lad!”

Fritz smiled slightly. “Don’t ya see? He heard ya. He’s just stuck talkin’ like a pirate or somethin’.”

Freddy appeared to be deep in thought, studying Foxy carefully. “That’s very strange…”

“Even I don’t have A.I. glitches. I didn’t even remember my own name, but I’ve never toggled into that mode before.”

“There’s gotta be a broken switch somewhere,” Fritz suggested. “There has to be a practical explanation.”

“I don’t know what to tell you,” Freddy replied.

Foxy stared at his friends helplessly, the ears of his endoskeleton pulled back in nervousness. He grabbed his mask sitting on the floor beside him and slid it back on over his head. His tail wrapped tightly around his legs as he curled in on himself.

Freddy hugged him. “It’s going to be fine, Foxy.”
"We'll fix this," Fritz added. "Just... Take it easy, alright?"

Foxy nodded and hugged Freddy back. By accident, his hook dug into his friend's shoulder, tearing the fabric and some of the foam beneath it. Hearing the ripping sound, he shrank back again.

Freddy watched him with a soft expression. "It's just some fabric. No harm done."

Foxy ignored him, putting his head on his knees.

“It’s okay, so cheer up a little,” Bonnie encouraged. “We’ve all got things that need fixing, so don’t feel so bad. It could always be worse, right?”

“I heard that,” Gilead groaned.

Bonnie’s ears stood on end in surprise. He smiled sheepishly and took a step away from Gilead. “Oops…”

Freddy looked between his brother and his friend. “We have each other, and that’s all we need. No matter what happens to these suits, we’ll always be together.”

Fritz smiled at them warmly. “That’s sweet of ya, Freddy. We’re all here for ya, too.” Freddy grinned and hugged him tightly and abruptly. The man was clearly taken off-guard, but returned the kind embrace. He chuckled and added, “Careful now, those metal parts are stronger than ya’d think.”

He eased up a little on the hug, but did not let go. “Oh, uh, sorry about that.”

“No worries, kid.”

For a brief moment, things appeared to be looking up for Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza. Despite having a staff member in the hospital and some issues with the animatronics, everyone was reasonably happy at the restaurant that night.

As upset as Foxy was about his current state, he was happy his friends cared about him as much as they did. Even Fritz came to help, which he never would have expected. If only he could just tell them what was wrong. It would have been so much easier if he’d been able to ditch the pirate accent and mannerisms, yet no matter how hard he would fight it, he would always be ‘Out of Order’.
That's Not My Name

Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Thursday, December 16th, 1993

Porfirio came into work that morning and made his way to the locker room, just as he had before the incident on Tuesday had occurred. He glanced at the mirror briefly as he remembered what had taken place there; what he had done two days ago.

*Don’t feel bad, he deserved it. You know he did. You enjoyed every moment of that.*

“I didn’t,” Porfirio argued.

*Why are you fighting with me? You know I’m right, so stop being so stupid. You listened to me, so now you can reap the rewards. You have your freedom, you have that pathetic little hairball at home. You wouldn’t have anything without me.*

“S-Shut up!” he exclaimed. “I hate you!”

*Aw, how cute… You can’t hate me. We’re the only ones that love you; the only ones you can trust.*

*We all know that you only have Haruka for your own selfish gain. I’m proud of you for trying, but it can’t last. Unless you get rid of her, she’ll find out eventually. Get rid of her soon, or you’ll be sorry.*

“No… I can’t… I love her, I need her!”

*What, because she loves those dumb slasher movies you both adore so much? Come on, Porfirio, that’s not love. She couldn’t possibly love you.*

*And you couldn’t love her as you claim to. You’re selfish, mean, and uncaring. You’re heartless and incapable of love. She’s better off without a monster like you in her life.*

He grabbed his uniform from his locker, slamming the door after. “You’re wrong.” he spat. “Go away, both of you!” Instead, all he heard was laughter. He knew it was directed at him. His friends were laughing at him, mocking him. Porfirio tried to cover his ears, tried to run, but no matter what he did, they wouldn’t quiet down. Cruel laughter was the only thing he could hear.

He threw on his uniform, grateful for the spare, unstained shirt in his locker, and fled from the locker room. Their teasing followed him.

*What are you going to do, cry about it? That won’t help you.*

He continued to try to flee without success, until a firm voice cut through it all.

“Mr. Richmond,” Thomas snapped. “My office. Immediately.”

Porfirio swallowed sharply, knowing it was all over now. He’d been caught.

*You should’ve listened to us. Now he knows. I hope you’re happy.*

His eyes widened in terror as he remained frozen in shock for a few moments. When he was able to move again, he bolted for the door, trying one last time to escape. This time, he would not come
back. It was too dangerous. Before he could go more than a few steps, he felt a hand tightly wrap around his wrist.

"And where do you think you're off to in such a rush?"

Porfirio struggled, trying to free himself, but was unsuccessful.

“Come along now,” Thomas grumbled, forcing him to come to the office with him. When they arrived, Mr. Fazbear shut and locked the door behind him, ensuring his employee would be unable to make another attempt at running away. “Have a seat,” he commanded. With a sigh, Porfirio did as he was told, hanging his head submissively. By this point, he knew his only option was to comply.

His boss sat in front of him at his desk, his fingers interlaced. Thomas peered at him suspiciously, watching him with caution.

“Now, tell me: what happened with Mr. Howard earlier this week?”

_You can try to get out of this… Don’t tell him anything!_

He remained silent, keeping his head down. His heart raced and he felt himself starting to shake from the anxiety.

_This is your fault. You're going back to jail now, all because you didn’t do what you were told, idiot._

"Mr. Richmond?"

Again, he did not speak.

Thomas sighed in frustration. "I know it was you, so it’s in your better interest to just tell me."

_This isn’t good…_

Porfirio squeezed his eyes shut and clenched his hand into a fist. He desperately willed them to be quiet, but they continued to interject whenever they felt like it. All he could think about was leaving the room, the building, the city, and even the country entirely. He'd move to America and start over again. Surely he'd be safer there. No one would have to know about his past in Canada.

"Maxwell, this will go much easier for both of us if you’d cooperate," Mr. Fazbear said.

He swallowed hard and mumbled, "I'm sorry..." He still didn't look at him.

"For...?" he prodded.

"For hurting Anthony," Porfirio continued.

"You did more than 'hurt him'. He's in the hospital, and you should be lucky he didn't bleed to death. Hell, I could, and should, turn you in for this, and you'd be put in jail! I've put up with enough over the years, and I don't need this trouble on top of all of that. My company could very well be in jeopardy because of this little stunt you've pulled."

He shot his head up to look at Thomas as he mentioned the possibility of serving jail time, a terrified expression on his face. "N-No, please..." he pleaded. "I-I'll leave, you'll never have to see me again!"

_You're pathetic, you know that? You're begging for forgiveness like a dog looking for dinner scraps. And like a dog, you won't receive any._
His boss' face somehow grew even graver. "Let someone who should be going to jail just leave without a trace? Not a chance."

**You don't need permission. Just run when you can!**

"I-I didn't mean to!" Porfirio exclaimed.

_You liked it. You enjoyed every moment of it. You're not fooling anyone._

Thomas watched him closely, analyzing his every move and every shaky breath he took. "Really, now? Explain that to Mr. Howard. He told me you tried to kill him," he accused.

"I-" Porfirio cut himself off, pulling a hand through his hair in a stressed manner. "It's not like that..."

_Aw, you know it was exactly ‘like that’. It's cute that you're trying to play nice for the big man, especially after what you did to his family._

"N-No I'm not!" he yelled back. "It wasn’t like that!"

Thomas raised his eyebrow quizzically. "You're not what?"

Porfirio wanted to shrink away into nothingness. They began to laugh at him again; at his suffering. He sounded distressed as he forced himself to utter "Nothing" in response to the question.

_Lying, just as you always do. See? We know what's best for you._

Mr. Fazbear’s expression softened slightly. “Maxwell, is there something bothering you that you’d like to tell me about?”

“Don’t call me that!” he screamed. After realizing what he had said, he covered his mouth and ran to the door, frantically twisting the handle, futilely. He’d let his guard down, and now the truth would get out. He was done for.

“What do you mean?” Thomas frowned. “Is that not your name…?”

He kept his face turned to the door, relaxing his grip on the knob and sighing in defeat. “N-No, actually… It isn’t,” he admitted.

Mr. Fazbear paused for a moment, clearly not expecting that answer. “Well… What is your name?”

“Porfirio…” he uttered half-heartedly.

Thomas’ eyes lit up in surprise. “Porfirio Violet... My my, how you’ve changed. It's been awhile, hasn’t it?”

He nodded a little, still not returning to his seat. He didn’t want to face him again, fearing he knew what had happened; what he had done. Porfirio hoped he'd be lucky, but he doubted it.

**What’s wrong with you? Why did you tell him that? Now you’re in trouble for sure!**

“IT has,” he agreed.

“Have a seat. It’d be wonderful to catch up with you,” he suggested. There was an edge of caution in his voice as he watched Porfirio, keeping the recent incident in mind.

After several moments of silent debate, he sat back down in the seat, trying to tell them that he was
doing his best, despite their protests. He waited for Thomas to direct the conversation.

“So, what have you been up to since you quit?” he inquired.

“Well,” Porfirio began, uncomfortably. “My mother got sick, so I moved away to take care of her, up to her death.”

As if she would have wanted scum like you around her in her final moments.

**Hey, anything helps. He’s buying it, see?**

At least there’s that.

Mr. Fazbear frowned. “I’m so sorry to hear that…”

He shrugged a little, not meeting his boss’ gaze.

“So, you’re back now, I take it?”

“I am.”

“I see…” he said. “But, what’s with this name change? We would have gladly welcomed you back, Mr. Violet.” Thomas smiled a little. “You were a fine employee, taking on work wherever you were needed most. I don’t see why you would want to keep that a secret.”

“I guess I just… needed a fresh start.”

He nodded in understanding. “Would you prefer for me to call you Maxwell?”

“Uh…”

You’ve failed already, so it doesn’t really matter. Too many people know.

He shrugged again.

“It’s a pleasure to have you back. Now, would you mind explaining to me what happened with Mr. Howard?”

Porfirio tensed up, curling in on himself a little. “I didn’t mean to hurt him, sir…”

Any trace of the smile on Thomas’ face had left. “I don’t believe that, Mr. Violet. It was clearly deliberate. But, I’m willing to keep quiet about this as I’ve done with previous…” he hesitated. “accidents, but I need you to tell me why. I can’t cover this up if I don’t know what happened.”

“We got into a fight. It got out of hand.”

Keep telling yourself that. You and I both know what actually happened. You made a mistake, Porfirio. Anthony doesn’t deserve to live. We’re the only friends you’ll ever have.

He cringed a little as he heard the snide remark. All he could do was hope his excuse was believable.

“A fight… I see.” Mr. Fazbear reclined in his chair. “Tell you what, to preserve the name of the company, we’ll put this behind us. I won’t be so forgiving if you muck about like this again, and I’ll have no choice but to take this to the authorities. I know you have an outstanding work ethic, and you’ll put it to good use to make up for this. Understood?”
“Yes, sir…”

Thomas grinned, stood, and offered his hand to Porfirio. “Welcome back.”

He shook hands with him and left the room when the door was unlocked for him. After he heard what was expected of him, he knew escape was no longer an option. He’d just have to be careful… Crafty and cautious. If he played his cards right, he’d be safe. Or so he hoped.

**Well, he’s too dense to have figured it out, so keep the squawking know-it-all quiet, and you have a chance.**

**Oh, it’d be so much easier if you could just leave!**

“You know I can’t,” he grumbled under his breath. “Besides, I’m not leaving Haruka.”

*You know you need to break it off, but we’ll deal with that later. For now, appease the boss and keep the little kiss-up quiet. We’ll keep you safe, but you’ve got to listen.*

“I will.”

*Good.*

Freddy watched from his spot on the stage as the office door opened and the men inside made their way out. He continued to sing his song, as he was supposed to, but was merely going through the motions today. His mind was elsewhere. His focus was on his father; the one he knew he’d never get to speak to again. What was he up to? Sometimes, he'd hear him humming 'Carmen Overture', quietly to himself. He even had that little red ‘#1 Dad’ keychain Freddy had made for him for Father's Day almost a decade ago still hanging off of his work keys. Hearing the song and seeing that little ornament broke his heart, knowing how much he was missed; left to helplessly watch him and unable to ease his pain.

Thomas had lost everything important to him. The only family he truly had left was his brother, and he only showed up occasionally. Otherwise, he was alone, filling his time with the business.

**What if he lost that as well?** Freddy thought to himself. Would he be able to continue on? He didn't know, but he certainly wouldn't want to find out. But no matter what, he would do his very best to make sure he put on the best show possible. If the kids were entertained, surely they'd keep coming back. And if they kept coming back, they’d keep making money, and the business would thrive. At least, that’s what he hoped.

As his mind wandered, he remembered that Christmas was approaching quickly. As a young child, his eyes would light up at the mention of gifts and eating such a lovely meal. Seeing the snow falling and the festive lights only made him depressed, now that he was trapped and forgotten at the restaurant. The holiday cheer only served to remind him of all that he has lost. Those joyful mornings of gathering around the decorated tree with his father, uncle, and brother were long gone, especially the ones with both of his parents.

At least his mother was free, with God rather than being trapped. He knew he should have felt lucky to have gotten another chance at life, yet doubts always lurked in the back of his mind. For a brief moment, the thought of having a Christmas with his family once more, like before, crossed his mind. He hastily scolded himself for hoping for such a thing. Freddy knew it was unrealistic, and that letting himself hold onto that hope would only serve to hurt him.

At least he had Gilead again. He also had his other friends to 'celebrate' with him. Maybe someone
would be kind enough to visit them on Christmas night. Again, another unattainable wish. Freddy reasoned that staring at the empty pizza boxes sounded like a nice way to spend the holidays. They could actually make a pizza to put in the box, but there'd be no one to eat it, so that would be a pointless activity.

Freddy didn't want to think about Christmas anymore. Not when he realized his father would only have Uncle Everett for company. Between his own situation and his father's, he concluded that Christmas had officially become his least favourite holiday, despite having once been his most anticipated time of the year.

Shaking the thought from his mind, he tried to focus on just who that man leaving the office was. That Maxwell guy, hired a few weeks ago... Freddy watched him as he patrolled the restaurant, and every time, he felt a strange sense of déjà vu wash over him. He wasn't sure why, but he couldn't help but feel like he had seen him somewhere before. The more he thought about it, the more it sent a chill down his spine, yet he couldn't place why. Where had he seen him? Maybe he hadn't. In all likelihood, he probably just had one of those familiar faces, and Freddy was simply putting too much thought into it.

Then again, he saw his father drag him into the office, clearly not by the man's will. What had that been all about? He realized that being the Freddy Fazbear of Freddy Fazbear's Pizza did not entitle him to know every secret the company had. He desperately wanted to know what had transpired in that office moments ago, and knew it'd be difficult for him to find out, with limited contact with the human staff. But he was determined to find out, one way or another. At least he now had Mike, Fritz, and Anthony to talk to, and figured he could try to enlist their help. But, the bigger question was: if they knew anything, would they tell him?
Freddy Fazbear's Pizza - Friday, December 17th, 1993

Fritz showed up at work late that evening, having slept in by accident, most likely from his intense training regime from the day before. When he arrived, he heard Mike call out “Friiitz~!” before hugging him tightly.

He chuckled and returned the embrace. “Good mornin’, Mike. Ya missed me that much?”

“Yeah! I was worried you weren’t coming!” he exclaimed with a hint of concern. “It’s not like you to be late!”

Fritz smiled softly at him. “Nah, I just slept for too long. But, I’m here now.”

“I’m glad! It wouldn’t be the same without you.” Mike let go of him and took a step back to get out of his personal space.

A moment after, Fritz noticed him shiver a little and frowned. “Are ya cold?”

“Oh, n-not too cold!” he replied, his body visibly disagreeing with the statement. “I just forgot my coat at home, t-that’s all.”

He grinned and slipped off his company issued ‘Security’ jacket, draping it over Mike’s shoulders. He met his eyes with a warm gaze. “Does that help?”

“Oh, um, i-it does… Thank you.” He put his arms through the sleeves and pulled the bulky body of the garment around himself, clearly much comfier. He nestled into the fabric and was delighted with the cozy material snuggled against his body. Between his pure glee and the way the oversized jacket sat on him, there was no way he could be described as anything but adorable. The way the sleeves hung too long off of his slight arms, the way he had the collar pulled up around his neck… It was too cute. Of course, Fritz wouldn’t have admitted to thinking this.

“You’re very welcome.” He dragged his attention away from him, realizing he was staring. “So, what’ve ya been up to?”

Right as Mike was about to answer, Bonnie approached the two of them. “Hey, uh, guys? Could ya come to Pirate Cove? Foxy wants to talk to you.”

Fritz frowned, facing Bonnie. “Oh… Well, alright. How’s he doin’?”

“He’s fine. He just wants to talk to you. He wouldn’t say what about, though.”

He waved his hand a little dismissively. “‘Nah, don’t worry about it. I’m comin’.” His smile returned as he faced Mike. “Wanna join me?”

“Uh…” He thought about going near the animatronics, eventually concluding that he would be fine if he stayed near Fritz. “Sure!”

The three of them made their way to Pirate Cove. Along the way, Bonnie glanced at Mike, seeing that the jacket he was wearing was clearly too big for him, and noticing Fritz’s name badge attached to the front of it.
“What’s with the coat?” he teased. “You know the snow’s outside, right?”

“Oh, Fritz lent it to me!” Mike enthused. “I was cold, so he let me wear it!” He kept the collar of the jacket pulled up close to his face and smiled to himself in joy.

Bonnie looked at Fritz, who looked away quickly, appearing to be a little embarrassed.

“Fritz, are you okay?” Mike asked.

“Hm? Oh, I’m fine.” He gave him a lopsided grin.

They continued on in silence, making their way to the stage where the other animatronics were waiting. James sat facing them, dangling his feet off the edge and swinging them back and forth. Freddy and Chica stayed closer to Foxy and Gilead, chatting with them. Unlike the last time they had seen him, Foxy appeared to be more like himself, moving and speaking normally.

Fritz hopped up and waltzed over to the main group, while Mike kept his distance a little, especially after seeing how unpredictable Foxy had been as of late. Of course, he didn’t believe he was in any real danger, but he was still wary.

James looked over to him and smiled. “Great to see you again, Mike. Care to join me?”

“Uh, sure.” He made his way over and sat with him, a little uneasy. He had to remind himself that James was nice, despite his creepy appearance. If he was honest with himself, he thought James was the scariest-looking animatronic of all of them.

Foxy was pretty freaky as well, with exposed endoskeleton on his legs and torso, and those wickedly sharp teeth that appeared to be more than capable of causing some serious damage. Gilead wasn’t far behind them with the lack of an endoskeleton... and soulless pits for eyes. Gilead's suit reminded Mike of the phone call he heard on his first night; the one Anthony claimed he’d be stuffed in if he wasn’t careful. Luckily, he didn’t need to actually worry about that. Freddy, Chica, and Bonnie didn’t look too scary, compared to the other three, at least.

James lightly brushed his hand against the 'Out Of Order' sign on the stage, as if thoughtfully pondering the significance of the message it bared to the public. "How have you been?"

"Oh, uh, I've been fine," he replied. "How about you?"

He shrugged. "You'd think a lot would have changed since the big reveal, but not really. As usual, not much changes here at Freddy's."

"Aw, but I think it has!" Mike whined. "It changed everything! Like, it means I shouldn't be as scared of you guys!"

A slightly troubled look passed across James' face. "But you're still afraid of me, aren't you?"

"Well, I..." he laughed nervously. "I-It's not that I'm afraid per se..."

He sighed in disappointment. "Well, you're not shrieking in terror anymore, I suppose..."

Mike's pleasant demeanor had faded. He knew full well that James was upset. But, he was telling the truth. It wasn’t James' fault that he was so... scary. He was really kind, however, so it only made Mike feel worse about not being comfortable around him.

"B-But I do like you, James!" Mike insisted with sincerity. "I-I'm trying, really..." He held the coat
tightly around his thin body, glancing down at the badge pinned to it, letting his mind wander as he considered why it was wrapped around him in the first place. Clearly, Fritz had only offered it to him to be polite, and nothing more. He couldn't fathom what exactly he saw in someone as weak as himself. Compared to him, Mike felt useless. He couldn't even talk to James without messing that up. Fritz was so much better at his job than he was; fearless, strong, athletic, and good with the animatronics. Mike was none of these things, and was more than aware of that fact. If anything, he was just another thing Fritz had to babysit each night. He felt unworthy of wearing a nightguard uniform; he was an imposter at best. He felt worse as he considered that Fritz would have been able to talk to James with ease, a basic thing he was incapable of doing.

Shaking himself from his thoughts, he added "I'm sorry… I'm pathetic."

"Don't say that about yourself," James argued. "You're a wonderful person. Sure, you get spooked easily, but that doesn't make you pathetic."

"I guess," he mumbled back. He wanted to believe him, but he couldn't imagine how he could possibly be right. Mike believed that his cowardliness only served to make him a mere joke of a nightguard.

Meanwhile, Fritz went over to Foxy, as he had come to do. “Hey, Foxy, how are ya?”

Foxy smiled a little at him. “Hi. I'm doing okay.”

“Well, I've got time,” Fritz replied conservationally, taking a spot leaning against the wall and propping himself up with his forearm. "So, start talkin', kid."

Foxy's tail swished back and forth and his ears flattened.

"Foxy?"

"Give me a moment..." he muttered.

A long, awkward silence filled the air, only interrupted by Mike coughing from across the stage. The tension was thick in the air as Fritz and the other animatronics waited with bated breath for Foxy to explain himself.

Foxy's voice sounded strained, but he managed to speak with some clarity, unlike other times. "I've been having a bit of a p-p-problem..."

"What kind of problem?" Chica asked sweetly. Bonnie lightly wrapped his arm around her waist. She rested her head against him but still made sure to listen to Foxy attentively.

"It's alright, Foxy," Bonnie added. "We'll listen."

His voice continued to sound more strained, and static had made its way into the mix. "My progra-a-amng is b-broken."
Fritz raised his eyebrow in confusion. "What do ya mean by that?"

Freddy frowned, nodding for him to continue.

"F-F-Foxy and I, we d-d-don't mix!"

"Wait..." Freddy mumbled, thinking for a bit. His eyes widened in surprise as he pieced together what Foxy was trying to communicate to them. "Oh my gosh, your soul didn't override the programming...?"

Foxy sputtered and nodded, looking between all of his friends with a troubled expression. The lights in his eyes flickered a little, as if threatening to shut off on him.

His face softened as he took in the information. "Reynard... Why didn't you say anything to us?"

"I c-c-c-couldn't..." he skipped.

"So... Foxy the Pirate and Reynard aren't the same?" Bonnie interjected.

Again, he nodded.

"Aw, kid, I'm so sorry... If I'd known, I wouldn't've called ya Foxy all this time," Fritz added.

"None of us would have," Gilead said from his place on the floor.

By this point, he kept quiet, clearly struggling to speak.

"And you've been fighting the A.I. all this time, haven't you?" Freddy questioned. He did not get an answer, but he didn't actually need one. It was evident by his friend's behaviour that the pirate accent was caused by the A.I., not him. It all made sense now. Poor Reynard had been having all those issues because of a glitch between the software and his human personality. That explained the hard shutdowns he frequently underwent. He was toggling between the two, fighting for control.

"Is there any way we can help you?" Chica inquired.

"N-N-N-No there isn-n-n-n't, Chi-i-i-ica."

"When Anthony comes back to work, we'll have him look at ya, alright?" Fritz piped up. "We can't let ya stay like that."

Freddy smiled slightly. "We'll get both you and Gilead back to performing, Reynard. I promise. We'll get rid of that old sign on the stage."

Reynard nodded a little and attempted to smile at them. He didn't believe they could fix him, considering he was the problem, not Foxy. If his soul hadn't been in the suit, the animatronic would have run with ease, and Foxy probably would have still been performing. Yet, this was not the case. He let himself hope that they could at least ease the pains that the errors caused him. It made him happy to see that his friends all loved and cared about him, and genuinely wanted to help him.

If Gilead got the chance to perform again, that would be enough for him. Maybe they’d be able to renovate Pirate Cove; turn it into a new attraction featuring Gilead. That way, he’d be in the spotlight, as he deserved to be. Yet, if Pirate Cove was closed for good, what would that mean for him? If they couldn’t fix him, both Reynard and Foxy were as good as useless. And everyone knew what happened to useless things at the restaurant: they were scrapped. Or abandoned in the backroom for whatever reason, which was hardly a nicer alternative.
Thomas couldn’t afford to mend his costume, let alone repair him properly to reopen the attraction to customers. So far, he was just lucky they hadn’t tried to throw him out yet. At least now, the security staff wouldn’t let that happen. Then again, they wouldn’t be able to keep Pirate Cove closed forever. Sure, opening it up again would draw larger crowds and increase sales as a result, but he was too broken to run the show. And so the vicious cycle continued. No funds, no attraction. There had to be a solution somewhere; something that would save him and Gilead, and avoid bankrupting the business. Reynard just hoped their efforts to save them wouldn’t be in vain.
It was a typical Monday; Mike was exhausted. As usual, he had stayed up too late on Sunday night, watching a movie and eating ice cream. He knew it was irresponsible of him to have done so, but he just wasn’t tired enough to sleep. He also reasoned that if he wore himself out before going to bed, he wouldn’t have time to wonder if monsters truly lurked under beds and inside of closets. Or maybe waiting in the hall just in case he needed to take a leak in the middle of the night.

Even if vile creatures truly weren’t out for his blood, the thought that they could be kept him up at night. So, Mike resorted to binge watching things on t.v. and eating junk food until he was too sleepy to keep his eyes open any longer.

Mike debated getting a coffee, but was repulsed by the thought of how disgusting the bitter flavour would be, even if it was masked by an obscene amount of milk and sugar. In the end, he opted against it.

However, arriving at work seemed to remedy his fatigue on its own. Something seemed unusual about the atmosphere of the restaurant, as if something was going on. He couldn’t place exactly why he felt this way, but there was definitely an upbeat energy to the room.

“Hey, Mike! How are you?” Chica cheered with a grin.

He jumped a little in surprise but quickly smiled as he realized who it was. “Oh, hey Chica… Uh, I-I’m okay, how are you?”

“I’m great!” she enthused. “Ready for work?”

“I guess so, if you can still call this work,” Mike replied.

Chica laughed heartily. “I’m sure coming to work must feel like a paid social outing as of now.”

He nodded a little. “A paid social time in a really creepy kiddie restaurant from midnight to six, you mean.”

“Aw, it’s not that bad, right? You have all of us!”

Mike smiled slightly. “That’s true.”

“Do you still enjoy working here?” she asked sincerely.

“Uh… Yeah, I do,” he said.

Chica beamed, obviously pleased by the news. “Oh, that’s fantastic! I’m so happy you like it here, Mike!”

He laughed a little. “Calm down, I wouldn’t want you to, uh… Burn out a circuit…?” he added with uncertainty.

“I won’t, I won’t,” she assured.

He chuckled a little more. “Yeah…”
“Oh, right! I almost forgot! I was supposed to give you this!” Chica casually mentioned, passing Mike an envelope. “I was told you were to follow the directions inside,” she explained.

He took the envelope from her and examined it, looking rather confused. Inside was a piece of paper with a crude map of the building scribbled on it in a blue pen. There was a path drawn from the front entrance to Show Stage, which was right beside him at the moment. On it, it said ‘Follow the clues.’ Mike stared at it in confusion, having absolutely no idea what any of it meant.

“What… is this?” he asked.

“That’s a secret,” she giggled. “Go on, Mike! Do what it says!” she exclaimed excitedly.

“Um… o-okay then,” he replied, carrying the note as he wandered to his destination. When he got there, Freddy was waiting with an equally contented expression as Chica’s.

“Hello, Mike,” he greeted. “I see you got the map there. Are you ready for your first clue?”


“You'll see,” he replied happily.

"Oh, um, alright..." Freddy passed him an envelope, exactly like the one Chica had handed him before. He opened this one as well, and found two packets of hot chocolate, along with another piece of paper. The note said 'You're doing great, Mike. Keep up the good work! Your next hint is waiting for you in Pirate Cove, matey.'

Mike looks back and forth between the strange clue and the hot chocolate, even more baffled. He had no idea what the hot chocolate had to do with the hint, or even why there were these hints to begin with. From what he could gather, the animatronics seemed to be in on whatever was going on.

"Uh... Pirate Cove is next?"

Freddy smiled and nodded. "Keep going! You'll really like it, I'm sure."

"Like what?"

He grinned and mimed pulling a zipper across his lips. Mike took this as his cue to go hunt down the next clue in Pirate Cove. He juggled the hot chocolate and letters in his hand as he slipped inside the room, still trying to determine what was going on. He figured it was some sort of scavenger hunt, but why? Who was leaving the hints?

When he came to Pirate Cove, Reynard and Gilead were on stage, clearly waiting for him there. Much like the others, Reynard had a similarly pleasant expression to the other animatronics. Due to his lack of an endoskeleton, Gilead was unable to do anything but stare blankly in front of him, but Mike had a suspicion that he would have been smiling as well had he been able to.

“There he is, right on time!” Gilead cheered. “This clue is a bit vague, but I’m sure you’ll find your way just fine.”

Mike stepped up onto the stage and Reynard handed him the next envelope, one larger than the others. He tore it open and found a blue knit toque and matching mittens enclosed with another note. He slipped the hat onto his head and tucked the mits into his pocket. It was a lovely hat, clearly well made and high quality. It would certainly keep his head warm and protect his ears from the harsh winter wind. Mike reached into the bottom of the envelope and found the next note. This one read: ‘Hopefully you'll be warmer now. Have you figured out what the surprise is yet?’
“I haven’t, mysterious note-writing person!” Mike whined to himself.

“It’ll all make s-s-s-sense soon, Mike,” Reynard assured with a skip in his voice. “That toque suits you well, b-b-b-by the way.”

“Oh, uh, thanks.”

“The person behind a-a-a-all of this picked that out special for you. Th-th-they’ll just love to see you wearing it, seeing it looks so-o-o-o nice on you,” he praised.

He wasn’t sure what he thought of that statement, considering he still didn’t know who was leaving these clues and gifts for him. Mike went back to reading the note. ‘The next clue is in Chica’s favourite room in the restaurant, where all those cheesy pizzas come from.’

“Oh, it’s in the kitchen!” Mike shouted excitedly.

“Get going, then!” Gilead encouraged.

“I will!” He departed from Pirate Cove with the envelopes, toque and mittens, and hot chocolate in tow. Mike rushed to the kitchen to see what was waiting for him there. He hoped it was a pizza!

When he swung the doors open, he found Bonnie leaning against one of the counters with a pizza box at his side. His suspicions had to be right!

“T ook ya long enough,” Bonnie teased playfully, sliding him the box.

He greedily pulled the box open, only to find a grey wool blanket neatly folded inside. He frowned as he lifted it out of the box. At least it looked warm. On the inside of the lid, another clue was taped to it that read: ‘You thought that would be a pizza, didn’t you? Don’t worry, I’ll make sure you get some later, I promise. Your next hint is waiting for you in the room between Pirate Cove and Show Stage. Happy searching!’

“Aw, this one isn’t as clear!” he complained.

Bonnie snickered to himself. “Go over there and take a look. You’ll find it eventually, Mike.”

He nodded and departed in search for his next location. He stood in the Dining Area for several minutes before it dawned on him that the clue was directing him to Backstage. He wasn’t too keen on the choice of location, but headed inside anyway. Mike found James waiting for him there, holding a black shoebox in his hands. At least, that’s what it looked like to him.

James smiled at him as he came in. “I hope that clue wasn’t too tricky,” he commented, passing him the box, topped with a white ribbon. “Oh, I just love giving people gifts, even if they aren’t from me! Open it, open it!”

His eyes widened in surprise at the size and shockingly heavy weight of the parcel. He carefully removed the ribbon and slid the lid off, revealing a black and white pair of shiny new ice skates.

“Skates…? Why are these here? Are they even my size?” He checked and saw that they were, in fact, his size. Whoever was behind all of this must have guessed well. “Well, they are… I just don’t get it. Hot chocolate, a toque and mittens, a wool blanket, and a pair of skates, of all things. What’s with all of this?”

“Read the hint,” James suggested.

As with the others, this present had a note attached to it as well. ‘Aren’t you tired of carrying all of
“Well, it *is* getting pretty heavy,” Mike reasoned.

He couldn’t hide his excited smile. “What are you waiting for? Drop off your stuff!”

“I will, I will,” he replied. “Why are you so excited to see me go to my office, anyway?”

“You’ll see~!” James sang.

He was skeptical, but made his way to his cluttered office as the clue has told him to. Mike set his now toppling pile down beside his chair and plopped down in his seat, now even more worn out than when he had arrived. However, when he sat down, he spied a familiar green box propped up against the base of the fan: a box of Mike and Ikes. He grinned and picked the box up. Someone must’ve forgotten it there, but it was his now. As he tore the cardboard flap off and popped a candy in his mouth, enjoying the sweet flavour on his tongue, he saw Fritz step into the doorway of the office.

He chuckled softly. “The touque looks nice on ya.”

“Fritz…?” Mike stared at him in bewilderment. “What are you doing here?”

He shrugged, a smile creeping across his face as he sat on the edge of the desk, facing Mike. “Well? What do ya think of the surprise?”

“Uh…” He popped another candy into his mouth. He wasn’t sure exactly what to say, considering the strange assortment of gifts he had found, along with their notes.

Fritz reached over and plucked one of the candies from the box.

“Hey, those are mine!” he protested.

“Aw, c’mon. I think I deserve at least one after all the trouble I went to settin’ this up for ya,” Fritz replied.

Mike’s eyes widened in shock. “W-Wait, you did this?”

“I sure did,” he said warmly.

“But… why?”

He gazed into his eyes fondly. “Because I wanted ya to know just how special ya are to me. I wanted to do somethin’ nice to show ya that.”

“I-I, um… Wow…” Mike mumbled, not entirely sure what he meant by that, let alone how to respond.

Fritz seemed to have picked up on this. “I really like ya, Mike. A lot… So, I was hopin’ you’d go out with me sometime. I was thinkin’ we’d go skatin’ and have some hot chocolate after. Whad’ya think?”

“I-Like hang out?”

“I was thinkin’ more like a date, but if ya just want to go as friends… that’s fine, too,” Fritz explained. He wasn't able to hide the slight disappointment in his voice as he said 'as friends'.
Mike just stared for several moments, flabbergasted. “Y-You want to date m-me?” He gestured to himself, jabbing himself in the chest. He felt his cheeks burn as they turned a deep shade of red.

“Yeah, I-I do…” Fritz cleared his throat uncomfortably. He quickly looked away from him as he also began to faintly blush.

He ate another candy before setting the box back down on the desk, near where he had originally found it. Mike stood and hugged Fritz tightly, resting his head on his shoulder.

"I-I'd love to, Fritz…"

He was rather surprised at the answer, considering how Mike had initially reacted, but he was overjoyed anyway. He almost couldn't believe that he'd said yes to him. Beaming, he wrapped his arms around him in a loving embrace.

"Let me know when you'd like to go, and we'll go," he said fondly.

"Maybe after Christmas?" Mike suggested. "Mr. Fazbear said the Christmas party will be on Christmas Eve, so..."

"That sounds nice to me. We could, uh, go to it together, if you'd like. We'll still go skatin', of course."

Mike's eyes widened a little. "And tell e-everyone?"

"Why not? What's the harm in it?"

"I, um..." he hesitated. "I don't know..."

Fritz gently brushed Mike's hair out of his eyes for him and spoke gently. "If ya don't want to tell 'em yet, I won't be upset."

"I-I'd rather not. I'm sorry-"

"Mikey, it's okay. We don't need to rush it," he assured. "We'll go together, but not as a couple. How does that sound?"

He nodded, meeting Fritz's eyes.

"Aw, don't look so sad... Smile, please?"

Mike did just that, focusing on how excited he was to be dating Fritz, rather than the nerve-wracking explanations he'd owe to his friends and colleagues later. He reasoned that he'd be more comfortable to show off his new relationship with time, when he felt ready to. He just wished he wasn't such a 'nervous Nellie'. The one he truly needed to be afraid of, however, was his mother.

She would stop by to visit Mike as often as three times a week, always doting on him and treating him as if he were still a child and living at home with her. Yet, he never seemed to fight her on it, considering she would always cook and clean for him when she came. Free help was always welcomed. Of course, telling her he was seeing someone would hardly be an easy task. To her, he may as well have still been a child that needed to be protected from the big bad world, and telling her he was in a relationship would only cause her to panic. Mike decided that he simply wouldn't tell her; she didn't need to know about Fritz, especially as anything other than a coworker.

Most, if not all, of his tiredness has faded. When he had come to work, he never expected to find this
waiting for him. Then again, he couldn't have been happier to have found it; how sweet Fritz was and how much he cared for him. It made sense to him now why Fritz had been so nice to him earlier and why he was so attentive to his every need. He still had no clue why he was interested in him, but Mike certainly wasn't complaining.

“Why did you pick Mike and Ikes, of all things?” he asked after a few moments.

“Because they had your name on ‘em, and they’re sweet, just like ya.”

Mike snorted and rolled his eyes. “Wow, that’s so cheesy,” he teased light-heartedly.

He chuckled and gave him a gentle squeeze. “Aw, c’mon. I know ya liked it.”

“I did,” he admitted with a smile.

The only thing that was missing now was that pizza Fritz had mentioned in his note he left in the kitchen. Normally, he’d want to eat it all by himself, but now, Mike really wanted to share it with Fritz.
Fritz straightened his tie as he waited for Mike to answer the door. Although he knew this evening wasn't a date, it still felt like one to him. It'd been a long time since he had been on one... As much as he wished to go to the party that evening with Mike, as a couple, he was prepared to honour his request to keep things quiet for the time being. After all, they still had a formal date scheduled for later.

The door to the apartment opened a crack as he peeked out at Fritz. His face lit up in delight as he saw him waiting in the hall. Pulling the door open widely, Mike looked at him from head to toe.

"You look amazing!" he exclaimed.

Fritz chuckled and held his arms out. "Ya like it?" He was wearing a charcoal dress shirt that complimented the grey colour of his eyes nicely, paired with black dress pants and a red tie.

"Yes!" Mike's eyes danced as he couldn't hide his excitement. Not that he had any need to.

He grinned, eyeing Mike's outfit selection. He was wearing navy-blue dress slacks with a matching vest, over a white dress shirt done up with a blue bow-tie around his neck. "Ya look great too, Mike," he complimented.

"Really? Thanks!"

"Hey, I wouldn't say it if it weren't true." Fritz glanced down at his silver watch fastened to his wrist, a brief flash of worry crossing over him. "Ya got your dish, right?"

"I do," Mike replied. "It's in the kitchen."

"Well, go grab it. We've gotta get goin' or we'll be late."

His eyes widened a little as the realization of the time washed over him. "Oh crap!" he shrieked as he raced to the kitchen, returning moments later with an oven dish covered in tinfoil to keep the contents inside warm. "Okay, okay, I'm ready! Let's go!"

Fritz smiled and took Mike's hand, speedily taking him down the six flights of stairs leading to the parking lot at ground level. By the time they had reached the bottom, Mike's breathing had become somewhat laboured, while Fritz's had remained unchanged.

"Why did we... have to take the stairs?" Mike complained. "A-And how are you... not out of breath?"

He shrugged. "It's better for ya." He poked his shoulder playfully. "Looks like ya need to run a bit more often."

Mike laughed airily. "I n-never run. Not unless I'm... being chased."

Fritz's tone of voice dramatically changed from a light-hearted banter to a serious one without warning. "Ya should. Everyone should value physical activity. It does wonders for the body."

"O-Okay... I'll, uh... work on it?" he replied uneasily. He was clueless as to what had caused him to
change his attitude so quickly. Had he upset him? Mike hoped he not.

He grinned at him, returning to his previous demeanor. "Good. I'd be happy to help ya get started," he said as he unlocked the car. Fritz sat in the driver's seat; Mike joined him in the passenger's side, holding the warm dish on his lap. Fritz started the car and began the drive to Anthony's house for the dinner party. He was always the most charismatic and outgoing of all of them, so he was a natural fit for hosting the celebration. Even though he'd only left the hospital last night, he still insisted he was well enough to throw a party. Only Anthony would ever have been allowed to do something like that. After he'd been admitted to the hospital, Mr. Fazbear planned on cancelling the entire evening, but Anthony had made it more than clear that he intended to throw the party anyway. They all knew the only reason he had been allowed to continue with it was because his wife would be helping him.

Not long after they had left the parking lot of his building, and after his breathing had calmed down, Mike decided to start some casual conversation. If he was lucky enough, it'd be enough to erase any tension he had felt between them earlier, no matter how brief it may have been. "So, what did you make?"

"Hm? Oh, I made some green beans with slivered almonds," he stated proudly.

"That sounds nice... for vegetables."

"Ya don't eat a whole lotta green things, do ya, Mikey?"

"Uh, well..." He shifted a little and let out a nervous laugh. "Not really," he squeaked.

"Why don't ya have some tonight?" Fritz suggested.

"But vegetables are gross!" Mike whined. His reaction was as mature as that of a toddler being told they had to eat everything on their plate. What a ludicrous request that would've been!

He couldn't help but roll his eyes a little. "Aw, come on, they're not that bad. I didn't overcook them, and the almonds go nicely with it. I'm sure you'll be surprised to find that ya might even like them."

"But they're vegetables," he groaned with distaste.

"Why don't ya just try a little?" Fritz offered kindly.

"Well... I guess I could try," he responded receptively.

"There ya go," he applauded. "And what about your dish? What have ya got for us? It smells really good."

"I made scalloped potatoes with bacon bits! Oh, and with lots of cheese!"

Fritz smiled warmly at him. "I'm sure it tastes great."

He pulled into the driveway of the Howards' house, meeting Mike's eyes one last time. As if reading each other's minds, they turned to face one another. Gazing into each other's eyes, the two of them leaned in so they were only inches apart. Fritz tenderly caressed Mike's cheek and smiled at him, and he smiled back, leaning into his touch. After a few seconds, Fritz worked up the courage to kiss him. Mike melted, wrapping his arms around him as he fully embraced the moment.

When he had drawn back, he could see a blush on Mike's cheeks along with a content smile. It had somehow made him look even cuter than he had before.
"W-Wow..." Mike stuttered nervously. Butterflies fluttered around in his stomach, but in a good way. He was almost in a daze, too wrapped up in the magic of the moment to be engaged in reality.

Fritz grinned back at him. "You're adorable." He let go and swung the car door open. "C'mon, we need to go inside." Mike snapped out of his dream-like state and nodded, following him into the cozy bungalow where the party was being held.

By the time they had arrived, it seemed as though everyone had already started without them. Each staff member was encouraged to bring their family members, so Jeremy had Adeline and Taryn with him. Naturally, Anthony had his wife with him, considering she lived there. For some reason, Maxwell was nowhere to be seen. As the other two families were chatting, Thomas was in the kitchen, preparing the turkey for them.

"Hello, hello! I'm glad you both could make it!" Anthony greeted as they came inside, hobbling over to them on his crutches. His right leg had several layers of bandaging wrapped snugly around it, visible under his dress slacks. The injury appeared to be very painful, yet it seemed to have no negative impact on his mood. He was still as chipper as ever.

"Oh, um, hey!" Mike answered, placing his dish with the others. "How are you?"

"I'm great!" he enthused. "Oh, right, you haven't met my wife yet!" Anthony beamed, clearly quite excited to be talking about the woman he loved. "It's about time you met her, seeing as you've already heard so much about her." He lead Mike over to a petite woman with sleek blonde hair, set into curls that cascaded down her back, and chestnut brown eyes. She and Anthony seemed to match in many ways. Both of them had worn classy black and white outfits to the party and had an oddly similar way of smiling. It was as if they had practiced it together numerous times until they had perfected the art of the 'impeccable charming smile'. Judging by how animated she appeared to be as she spoke, he could assume that they also both took great pleasure in socializing, laughing and joking almost non-stop.

"Dianne?"

She looked away from another woman, who appeared to be around five months pregnant. Mike concluded that it must have been Adeline she was talking to, since Jeremy had mentioned they were expecting earlier that month. It was the first time he had had the opportunity to meet her as well. Besides the lunch outing before, Mike hadn't had the opportunity to visit with his coworkers outside of work, and had not had the chance to meet their families as a result.

"Hey~!" she sang. "Welcome! You must be Mike!" Dianne offered her hand to him, which he shook.

"Hi!" Mike exclaimed, exuberantly.

Looking over his shoulder, she saw Fritz standing nearby. "There you are, Fritz! Long time no see! How've you been?"

"I've been doin' well, thanks," he said, coming over to Mike's side. He subtly glanced at Mike, who'd happened to notice and smile up at him.

"Fantastic! Make yourselves at home, alright? Bathroom's just down the hall over there," she explained, pointing to their right, "And if you need anything, don't hesitate to ask Anthony or I!" She snickered a little as she realized her error. "I guess you already knew that, and Mike could've just asked if he needed to know, but, what kind of a hostess wouldn't ensure she gave a proper greeting to her guests?"
"It's fine, thank you!" Mike giggled.

Dianne's amused expression faded a little as she glanced at Fritz. "What happened to you, tough guy?"

"Oh, you mean this?" He gestured to the healing gash on his cheek. "Just another fight," he explained nonchalantly. "It happens." He shrugged and went on to say, "It's no big deal, really."

"But you got hurt..." Mike pipped in softly.

He gave him a reassuring look. "Yeah, I did. But I'm fine." His signature crooked grin spread across his face. "Don't worry about me.

Mike nodded and returned his attention to Dianne. It was rather obvious that she had been watching them, but she refrained from commenting about it. He was mildly concerned that she had suspected that there was something between him and Fritz. Thankfully, she continued on as if the brief exchanged had not occurred...

"Oh, you have a dish? Here, I'll take that for you," Dianne offered to Fritz. He passed her his dish and thanked her. "Enjoy the party!" she added pleasantly, making her way to the kitchen.

"Do I have to?" a young voice complained from across the room. Mike looked over and saw a little girl, no older than ten, with short wavy brown hair and brilliant blue eyes sitting on the back of the couch, while Jeremy was standing beside her, trying to talk her down.

"Uh... T-Taryn, please..." Jeremy insisted.

"But I'm having fun!" Taryn shouted.

Jeremy cringed. "N-Not so loud..."

Adeline heard the ear-piercing remark and hastily made her way over. "Taryn, listen to your father and get down from there," she requested kindly. "You know better than to carry on like that."

"But he didn't actually tell me I had to!"

She became enraged at her child's response. "Taryn Marie Fitzgerald, you knew exactly what he wanted you to do," she nearly growled. "Don't give me that, young lady. Get down from there immediately."

Taryn's eyes widened in shock as she nodded and dismounted from the couch. "S-Sorry, Mom and Dad..."

Her tone softened. "I forgive you, just..." Adeline glanced at a rather nervous Jeremy briefly. "Sweetheart, you know better than that. You know he has some trouble articulating himself."

She nodded a little and looked down, ashamed of herself. Jeremy hugged her close to comfort her, without a trace of any resentment on his face. Taryn returned the hug and hid her face against his side.

Mike slowly approached the family after having witnessed the awkward situation. "Hey, uh, is everything alright?" he inquired.

Jeremy looked up at him with a small smile and a nod. He returned his gaze to Taryn, who had shifted her attention to Mike already.
"Yes, sir..." Taryn mumbled.

He frowned a little. "Why are you so sad?" asked Mike.

Adeline piped up for her. "We just had a little problem, but it's fine now."

"Oh, okay," he said. He smiled a little at the family. "I guess we haven't met before, have we?"
Adeline shook her head, and he offered his hand to her. "I'm Mike."

She shook his hand. "Nice to meet you," she replied with fondness.

"I think we have some time before dinner, so, do you want to play a game?" Mike beamed at Taryn.

"Yeah!" she exclaimed.

"Let's play hide and seek! Count to twenty!" he requested before rushing off to hide, barely waiting for an answer from her.

Taryn giggled and closed her eyes, starting to count steadily. Jeremy released the hug then went to his wife's side.

"It's nice to see her have fun," Jeremy said.

"I agree, she could always use a new playmate," she commented. "Well, it's nice to meet him. But is he always that... excitable?"

A smirk spread across Jeremy's lips. "Yeah..."

She couldn't help but snicker a little, seeing how much energy the young man had with so little stimulation. "Oh, love, you seem to find yourself with the strangest people, don't you?"

"Strange but... but nice," he added.

Adeline gazed into his eyes and smiled at him gently. "I'm glad you're making new friends. It's good for you."

He heard footsteps come close to him, and couldn't wipe the grin off of his face. Would he be found? Mike hid himself inside Anthony's blanket box, curled up inside and peeking out of the crack between the box and the lid that covered it. His legs were beginning to feel cramped from squatting in the crouched position for several minutes, and he was getting ready to give in due to his discomfort. That is, until he spotted a small hand with pink fingernails from his place, clearly belonging to Taryn. The wait would be worth it. She stopped outside the box and glanced around the room for a few moments.

"Mike?" she called out. "Where are you?"

He stifled a laugh as she began to walk a few paces away to check under the couch. The hushed sound drew her back to the box as she stared for a while before peeling the lid off, revealing Mike inside. He smiled up at her and playfully whined, "Aw, you found me!"

Taryn grinned excitedly, proud of her victory, and helped Mike out of the box. As he stood up beside her, they heard Mr. Fazbear call them to dinner.

"Race you there!" Mike challenged as he took off towards the dining room.
"Hey, no fair! You got a head start!" she laughed as she attempted to catch up.

The two of them slid into the dining room almost falling over as they tried to skid to a stop. Of course, with sock feet, it was difficult to do so. Mike was only a few inches from smacking into the wall when he managed to stop.

Fritz chuckled at them and shook his head. "There ya are. I was gettin' worried about ya." He patted the empty chair beside him. "Here, I saved ya a spot."

"Oh, thanks!" He bounced over and took his seat. The scent of a savoury turkey, stuffing, some carrots covered in a sweet sauce, and his cheesy scalloped potatoes filled his nose. It smelled delectable, and he couldn't wait to dig in. The one thing that he wasn't as pleased to see, however, was the bowl of green beans and slivered almonds waiting nearby. Fritz had obviously not forgotten about their conversation. There was also a bowl of salad lurking beside it, and judging by the look on his face, he intended to make Mike try both of them.

The guests passed the plates and began to serve themselves. Fritz passed him the bean dish without asking if he wanted any. He hesitantly took a single bean and a piece of almond. As he was about to send it along, he was interrupted.

"Aren't ya gonna take a little more?" Fritz asked.

He sighed quietly and took three more beans before quickly ridding himself of the dish.

"There ya go!" he celebrated, lightly placing his hand on Mike's shoulder.

Mike hesitantly stuffed all four of the beans pods into his mouth and forced himself to chew and swallow them. The overwhelming flavour of them and the unappealing texture made him gag. But because Fritz made it, he ensured he finished it. Why did vegetables have to be so gross?

"See? That wasn't so bad, was it?" Fritz commented.

"I guess not..." he lied. He really didn't have the heart to tell him that, no matter how well they may have been cooked, he would never like vegetables. Even if Fritz made them. That part may have helped motivate him to eat them, but it did nothing to mask the wretched taste. At least the carrots were sweet and coated in a maple syrup sauce.

After his brief torture, he heard Anthony ask him, "So, what's new with you, Mike?"

"Oh, nothing much, really," he replied calmly. Under the table, he felt Fritz take his hand in his. Mike's face flushed a light pink, worrying someone would notice. Yet, he had no idea how to communicate that to Fritz without making a fuss and drawing attention to them. He glanced up at him and hoped it would be enough.

Anthony watched the two of them in silence for a short while before uttering the very thing Mike had desperately hoped would not come up. "Wait...You two wouldn't happen to be together, would you?"

"N-No!" Mike blurted out much too quickly and without thinking, his cheeks rapidly started to match the cranberry sauce on the table. He shot his attention his plate to avoid looking at Anthony.

"Mike..." Fritz began, sounding almost crushed.

He took his hand back and fled from the table without warning, ducking into the bathroom and shutting the door behind him. He thought he heard someone call after him, but didn't bother to look
back to see who it was. Mike locked the door behind him and sank to the floor, hugging his knees to his chest and hiding his head. He felt awful for hurting Fritz; he hadn't meant to say that. Then again, he wasn't sure of what he should have said instead. He wasn't ready to reveal that information, but it was out now whether he was okay with it or not.

What gave it away? Was he too reckless? These were some of the thoughts that raced through his mind as he sulked. Fritz sounded miserable when he had denied their relationship... Would he forgive him? Mike had no idea.

Footsteps approached the door, along with a light knock.

"Uh, hello? Hello? Mike?" Anthony called through the door, only to be met with silence. "Mike, are you alright?"

"N-No..." Mike mumbled.

"What happened back there?" he asked with concern. "You seem upset all of the sudden." There was more silence. "I know you probably want to be alone right now, but I'd like to talk to you. Maybe I can help."

"I-I messed up," he began.

"Could you open up the door?"

Slowly, the door cracked open. Anthony was leaning against the wall, supporting himself with his crutches. Mike felt even worse now, knowing he shouldn't have been standing nearly as much as he had been. Between his duties as the host, and now dealing with Mike's moping, he had a lot of rushing around to do and a lot to manage.

"Hey, that's a lot better, isn't it?"

Mike sighed. "Kind of..." He looked miserable by now.

"So, do mind telling me what happened?"

"I m-made a mistake..." he explained.

"How so?"

He stared at the floor, noticing just how large the injury Anthony had was. He brushed his hand against the door frame slowly as he spoke. "I upset Fritz... I-I mean, I denied our..." He cut himself off. "I-I couldn't keep it a secret, and it's only been f-four days!"

Anthony had a sympathetic expression on his face as he listened. "You don't need to keep anything from us... Why would you think you needed to?"

"I-I don't know..." Mike replied. "I guess I was j-just scared of what would happen. S-So I panicked and just b-blurted it out."

"You don't have anything to worry about. We're your friends, and we're happy for you."

"W-What do you mean?"

"Well, why wouldn't we be? Both of you are our friends, and we want you to be happy. I think you two make a good couple, actually," he went on in an animated manner. Anthony had clearly pieced the situation together with ease.
"R-Really...?"

"Of course!"

"You're not s-surprised?" asked Mike.

"No, not at all," he remarked. "If you thought we'd react badly to the, uh, nature of your relationship... Well, I can assure you, you have nothing to worry about. He came out to us a few years ago."

His jaw dropped. Now this was the last thing he expected to hear. Things had certainly taken a different turn at this point. Maybe his fears would be irrational, and he'd only have his mother to be concerned about.

"W-Wait, he just said that? L-Like it was nothing?"

Anthony smiled and chuckled. "Uh... yeah, he did. Well, maybe not like it was 'nothing', but he did tell us." He shrugged. "I'm sure he was worried about some of the same things that you are right now, Mike, but you really don't need to hide anything from us, alright?" When Mike nodded, he added "Come on, let's get back to dinner."

A dark expression passed over Mike's features and he gripped the door frame tightly. "He seemed so u-upset... W-What am I supposed to say to him?"

"Exactly what you just told me. Fritz is a good guy; he'll understand."

Mike nodded again, letting his hand fall to his side. Anthony grinned and backed up a few steps to give him some space to get out. He shut off the light and followed the host back to the party, taking a deep breath and hoping for the best. As much as he didn't have any reason to believe Fritz wouldn't forgive him, he still felt anxious and fearful that he would not be met with fondness. He remembered that a true relationship was based off of love and co-operation, which helped to ease his troubles.

When they got back to the table, both of them took their seats without a word. Mike only dared to glance at Fritz after he had already sat down again. Just as he had suspected, he was miserable. He had his elbow propped up on the dinner table, his forehead in his hand, staring down at his plate and pushing his food around with his fork. It broke his heart to see him so down, especially knowing he was the cause of it. At least it meant he didn't have to eat the salad now... Then again, he would have shoved back the entire bowl if it would have brought a smile to Fritz's face.

As he sat down, he was only acknowledged with a quiet sigh; the only sound in the room other than the distant melody of the soft festive music playing in the background. The entire party had their eyes on them by this point, watching and waiting to see what would happen next. "I'm s-sorry..."

Fritz looked over at him, his eyes brimmed with tears, much to Mike's surprise. Their eyes remained locked on each other's for much too long of a period of time, neither of them wanting to speak first. Mike could feel the room watching them, which only served to increase his discomfort.

"Fritz..." Mike lightly placed his hand on his shoulder, feeling him flinch at the touch. "I-I'm so sorry... I d-didn't mean what I said..."

"Ya don't want to be with me," he uttered flatly. "I understand."

"N-No, I do!" Mike shouted hysterically. "F-Fritz, please... I just freaked out, a-and..."

Fritz went back to poking at his food to avoid looking at him. "And ya denied our relationship in
front of all of our friends," he finished for him with another sigh. "If ya didn't want to date me, ya should've just said so a few days ago. It would've hurt less," he mumbled.

He wrapped his arms around Fritz tightly as tears rolled down his cheeks. "B-But I do ," he choked. "I-I love you! A-And I'm so, so sorry… Please f-forgive me." The entire room was silent for a lengthy period of time before Mike added, "O-Oh gosh, I said that too soon, d-didn't I?"

A sad smile spread across his lips as he gently wiped away Mike's tears. It took him a few seconds before he decided to hug him back. "No, ya didn't… Not if ya mean it."

"I do… I love you, Fritz, a-and I'm s-sorry I panicked."

"I love ya too," he said softly, keeping his voice low as he spoke into Mike's ear. He kissed his cheek and returned to his meal. He followed his lead, noticing everyone do the same; they were all too distracted by the commotion to eat. Knowing they were all paying such close attention to him unnerved him, yet as Anthony had said, no one had given either of them trouble.

"I, um…" Jeremy murmured quietly. Mike glanced at him and waited patiently for him to continue. "I'm happy… f-for you both. Congr..."

"Congratulations?" his wife supplied kindly. He nodded in agreement.

"Oh… Thanks!" Mike enthused, his usual cheerful mood returning.

Jeremy grinned softly as he resumed his meal quietly. Considering he didn't usually say much, his comment meant a lot to Mike. His friends truly did support him and were honestly excited for them. This gave him confidence to know that, despite only having recently joined the established social circles of the Freddy's staff, he fit right in. There was something to the close-knit family of sorts that had formed; an unshakable bond formed between people who had all been through hell and back together, and had refused to give up, no matter how great their loss had been. Although Mike had been through much less, it didn't seem to bother them, as they welcomed him with open arms.

The party continued on until the late hours of the night, filled with merriment and holiday cheer. Mike had almost forgotten about the less than ideal moments that had come up throughout the evening. The only other disappointment that had occurred was after dinner, where there was a depressing lack of dessert to be found. What kind of Christmas party didn't have dessert, anyway? It also mildly bothered him that Maxwell was absent without any real acknowledgement from anyone, considering he had been a staff member for a long time. Before he left, that is. Mike was hardly a close friend of his, but knowing he was missing out on the fun bothered him. However, none of these concerns were enough to keep him from enjoying himself.

Fritz drove Mike back to his building after the party had ended. He offered to walk him back up to his floor, but he insisted that he was fine to go alone, even in the dark. He was determined to be brave and do it himself. Fritz kissed him goodbye and drove off, leaving Mike to make his way inside. Along the way, he spied a familiar face: Maxwell Richmond.

"Hey, Maxwell!" he called out. "What are you doing here?"

He looked up slowly from an unrecognizable flat object he held in his hand, exhaling the smoke from his cigarette and meeting his eyes for a moment. "I live here," he stated almost coolly.

"No way, seriously?" shouted Mike with enthusiasm.

He rolled his eyes, clearly not interested in continuing the conversation. Maxwell took another drag
and examined the snowbank beside him, leaning against the side of the dumpster.

Clearly, Mike didn't seem to notice his attempt to brush him off, as he wandered over to him to keep talking. "Where were you? Did you forget it was tonight?" The wall would've sooner answered him than Maxwell at the given moment. Yet, he was not deterred. He came up beside him and leaned a bit too far into his personal space, evoking a scowl and a quiet growl from him. "Maxwell?"

"Go away, Mike. You're annoying and stupid, so quit pissing me off. You're downright grating; I hate you," he grumbled venomously. "Go pester someone else. Besides, my name is Porfirio, not Maxwell. Get it that through your thick skull, will you?"

His eyes widened in hurt at the sharp insult. He could've sworn he physically felt his heart ache. Mike slinked back and mumbled an apology as he prepared to head inside to cheer himself up. Just as he was about leave, he peeked at the object in Porfirio's hand. He saw a tray of gingerbread cookies, of all things. Cooked to perfection, he observed.

"W-What are those…?" he asked timidly, looking at all of the baked sweets.

"None of your business."

He couldn't resist looking a little longer. He realized after a couple of seconds that there was something special about them. Each cookie was custom decorated to resemble a staff member, and their family members. There was one of himself, adorned with a few small dots of icing on its cheeks for freckles, a cheery smile, two blue sprinkle candies for eyes, and some light yellow icing used to make the hair. Mike's eyes sparkled in amazement as he saw each cookie on the tray, all of them created with skill and an incredible amount of detail. Not a single feature was forgotten from any of them, down to the expression on each of their faces. Fritz, Jeremy, Adeline, Taryn, Dianne, Mr. Fazbear, and one of a woman with black hair done up into two buns that he didn't recognize, were all there. Each cookie was carefully wrapped up into small transparent bags tied shut with a piece of purple ribbon. A small matching tag dangled from each one.

"These are amazing…" commented Mike. "You made these?"

"Yeah," he replied shortly.

His smile faltered a little when he got to the ones of Porfirio and Anthony. All of the cookies had a pleasant expression on their faces, except for the one resembling Porfirio: the only one that looked sad; depressed, even. The most disturbing one, however, was the one of Anthony. The Anthony gingerbread man, despite having a friendly grin, had a broken right leg that had been messily reattached with some white icing. It was an uncharacteristically sloppy repair job compared to the impressive skill seen on every other part of the cookies.

"What happened to that one?" he questioned, pointing to gingerbread man Anthony.

"It broke."

"Oh, okay…" He found it bizarre that the broken leg on the cookie happened to be the very leg real Anthony had injured. A strange coincidence. "Why does yours look so sad?" he inquired.

"Because it is," he dismissed.

Mike chose to not comment on that. Instead, he redirected the focus of the conversation. "So… Why did you make these? It looks like you put a lot of work into them!"

Porfirio glanced down at the tray in his hand. "For the party," he admitted. "They're worthless now,
so I came out here to take my smoke and throw them out."

"Throw them out!" he exclaimed. "Why would you want to do that? They look amazing! You should've come to the party and brought them with you!"

"Thomas banned me from going," Porfirio hissed.

"What? Why…?"

"Because Howard was hosting it," he explained with distaste. "Apparently, he wasn't comfortable having me come."

Mike frowned, glancing between the cookies and Porfirio. "That doesn't make sense…I thought you two were friends."

"Were. That's the key word."

"Did something happen…?"

Porfirio sighed and set the tray down beside him. He took another drag of his cigarette and looked up at the sky as he spoke. "Have you thought to ask how Anthony got his leg sliced open?"

He shifted uncomfortably at the thought and turned his gaze to his feet. "Well, uh, I guess not…"

"It was my fault…" He grimaced. "That wasn't an accident." His voice began to waver. "I-I hurt him on purpose…"

He immediately began to distance himself from Porfirio as he felt his heart begin to pound in his chest. Mike was like a deer caught in headlights; terrified and unable to bring himself to run. His hands came up to cover his mouth as he was helpless to only stand by and stare. Porfirio looked over at him and frowned, watching him, his aggression seemingly gone. The change in attitude did little to calm Mike down. Just knowing that Porfirio had hurt anyone, especially his friend, scared him and made him fear for his own safety.

"Look, I'm sorry for calling you stupid and annoying; I just wanted to be alone. I don't actually hate you." Porfirio finished his smoke and put it out with his shoe. "Whatever. Don't say anything, I don't care. Anthony hates me, so what difference does it make if everyone else does as well?" he asked without expecting an answer. "Do whatever the hell you want with the cookies, it doesn't matter what happens to them. Give them to your boyfriend or something," he snapped as he stomped toward the door.

"W-Wait, how did y-"

"I saw you with the meat-head when he dropped you off. It was obvious." He rolled his eyes. "Merry Christmas, Mike," he uttered sarcastically as he went inside.

He nervously replied with "M-Merry Christmas, Por-" but door to the building slammed shut before he could finish.

He stood outside alone for several minutes as he attempted to take in everything he had just witnessed. All of the information had hit him like a two-by-four to the head. It turned out that Maxwell, more accurately Porfirio, had quite a few secrets. At least, more than the other people at work did. Mike realized he knew next to nothing about him. Porfirio was revealing himself to be quite different than he had thought; rather aggressive but also having a level of vulnerability that confused him greatly.
After processing the recent turn of events, his thoughts turned to the abandoned cookies. Mike wandered back over to the tray and looked at them once again. This time, he read the tags. Each tag had a different message for each person, all written in flowing, elegant cursive in dark purple pen.

He read the tag on his cookie, which read: 'Merry Christmas, Mike. Enjoy the time with your family tomorrow. -Porfirio Violet' Considering they had only spoken on a few rare occasions, he was very flattered at the painstaking effort he has clearly put into the gift.

Out of curiosity, Mike decided to read what he wrote to Fritz, which said: 'Merry Christmas, Fritz. Train hard and do well in your next fight. -Porfirio Violet' The friendly note did not sound anything like the insult he had heard just heard a moment ago. Especially considering that the insult was directed at his athleticism. But now he was complimenting him for it? It was hard for him to determine whether he cared for Fritz's company or not.

He picked up Anthony's cookie next. The note on his made Mike almost feel bad for how he was rejected from the party. Anthony's tag read: 'Merry Christmas, friend. I'm sorry. -Porfirio Violet' The snapped leg on the cookie was an odd detail for him to include, but it was obviously important to him. He guessed Porfirio included it to add more meaning to the message, but it could've been any number of other reasons.

Lastly, Mike checked the tag on the cookie for the person he didn't recognize. She wasn't a staff member, but was included for whatever reason. This tag read: 'Haruka, Merry Christmas, sweetheart. May your day be filled with holiday cheer. I love you. -Porfirio Violet' He noticed a small heart drawn in beside her name as he placed the cookie back on the tray.

He assumed this Haruka person was some girl he loved, probably invited to the party as his guest. Since Porfirio was uninvited, she was likely turned away as well. Seeing how much work he had put into making gifts for everyone, only to have been rejected harshly, made Mike feel awful. Sure, he was terrified of him, and for good reason, but that didn't make him a bad person. Or did it?

He took the tray of cookies and went inside his apartment for the night, brushing the sad thought from his mind. Tomorrow was Christmas Day, and it would be joyful and fun. He had trouble falling asleep as he anticipated the morning to come.
A Merry Fazbear Christmas

Mike’s Apartment - Saturday, December 25th, 1993

He sprang out of bed and raced into his living room, much like a little boy would have. It was Christmas morning, and Mike was eager to start the day. He started preparing the pancake mix while he waited for his mother to come to spend the day with him. He only had a few gifts under the modest tree he had lit up in the corner, and hoped there would be more to come.

As he was finishing the batter and ladling the first scoop into the hot pan, he heard a knock on the door. Beaming, he raced to the door and pulled it open quickly. As expected, his mother was on the other side.

"Mom!" he cheered, hugging her with little regard for the things she was juggling.

She almost dropped the stack of beautifully wrapped goods in her arms from the impact. She stumbled a little before regaining her balance. “Michael!” she exclaimed in panic.

Realizing she needed some assistance, he apologized and helped her with the boxes. His mother stepped inside his apartment and smiled as she looked around and saw that his living room was clean, for once. The air was filled with the clean scent of a light citrus cleaning product and the toasty aroma of pancakes wafting from the kitchen.

“I see you’ve done some cleaning,” she applauded kindly. “You didn’t just hide it all in your bedroom, did you?"

“I didn’t!” he enthused. “I actually cleaned it up this time!”

“I’m impressed! My little man’s growing up so fast… Oh, before I know it, you’ll be running off somewhere with some girl.”

Mike laughed and gave her a playful look. “I’m not going anywhere, I promise.” He spoke with honesty, knowing that, as long as things were continuing as they were currently, he’d be staying relatively close to home. Not necessarily with ‘some girl’, but that detail wasn’t quite as important. At least not now. He would be staying close to home, that’s all she needed to know.

He helped his mom set the presents under the tree before he raced into the kitchen to attend to the pancakes. Mike had nearly forgotten the pancake he had ladled into the pan before his mother had arrived. Luckily for him, he had caught it before it began to burn. It was rather dark brown, but not burnt just yet. He flipped it over with a little bit of difficulty, slightly smearing the other side on the pan.

“Mike, let me help you with that,” she offered kindly.

He turned his head to look at her, a soft smile on his lips. “I’ve got it, thanks.”

A subtle hurt expression came to her face. She knew he was an adult, living on his own and more than capable of providing for himself, yet she couldn’t help but feel a little rejected. Usually, she would do all the cooking and cleaning whenever she would visit, but this time, it seemed as if Mike had taken over, for some reason.

“It’s not like you to be so…”
“Responsible?” he suggested.

“I guess so.”

Mike shrugged. “I really shouldn’t still be relying on you to look after me, Mom.”

But she still wanted to take care of him. She knew this day would come, but it didn’t make it any easier. Mike was growing up; becoming an independent young man.

“Mom?”

She shook herself from her thoughts. “Yes?”

“You seem upset…” Mike commented.

“I’m fine.”

Mike slid the pancake off of the pan once it had cooked through and went over to his mom, giving her a hug. “It’s okay… Please don’t be sad!” He let out a quiet laugh. “You’ll always be my mom, no matter how old I get!”

She held him tightly and nodded. “I love you.”

“I love you too!” He gave her a squeeze and resumed his position at the stove. Within a few minutes, the pancakes were served. The small table was set with the pancakes and a glass of eggnog for each of them, all centred around a neat arrangement of festive pinecones as a centrepiece.

Mike’s cooking wasn’t perfect, his mother observed, but compared to when he had first moved out, it was quite the improvement. As a parent, this made her proud. Now, if only he’d start preparing meals that didn’t come from a box…

“Dad’s not coming, is he?” Mike inquired with disappointment.

She sighed quietly. “I’m afraid not… He wanted to come, really. He just had another business trip, that’s all.”

He pouted and pushed his last piece of pancake around in the maple syrup on his plate. “He says that every year… He’s always away.”

His mother looked up at him and gave him a sympathetic look. “He’s trying to make sure he has time booked off for your birthday.”

“Yeah, but that’s not until April 20th.”

“He’s still making time to come see you.” She was met with silence. “Mike, it’s not that he doesn’t want to be here… He’s just having trouble booking time off to come home.”

“I know, I know…” he mumbled.

She smiled at him and gave his shoulder a squeeze. “Chin up, baby, he’ll be home soon. I promise.”

His mom finished her meal and stood, bringing her dishes to the kitchen counter. “Oh my, look at those cookies!” she called out. “Did you make these?”

Mike followed her into the room and saw her looking at the numerous gingerbread men (and women). “Uh, no, actually… My co-worker made them.”
“They’re beautiful…” She spotted the one of her son and exclaimed, “Oh, this one looks like you!”

He laughed a little and gently pried the cookie from her hands. “It does, doesn’t it?” He held the cookie up to his face and beamed, matching the expression on the baked treat. He unwrapped the top of the bag and pulled the cookie out, snapping off one of the legs and offering it to his mother. She gratefully took the piece and munched on it, making a happy sound as she tasted the treat. “Wow, whoever made these is skilled!” she enthused.

Mike took a bite of the remaining gingerbread man and his eyes lit up in wonder as the flavour of the sweet, spiced dessert filled his mouth. It was perfectly done as well; chewy but not too soft, not too hard. As strange as it seemed, Porfirio had quite the talent for baking! “These really are good!” Luckily, his cheer was returning, despite the memory that his father wouldn’t be joining them.

Remembering the gifts, the two of them returned to the living room and gathered around the tree.

Mike’s mother kneeled down and reached for a box, looking through the colourful wrapped presents to find the right one to start off with. Once she had selected one, she picked it up and passed it to him with a smile.

“Thanks!” he exclaimed as he read the tag. ‘To: Mike, Merry Christmas! From: Mom and Dad.’ He turned the present over in his hands a few times before curiosity got the better of him. He tore open the red paper to reveal a bag of marshmallows, of all things.

“Uh… thanks?” he said with uncertainty.

Clearly, his mother had noticed his confusion. “It’ll all make sense soon.” She smiled and sat in her seat while Mike went over to the tree to pick out a gift for her. He picked up a large box and set it in her lap.

“For you!”

His mom grinned up at him and unwrapped her present. Behind the paper was a plain, brown cardboard box. She opened it and found it to only be filled with green tissue paper.

“Keep looking!” Mike encouraged her. She kept digging around in the box until she found a tiny box, wrapped in silver wrapping paper and topped with a white bow. Intrigued, she unwrapped this other box, revealing a silver chain with a stunning sapphire pendant dangling from it.

His mother’s eyes widened in surprise as she marvelled at the lovely piece of jewelry. “Mike, this is gorgeous… Thank you, sweetheart.” She brushed her hair aside as she slipped the necklace on and hugged him close. He returned her embrace without hesitation.

She grabbed another box from under the tree, this one being much larger than the others. When he got the box, Mike shredded the paper, much like an excited child. Now the marshmallows made sense; they were ammunition! “No way, you got me a marshmallow gun?!”

His mother chuckled at his excitement. “We thought you’d enjoy that.”

“Thanks, Mom!” he shouted as he pulled the gun out of its packaging, hastily stuffing marshmallows into it. Instead of going to hug her, he shot a marshmallow at her, grinning from ear to ear.

“Hey!” she teased, batting the marshmallow away as it fell into her lap.

“What?” Mike popped a marshmallow into his mouth. “All’s fair in war.”
The day went by much faster than he had expected it would. He and his mother watched It’s A Wonderful Life together and chatted for hours. Mike talked about how things were at work, not daring to utter a word about the nature of the animatronics or about his true relationship to Fritz.

Mike was afraid she would not take the news well. He liked to think that she would get used to the idea, and approve of Fritz if they ever met. But if he were honest with himself, he didn't actually know. He had heard horror stories of gay kids getting disowned by their families and the like, and desperately hoped that wouldn't happen to him as well. Mike loved his mom too much to even want to consider that possibility. Then it occurred to him: he didn't know if he was gay or not. He knew for sure that he was in love with Fritz, but didn't actually know if that meant he was attracted to men in general or if it was… something else. He really had no idea. That served to increase his hesitance to reveal the information. Mike didn't know himself well enough to put his emotions into words. Not yet. So he certainly wouldn’t attempt to explain that to his mother.

He tried his best to ignore the pangs of sadness that periodically washed over him as the doubts in the back of his mind pointed out that, if he wasn't careful enough, this could be the last Christmas he'd spend with his mother, or any of his family members for that matter. Mike hated that he even had to be concerned about such a thing. At least with modern times, society was becoming increasingly tolerant of homosexuals, which somewhat eased his fears. It was a toss up as to how she would take the news, if she ever found out, and Mike trusted that she would at least be understanding.

He still had a lovely time with his mom, despite his anxieties. In the end, Mike knew she loved him dearly, and figured those affections wouldn't be revoked, no matter what happened.

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Porfirio’s Apartment - Saturday, December 25th, 1993

_Ugh, why won't that banging stop?!_

He grumbled and rolled out of bed, as the pounding on his front door continued. He hastily slipped on a pair of jeans and a purple shirt before leaving his room. Porfirio inched closer to the door, about to answer it until he was interrupted.

_You're not actually going to open that, are you?_

_You don't know who's on the other side! It's a trap!_

He took a shaky breath and peered through the peephole in the door, seeing a cheery young woman with bright, brown eyes and black hair done up into two buns. Porfirio stepped a few feet away from the door and began to pace with his hands folded behind his back. “It’s Haruka,” he muttered to himself.

_So? What does that change? You can't trust anyone other than us. She could hurt you, Porfirio! Don't let her in!_

He heard the door rattle, freezing him in place and drawing his attention to it.

“Porfirio?” he heard her call out through the door. “You’re awake, aren't you? Could you let me in, please?”

He turned towards the door and stumbled closer to it.

_Don't do it!
His hand shook violently from anxiety and from some nicotine withdrawal; he was due for a smoking break. It eventually settled on the doorknob, as he brought himself to unlock it before retreating for the safety of his bedroom.

Clearly, Haruka had heard him twist the lock open, as she had entered right away. She frowned slightly as she saw no sign of Porfirio. She set the presents she had brought for him on his coffee table, since he had not bothered to get a tree, then called his name once again. She heard a quiet thud from the bedroom, and followed it.

She saw him there, bent over to pick up a book that had fallen to the floor. Instead of stepping into the room to help him, Haruka waited in the doorway. For whatever reason, he usually hated it when anyone other than himself came into his bedroom. Porfirio had only ever invited her in on a select few occasions, and even then she could only recall one time when anything romantic had transpired between them in the year or so they had been together. Even then, despite it having been one of the most intimate moments they had shared, it was far from sexual. She couldn’t think of a time where he had ever come close to suggesting such a thing, either. Haruka couldn’t explain why he was so protective of his bedroom, but respected his boundaries anyway.

Porfirio was a strange man, there was no doubt in her mind that he was. Haruka couldn’t understand why he would suddenly lash out at her on occasion, or why he would grow cold toward her, and it often hurt more than she would care to admit to. He would usually scream at her to leave him alone when he got into one of those moods. Other times, he would simply go cold; ignoring her and being short with her, even flinching if touched and locking himself away. She hated it when he acted like this, but she still loved him despite his odd and hurtful behaviour. Yet, when Porfirio was in a good mood, he treated her like gold. It was the very opposite of his mood swings. He had a soft side that would show itself, but not without it being interrupted by bursts of aggression and moodiness.

He stood slowly, watching her the entire time, but not out of fondness. Porfirio almost appeared to be defensive.

“I won’t come in, I promise…” she soothed, hoping to calm him.

He didn’t seem to relax at all, only backing up a little more and setting the book on the unmade bed. Porfirio continued to watch her, not taking his eyes off of her for a second.

Haruka frowned, quite troubled by her boyfriend’s behaviour. “Are you upset because that party got cancelled?” She was not answered. “Porfirio, please don’t do this… It’s Christmas, so I came to see you… I even brought some gifts for you…”

She heard a trill-like mew as Kowalski rubbed up against her leg. Haruka loved cats, and they certainly loved her as well. She scooped the soft furball into her arms and brightened a little. “See? Even Kowalski wants you to come out.”

After a few moments, he nodded and cautiously approached her. It was apparent that he was in a odd mood, so she knew better than to try and touch him. Haruka figured that would have been too much. Instead, she smiled up at him and said, “That’s much better.”

With the cat still snuggled against her, she sat down on his couch and pulled her legs up beside her, watching as Porfirio slipped into the kitchen.

A couple of minutes later, he returned with a plate of buttered toast. She giggled quietly as she saw a blissful expression cross his face as he bit into a piece. It was almost difficult for her to picture him without his favourite meal, since he often had a crumb-covered plate lying on at least one table at any given time.
“What?” he asked, muffled by the food still held up to his lips.

“Toast again?” she teased.

Porfirio shrugged and sat beside her, continuing to eat. After he had finished a piece, he glanced over at her and smiled softly, shifting slightly to be closer to her.

Haruka observed that his behaviour had changed some since she had arrived. She was glad for this, taking the improvement as an indicator that Porfirio might have been in one of his better moods that day.

Once Porfirio had finished his meal, they heard a knock at the door. Haruka stood and answered the door for him as she saw him make no effort to do this.

“Oh, sorry, uh…” the young man on the other side of the door began nervously. “D-Do I have the right unit?”

She glanced at him quizzically, eyeing him from head to toe. “That depends on who you’re looking for, I guess.”

“I’m looking for Porfirio… I thought I had the right place, but…”

Haruka grinned. “Well, you have the right place, then.” She turned around for a moment. “Porfirio, come to the door! Someone’s here for you!”

“Ugh, who?” Porfirio grumbled.

She returned her attention to the young man at the door. “Well, what’s your name?”

“Oh, I’m Mike!” he exclaimed. “One of his coworkers.”

“Mike…” she mulled over the name for a few moments as she tried to place where she had heard it before. “Right! I believe he’s mentioned you before. It’s wonderful to meet you!”

Mike’s face brightened as he heard this. “Wait, really?”

She nodded. “He has… By the way, I’m Haruka,” she explained, extending her hand to him.

He shook her hand without hesitation. “Oh!” he realized, piecing together who she was from the cookie version of her Porfirio had made. Mike noted that he had done a good job of depicting her soft features in baked form.

“Hang on a second, I’ll go get Porfirio for you.” Haruka stepped away from the door, and a short while later, he had taken her place.

He sighed as he saw Mike waiting, not excited in the slightest to have him there. “What do you want?” he asked with little patience.

Mike winced a little at the intensity. “I-I just came to say M-Merry Christmas…”

Porfirio rolled his eyes. “Bah, humbug,” he uttered flatly.

He laughed nervously to ease his discomfort. “I thought I’d return your tray… I really liked the cookie… I-I’m sorry, I won’t keep bothering you! H-Here!” Mike held the tray out to him, with only two cookies left on it: the ones of Porfirio and Haruka. When Porfirio had taken the tray, he fled, not wanting to stick around to see his reaction.
He sighed as Mike raced off, not bothering to look at the tray. Porfirio shut the door and roughly set the tray on the kitchen table.

“Well? What was that about?” Haruka inquired, waiting in the kitchen for him.

“Nothing.”

“It didn’t seem like ‘nothing’,” she replied, looking at the metal baking sheet on the wooden table. Haruka picked up the cookie version of herself and read the tag. Her eyes danced in delight as she read the message from Porfirio and admired his handiwork. “Love… These are beautiful,” she said.

His face twisted bitterly at the compliment. “There’s nothing special about them.”

She shook her head. “I’d disagree.” Haruka came to his side and wrapped her arms around him, chancing the negative reaction that may have come from it. He didn’t move for a few moments before, much to her surprise, returning the hug. Trying her luck once more, she kissed him briefly and said “I love you too.” Haruka felt him bristle at her touch, but he hadn't pushed her away, which was progress.

Porfirio managed a slight smile as he fought to ignore them telling him to push her away and kick her out of his home. He felt uncomfortable at best, but knew that she was happy. For her sake, he simply let them yell at him. It was Christmas, all he wanted was to make Haruka happy. And so far, he had succeeded.

Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza - Saturday, December 25th, 1993

Freddy sat on the stage and looked around the eerily quiet restaurant. The only sound he heard was the dull hum of fans and the occasional scuffle from one of his friends shifting. Like most weekend nights, it was pretty boring and there was hardly anything to do.

Just as Freddy was about to declare it the worst Christmas ever, the front door of the restaurant swung open and in tumbled Mike, struggling to carry several bags in with him. Oddly enough, he was out of uniform, dressed as if he were only going to visit friends rather than show up at work. His cheeks were cranberry red from the frigid winter air.

"Mike...? What are you doing here?” Freddy exclaimed in bewilderment. He didn't expect to see anyone come in that night, especially not the most timid of all the staff members, alone.

He smiled at him as he attempted to keep his bags together. "Oh, hey Freddy! I came to see you guys! It's Christmas, after all, so I thought I'd stop by!"

Freddy's eyes widened a little. He couldn't believe that Mike had thought to visit them on a holiday. No one had ever done that for them in the six years they had been rotting away at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. It's not like any of the staff would have felt any reason to, either, considering they were completely unaware of the humanity trapped within the animatronics until a few weeks ago.

Mike laughed a little as he stumbled toward the stage. He set the bags down with a sigh of relief before rummaging around inside to find something. He triumphantly emerged with a parcel wrapped in snowman wrapping paper. There were two boxes, one much smaller and flatter than the other, held together with a white ribbon.

Mike beamed and handed the bundle to Freddy and cheered, “Merry Christmas!” He then drew
another two gifts out of the bag and marched over to Bonnie, giving him a present with a similar appearance, only his was a much smaller box. Mike gave the last one to Chica; hers was wrapped the same way, only it was large and rectangular, unlike the others.

The three animatronics stared at the gifts in their hands, filled with awe and wonder. None of them could have ever expected to have anyone visit them, let alone receive such a kind gesture. They all gawked as they tried to find their words.

“Open them!”

Bonnie was the first of the three to act, ripping off the paper without a second thought. “No way!” he laughed incredulously. He held up a guitar pedal that he had unwrapped, grinning from ear to ear. “This is wicked! Thanks, Mike.” He almost couldn’t contain his excitement as he pulled the lid off of the box, as if he couldn’t take the packaging off quickly enough.

Chica carefully opened her present next, ensuring she didn’t tear the paper. She gasped when she saw a lovely cookbook underneath, brimming with delicious recipes for her to make. “O-Oh my…”

“Do you like it?!” he inquired, bubbling with enthusiasm.

“Well? Do you like it?”

“How did you know…” Freddy managed to choke out, overcome with emotion.

“Uh, well…” he began uneasily. “I heard from your dad that you liked it, s-so I thought, well…”

Freddy pulled Mike into a hug without hesitation, almost squeezing him too tightly. “Thank you so much…”

He smiled and returned his embrace. “You’re welcome! Merry Christmas!”

Chica joined them, wrapping her arms around the two of them. “Merry Christmas, Mike!”

After separating himself from the gorgeous pedal, Bonnie joined his friends. The group stayed together for a few seconds before separating. The three animatronics were filled with glee and overwhelmed by Mike’s kind gesture. It was clear that he had put a lot of effort into choosing their gifts, along with coming up with a significant sum of cash to pull it off. Each of them went to enjoy
their new things while Mike picked up his other bags and headed off.

He went to Pirate Cove next to visit Reynard and Gilead and give them their gift. Mike slipped behind the curtain, almost falling as his bags swung forward from the momentum.

Reynard looked up at him, surprised. “Mike? What are you doing here?”

He balanced himself and grinned, grabbing a large box from one of the bags and handing it to him. “Merry Christmas, guys!”

He shook his head in disbelief. “Christmas…? I guess it is, isn’t it? I’d almost forgotten about it. There really hasn’t been a reason to remember, anyway…”

“But now there is!” Mike shouted. “Open it! It’s for you and Gilead!”

“For me?” Gilead piped up.

“It sure is!”

“I can’t really use it, whatever it is…”

Mike came over to him with Reynard and sat beside him. “Maybe not yet, but Anthony will come back soon!”

“I suppose…” Gilead mumbled.

“Why don’t we see what’s inside here?” Reynard suggested.

“Sure.”

Reynard opened the gift and chuckled at what he saw inside: a SNES with a copy of Star Fox.

“Good pick,” he applauded.

“Video games… Oh how I’ve missed those,” Gilead said.

“I hope you like it!” Mike exclaimed.

“I love it,” Reynard replied happily. They both thanked him in unison as they began to check out their new toy, with Gilead watching and adding his comments as Reynard unpacked the console.

“Mike?” he heard behind him. He spun around and saw James standing at the edge of the stage, looking confused. His silent approach nearly gave Mike a heart attack.

“Oh, h-hey James! Uh, Merry Christmas!”

A smile crept across James’ face. “Oh, thank you. And Merry Christmas to you as well.”

Before James could say anything else, Mike pulled out his final present and gave it to James. “I know you like giving gifts, s-so I thought you’d like to receive one for a change.”

His face lit up with joy as he saw the gift. James clapped excitedly and took the box, wrapped just like the one for Freddy was. He opened both of them quickly and smiled brightly, despite clearly not knowing what they were.

“It’s a Discman. You know, for playing music,” Mike explained. “And I got you a CD to play in it. I didn’t know what kind of music you liked, so I got you some Chopin songs.”
“Classical music is really pretty… Ah, it reminds me of my box!”

Mike grinned. “I thought it would! Now you don’t have to stay there to listen to your music!”

He laughed, “I suppose you’re right about that. Thank you, this is very nice.”

“You’re welcome!”

James opened up his gift and began to set it up not long after. Mike was pleased to see all of the animatronics so merry; blessed with the joys of Christmas they had missed out on for so many years. He went home shortly after he had finished making his rounds, glad to have had a such a lovely day with some of the people he cared about. This year, he had truly experienced some of the fulfillment that came with giving gifts to make his loved ones happy.
“Havin’ trouble there?” Fritz teased playfully.

“I’ve got it, I’ve got it!” he protested as he fiddled with the heel of the boot.

Fritz had already strapped his skates on without a hitch, whilst Mike continued to untie, adjust, then retie his repeatedly. He had been struggling with making sure his skates were tied tight enough for a few minutes, but was determined to put them on without assistance.

Eventually, Fritz got down on one knee and started adjusting his boyfriend’s skates for him, despite him continuing to insist on being able to do it himself.

“Ya don’t have to do everything by yourself, Mike.” He grinned and added warmly, “That’s what I’m here for.” After finishing with his skates, Fritz helped Mike to his feet, balancing him as he wobbled on the blades.

He held his hand as they made their way to the rink, for both balance and to show their love for one another. Mike was nervous to step onto the ice, but trusted that Fritz knew what he was doing and would coach him well. Mike squeezed his hand as they got to the edge, feeling anxious as the moment arrived. He’d only been skating once when he was a child, and it hadn’t gone too well. He hoped it’d go smoothly this time.

“Are ya ready?”

He nodded and stepped onto the rink, teetering and almost falling over immediately.

Fritz hadn’t left his side, and reacted quickly to steady him. He let go of his hand and caught Mike by the waist as he nearly fell backwards. “Be careful there,” he chuckled.

“I-I don’t know if I can do this…” Mike lamented. He continued to totter as he attempted to keep himself upright.

“I’ve got ya, Mike. Relax and you’ll be fine.” He glided onto the ice, coming to face Mike without letting go of him for so much as a second.

Their eyes met for a few moments before he almost fell again. Fritz couldn’t help but chuckle this time as he stabilized him once more.

“I can’t do this!” Mike shrieked as he flailed.

“Aw, come on, I know ya can. I won’t let ya fall,” Fritz assured him. He grasped Mike’s hands and said, “We’ll take this one step at a time.” Despite his encouragement, Mike stayed still, shaking as he tried to remain on his feet.

“Could you move?” a woman half-demanded. She was at the door to the rink, standing impatiently. “You’re blocking the entrance, so hurry up.”

“Give us a moment, please. He’s new to skatin’,” Fritz explained.

She snorted. “Well go to the beginner’s area, then. Some of us actually want to skate.”
“Give us a moment,” he repeated, disgruntled. “We’ll be out of your way in a bit.” Fritz sighed and returned his attention to Mike. “I’m sorry about that. Let’s give this a try, alright? Just stay standing, I’ll lead you.”

“O-Okay…” Mike mumbled, holding onto Fritz’s hands tightly. His boyfriend skated backwards with ease, as if it were second-nature. He struggled to simply stand on the ice, but managed to keep himself upright as Fritz led him to the edge of the rink. He smiled at Mike and assured him he was doing well the entire way.

“Ya did great!” he applauded. “How do ya feel?”

“A bit better, I guess…” Mike answered as he managed to balance himself.

“I’m glad. So, are ya ready to try skatin’ yourself?” Fritz inquired.

His worry returned. “I don’t know…”

“I’ll be helpin’, don’t worry.”

Mike took a shaky breath and held onto the edge and attempted to skate forward. At first, he moved very slowly, but it was better than falling. Before he knew it, he was rapidly gaining speed. “Fritz, look at me!” he laughed. “I’m skating! A-And I’m not falling!”

“See? I knew ya could do it!” Fritz glided up beside Mike and taught him how to turn on the skates to ensure he wouldn’t crash.

The two of them almost made it a full lap of the rink before Mike roughly fell on his butt. “Ow…” he muttered before attempting to stand back up, but not before slipping and landing on his stomach like a seal.

Fritz stifled a laugh and helped him to his feet. “Are ya alright?”

“I’m fine,” Mike groaned. “Can we try again?”

“Of course we can. It’s why we’re here.”

He laughed and got back up to his feet with Fritz’s help. They held hands as they glided along the ice together.

“How are you so good at skating?” Mike asked him.

He smiled at him and explained, “Well when I was a kid, my parents signed me up for hockey, so I played for a good few years. I wasn’t too bad at it, really, but I found I enjoyed droppin’ my gloves more than hittin’ the puck. So I got into boxing.”

“What did they think of that?”

Fritz shrugged. “They were okay with it, but my mom was worried about me gettin’ hurt.” He chuckled. “I just hope she won’t panic too much to see my face now with the scar formin’ and the missin’ tooth. It’s just an injury, and it’s healin’. I knew what I was gettin’ myself into.”

“I guess so…” Mike replied uncomfortably. He knew Fritz was prepared to deal with any injuries that came with his sport, but still didn’t like hearing about them. He reasoned it was his care for Fritz that made him feel so protective over him, never wanting him to get hurt.

He became distracted and began to speed up without control. “Mikey, watch out!” he heard Fritz call
to him as he rushed too far ahead, feeling his hand get yanked free. Mike rapidly gained speed, tumbling forward alone. He felt his heart race in his chest as he spiralled out of control. Right as he was about to crash, he screamed and covered his face with his hands.

He didn't feel himself hit the wall as he expected. Instead, he hit a bump in the ice and pitched forward, feeling someone grab hold of him as he began to fly through the air. Mike and the other person tumbled to the ice together, his knee connecting with the icy floor and the rest of his fall cushioned by his rescuer. He moved his hands and saw that it had been Fritz who had saved him.

“F-Fritz!” Mike hugged him tightly.

“Are ya okay?” he asked with concern.

“I’m fine,” he assured Fritz, wincing as he felt his knee throb.

Fritz frowned. “Where are ya hurtin’?”

“My knee…” he mumbled.

He loosened his hold on Mike and stood, helping him to his feet. Mike made a pained sound as he put weight on his leg. Fritz supported him and asked, “Ya can't skate like that… Here, let me help.” He lead Mike off of the ice despite his protests as he insisted he was fine to continue on.

Fritz helped Mike to get seated on the bench and helped him untie his skates.

“I’m sorry I ruined our date,” Mike mumbled, feeling guilty.

He grinned. “Ruined it? Hardly! We still have hot chocolate and a warm blanket waitin’ for us,” Fritz encouraged.

His expression brightened. “How could I forget about that?!”

Fritz wiggled the skate off of Mike’s foot, mindful of his injured knee. “I thought you’d be lookin’ forward to that part the most.”

“Well, what’s not to look forward to about hot chocolate and cuddles?”

He smiled and said, “It'll be nice.” Fritz got both of his boyfriend’s skates off and then dealt with his own. “Now, let’s see what happened to your leg.” He carefully rolled up Mike’s pant leg to examine his knee, where it had smacked against the ice. His knee had a fresh bruise, not far below the cap.

“Is it bad?” Mike inquired.

“Nah, you’re fine.” It appeared as though it would have been quite painful, but by no means a serious injury. He would heal quickly.

“That’s good, I guess…” Mike tried to stand up to walk but was stopped before he could put his weight on his injured leg.

“Ya think I’m gonna let ya walk to the car like that?”

“I’m not sure how else I’d be getting to-” He squealed as Fritz lifted him into his arms.

“Like this,” he finished for him with a grin. Fritz gathered their bags and carried Mike to the car. He set him down in the passenger seat, kissed his cheek, and shut the door. A moment later, after putting their stuff in the trunk, Fritz took his place at the steering wheel and drove them to his house.
Fritz carried Mike inside his house and plopped down on the couch with him, smiling widely and holding him close. “Here we are, home sweet home. What’s mine is yours.”

Mike looked around the living-room with intrigue, noticing his simple but thoughtful choice of decor. The walls were a warm beige tone, and the chocolate brown hardwood floor complimented it perfectly. Other than the couch they were seated on, there was a sleek coffee table with matching side tables, each with a lamp situated on it, a television opposite to them, a shelf with some movies, and a small collection of workout gear, including a black punching bag and a pair of red boxing gloves, in the corner. He also noticed that the only decorations he had in the room were a few family photos hanging on the wall of himself with some people Mike didn’t recognize, along with a few of Fritz with Anthony and Jeremy, clearly enjoying each other’s company.

“You have a nice house,” Mike complimented.

“Thanks,” he replied. Fritz slid him off of his lap and stood. “I’ll be back.” He left the room for a short while before returning with an ice pack, which he wrapped around Mike’s bruised knee. “This should help a little.”

At first, he flinched from the cold, but quickly found that it brought relief as well. “Thank you,” Mike winced.

“No problem. Now, for that hot chocolate to warm us up.”

He clapped excitedly and beamed, suddenly not concerned with the burning of the ice against his leg. “Yay~! Oh, make mine extra creamy please! And lots of marshmallows!”

Fritz couldn’t help but chuckle quietly at his requests. “Someone’s high maintenance,” he jested. He kissed Mike’s forehead and added, “But how could I possibly say no to you?” He disappeared into the kitchen for several minutes and came back with two sweet, steamy mugs of chocolaty goodness. Fritz sat down beside Mike and handed him one of the mugs with several marshmallows stuffed into it, as requested.

“Thank you!” He cheered, taking the mug into his hands. Mike blew over his beverage to cool it faster. Fritz set his down on the coffee table and made his way to the shelf holding his movies.

“What would ya like to watch?” he asked. He listed several options of various genres, unsure of exactly what Mike would be interested in seeing.

Eventually, after several options had been listed, Mike settled on one: *Terminator*, of all movies. Fritz would have assumed that he would have shied away from a ‘scary’ movie with a murderous robot, but was proven wrong. After affirming that the movie wouldn’t be too much for him to handle, he started it and returned to his spot on the couch and wrapped the wool blanket around them both. Fritz took the opportunity to give Mike a proper kiss on the lips once they had gotten comfortable, which he certainly didn’t object to.

He snuggled up to Fritz and sipped his hot chocolate, feeling warm both inside and out. The two of them enjoyed the film together as well as the excuse to cuddle with a cozy blanket. It had been a lovely evening, one that neither of them would forget any time soon.

Fritz’s House - Monday, January 3rd, 1994

Fritz cracked his eyes open, annoyed with the bright light shining straight into his eyes. He had no
bearing on what time it was, or when he had gone to bed. That’s when he noticed that he hadn’t actually gone up to bed the night before. Instead, he found himself on the couch, with Mike curled up at his side with most of their blanket pulled tightly around himself in a cocoon.

He didn’t want to disturb Mike, seeing how peaceful he looked; how comfortable and happy he appeared to be, but Fritz needed to get up. Fritz gently shook his shoulder and softly said, “Mikey… Time to get up.”

Mike groaned and pulled the blanket closer, hiding his face in the fabric. He poked the fabric lump at his side and tried once more to coax him awake. “C’mon, please? I was thinkin’ we’d have some breakfast.”

The blanket shifted, and soon after, Mike’s head emerged from under the mess. He looked as if he were still half-asleep. He wrapped his arms around Fritz and muttered, “Five more minutes…”

He chuckled and replied, “Alright, alright. Only because you’re cute.”

“I’m not that cute,” Mike mumbled back.

“Yeah, ya are,” Fritz insisted playfully. After a few minutes, he got up and headed to the kitchen, with Mike following shortly behind him. They’d both agreed on a simple bowl of cereal each, making for some easy preparations. Right as he was about to add the milk to his cereal, he heard his doorbell ring. A pang of anxiety shot through him as he sprang to his feet, swearing several times under his breath.

“Fritz? What’s going on…?”

“Stay there,” Fritz commanded quickly, racing to the door and running his hand through his hair a few times to neaten it up in a hurry.

He pulled the door open slowly, his heart sinking as he saw who was on the other side: Greg Altman, his least favourite person. Greg’s face twisted into a mocking grin as he coolly said “Good morning, Fritz. Or should I say ‘afternoon’? Oh, don’t tell me, did you just wake up?”

Fritz scoffed. “Nice to see ya, too,” he replied sarcastically, intentionally not answering his question.

“No need to be so harsh,” Greg admonished, taken aback. “What took you so long? Did you forget what day it was?”

“No,” Fritz lied. In all honesty, it had slipped his mind last night. If he and Mike hadn’t had such a grand time the night before, he would have put himself to bed on time and would have ensured he was prepared for the morning to come. Not that Greg had any respect for the fact he worked the night shift as it was.

“Well, you didn’t show up as you agreed to.”

As he spoke, Mike creeped into the hall behind Fritz, favouring his leg. Although he had been asked to remain where he was, curiosity had gotten the better of him.

Greg laughed cruelly and added, “Ah, now it makes sense.” He snorted. “You got a boyfriend, so now he clearly takes priority. I see how it is. I’m sure Tristan and Rosemary would love to know that.”

“Don’t you dare drag ‘em into this,” Fritz snapped. He pivoted and said to Mike in a hushed voice, “I thought I told you to stay.” He saw Mike’s confusion and his expression softened some. “I’ll
explain later, just go get ready. Grab yourself a change of clothes and comb your hair.” A slight hint of a smile appeared on his face when he said, “Your hair got pretty messy under that blanket, sleepy head.”

Seeing Fritz so uptight and aggressive almost scared Mike. He nodded quickly and retreated upstairs to do as he was told.

Fritz returned his attention to his undesired visitor with distaste. “So, are we done here or what? The faster you’re gone, the better.”

“Why so soon? Quite frankly, I was just beginning to enjoy myself,” Greg argued. “Oh, I’m sure you just want more time with, oh what was his name? Mike?”

“Leave us alone,” Fritz growled.

“You moved on so quickly. I’m surprised, Fritz,” he taunted.

“As if you’re in any position to talk,” he retorted. “At least I waited until my marriage was over to move on.”

Greg chuckled and commented indifferently, “Ah, but it was already over. You failed her, so she moved on. You lost the battle years ago. Three, to be exact.”

He grimaced and replied with venom dripping from his voice, “Yeah, to trash like ya.”

Greg whistled. “Someone’s bitter.”

He brushed off his dig and grit his teeth. “Just drop them off and leave.”

He half-raised his hands in surrender. “Fine, I will. Don’t forget to bring them back on time. It’d be a real shame if you lost them altogether,” he threatened.

“Yeah. I will,” Fritz spat. “But it doesn’t matter what a judge says; you’ll never be their father.”

“And neither will Mike, should things last, unlike they did with Charlene,” Greg countered coolly.

Fritz, about to raise his voice at him, cut himself off immediately. Scum like him wasn’t worth his time. He tightened his hand dangling at his side into a fist, digging his fingernails into his palm. “Get out of here.”

Greg chuckled and strolled back down the pathway to his car, letting two children out of the back seat.

“Dad!” the little boy shouted with glee, taking hold of the younger girl’s wrist and leading her over to the door quickly. “Smell ya later, Greg!” he called over his shoulder, obviously much more interested in leaving the car than staying to say a proper farewell. He put some emphasis on his name that made it quite clear about how he felt about Greg: not fond of him at all.

Fritz got down on one knee and embraced the two of them, holding them close and grinning widely. “There ya are! Ya have no idea how much I’ve missed ya both!” he said with cheer. “How’ve ya been?”

“Much better now that I get to see you!” the boy enthused.

He laughed and ruffled his son’s hair. “You’re sweet. C’mon inside, we don’t want to let all the heat out.” He brought the children in and shut the door gently. “I’ve gotta go upstairs for a moment. I’ll be
back soon.”

“Okay!” The little boy took off his coat and shoes, then helped the girl to do the same. Fritz smiled softly at them and sped up the staircase, heading straight for his bedroom.

“Mike?”

He poked his head out of the bathroom doorway with his hair half styled and wearing one of Fritz’s shirts. Fritz couldn’t help but smirk as he saw how it fit on him; it was one of his more fitted shirts, yet it hung rather loosely on Mike.

“Oh, hey!” Mike gave him a slightly uneasy smile and returned to attempting to tame his rebellious hair.

Fritz noticed his discomfort and headed to his side, wrapping an arm around his waist and said, “I’m sorry… I didn’t want ya to have to see that.”

“Who was that?” Mike asked timidly.

“Someone I wish ya didn’t ever, ever have to meet.” He sighed and continued. “That was Greg, some of the lowest of low-lifes out there.” Fritz held him a little closer. “He and I… Don’t care for one another, to put it lightly.”

“Okay… But what did he want from you? I mean, why would he want to come if he didn’t like you?”

“He doesn’t, he only came because he had to, to drop off my kids. Of course, he also took the opportunity to rub my failures in my face.”

“You have kids?” Mike questioned. “I had no idea… And what do you mean by ‘failures’?”

“I… made some mistakes, a few years ago. Awful, awful mistakes that cost me everythin’ I had…”

He looked up at Fritz and met his eyes. “Fritz… What happened?”

“Since I was a young guy, I’d been workin’ my ass off to actually make some money in the ring. I figured that if I entered enough competitions, one day, some talent scout would discover me an’ help me go pro. But, that never happened… Instead, all it did was destroy my family.” He held him closer. “Mike, I lost everythin’… I got blinded by my pursuit of fame and fortune, and my ex wife got fed up with me. Things weren’t great between us, they never were. But when I got too focused on my career…” His voice wavered as he continued. “S-She cheated on me; cast me aside for that bastard, Greg, and took my kids…”

Mike’s eyes widened and his mouth hung open in surprise. “Fritz, I…”

“S-She remarried to him two years ago…” He took a shaky breath. “A-At least I get to have my kids with me every other week…” Tears came to his eyes but refused to fall. “Mike, I’m so, so sorry… I meant to t-tell ya about it later, I just didn’t want to scare ya off… I didn’t know how you’d take it. There’s my son, Tristan, and he’s six, and my little girl, Rosemary, who’s four. She’s got this condition she was born with, so she’s got trouble seein’… But, she can see some things, just not very clearly. That’s another reason why I was goin’ to hold off on tellin’ ya; I didn’t want ya to worry. I knn-know it’s a lot to take in, and it’s a lot of responsibility…”

He hugged Fritz tightly, resting his head against his chest. “It’s okay… You didn’t scare me off.”
Fritz returned the embrace and said, “Thank you…” He cheered up a little and added, “I love ya.”
“I love you too!” he replied. Mike happily kissed him and smiled up at him. “Can I meet them?”

Fritz was shocked by his reaction. He’d at least expected a bit of discontentment at finding out he had a family he had told Mike nothing about, but instead he welcomed the new information.

“Of course ya can, they’re downstairs right now. Uh, ya do know what you’re gettin’ yourself into, don’t ya?” he clarified. “They’ll be lookin’ up to ya, much like a parent. It’s a lot of work, and-”

“I know, but I’m okay with that,” Mike explained. “They’re your kids, so I want to do what I can to help.”

He grinned at him, feeling a weight lifted off of his shoulders. “You’re wonderful.”

“Not as wonderful as you are.” Mike finished neatening up his hair and took Fritz’s hand. “I want to meet them!”

Fritz chuckled. “Come along, then.” He lead Mike downstairs to the living-room, where a little boy sat on the couch waiting eagerly with a little girl beside him who was brushing the hair of an unnaturally coloured pony doll.

“Tristan? Rosemary?”

The boy looked up quickly and raced over. “There you are!” he exclaimed, smiling up at Fritz.

He laughed and replied, “I told ya I’d be back.” He put an arm around Mike’s shoulders and said “Tristan, this is someone very special I’d like ya to meet. This is my boyfriend, Mike.”

He stared up at him and said, “Hi Mike!”

He noticed Tristan bared quite the resemblance to Fritz, with the way his nose and mouth were shaped and his light brown hair. He had a rounder face than Fritz, bright blue eyes, and a light spray of freckles across his nose and cheeks.

“Oh, hey! Um, nice to meet you!” Mike smiled at him, not sure of what else to say or do. He felt overwhelmed but oddly happy at the same time.

Fritz then sat down on the couch beside the little girl and gently touched her shoulder to get her attention. She looked up at him, a soft smile coming to her lips. “Hi!”

“How are you?” He gestured for Mike to come over, which he did, standing beside him. Rosemary had light blonde hair, worn in braided pigtails, and beautiful golden brown eyes. Her face shape was much more like Fritz’s, but she otherwise looked nothing like him.

“I’m good!” she cheered. Holding up her pony, she proudly stated, “Look! I brushed her hair!”

Fritz smiled and stroked the pony’s mane. “Ya did a great job,” he complimented. “Sweetheart, I’d like ya to meet someone.” He guided her to look up at Mike and said, “This is my boyfriend, Mike. I’m not sure how well ya can see him right now…”

“I can see him, daddy,” she explained. He has blond hair and is wearing a black shirt, right?”

“He sure is!”

Rosemary grinned proudly and stood up, going over and giving Mike a hug. “Nice to meet you!”
He awkwardly touched her back near her shoulders, unsure of how to hug someone so short who was currently wrapped around his legs. “Nice to meet you, too.”

“We should do somethin’ together,” Fritz suggested.

“Like what?” he inquired.

He shrugged. “We could go tobogganin’.”

“Really?! Can we?” Tristan piped up from across the room.

“Ya know it!” Fritz exclaimed. He picked Rosemary up and hugged her close. “What are we waitin’ for? Let’s go!”

“Okay!” Mike raced to the door, as fast as he could with a bruised knee. Tristan rushed past him and skidded to a halt by the door, where he quickly grabbed his winter gear and threw it on in a hurry. Mike put on his own winter clothes, noticing that Fritz helped Rosemary to bundle up before dressing himself. He found it sweet to see how much he loved and cared for his children.

“Last one out’s a rotten egg!” Tristan called out, speeding out the front door. Fritz laughed and followed him out with Rosemary. Mike was left as the ‘rotten egg’, at least by Tristan’s standards. Fritz went to the garage and grabbed two toboggans propped up against the wall, passing one to Mike. He kept the other one tucked under his arm after he set Rosemary down, still holding her hand in his to guide her.

The four of them walked down the quiet neighbourhood street to the local park. Snowflakes gracefully tumbled down from the sky above and nestled themselves among the others that coated the ground. Near the middle of the park, there was a hill, the perfect size for riding down on a wooden sled.

“Hurry up! I want to go down!” Tristan complained.

Mike caught up to him with the sled, bringing it over for him to use.

“Could you go down with me?” he asked.

“Uh, I don’t know…”

“Pleeease~?” he begged. “Come on, Mike, it’ll be fun!”

Mike glanced over at Fritz, who only grinned and nodded for him to go. He looked back at Tristan and barely managed to say “Alright, I guess so,” before being pulled toward the hill by the eager little boy. He stumbled after him and eventually made it up to the top, his leg protesting the impact of running and climbing.

Tristan set the toboggan at the top of the hill and beamed, getting settled at the front. Mike gulped and nervously took a seat behind him, holding on tightly to the thin rope handles at either side of him. Immediately after, Tristan took off down the slope, laughing and enjoying himself while Mike shrieked and partially regretted his decision. He almost felt himself fall off, but managed to stay on until they slowed down to a stop at the bottom.

He spun around and looked up at Mike, grinning from ear to ear. “Did you like it?”

“Uh, y-yeah, I did…” He did enjoy himself, but wished he had something better to hold onto. In his opinion, the ropes were much too small. He quickly got off the toboggan and steadied himself on
Tristan giggled and dismounted the sled, dragging it up the hill right away to go down once more, by himself this time.

Mike watched as Fritz went down on his knees shortly after, with Rosemary sitting in front of him. He had reached around her to steer the toboggan and protect her in case she may have let go. Rosemary giggled and held on to the side ropes tightly, her braids whipping behind her in the wind, which her father had to dodge.

The four of them went down the hill several times more, sometimes with just the children or just the adults together. Once they had been down over a dozen times, they started their trek through the snow back to the house.

On their way home, Mike asked, “Hey, Fritz?”

“Yeah?”

“I should probably be going home now.”

Fritz seemed mildly disappointed, but before he could comment, Tristan cut in. “Aw, already?”

“I’m sorry, I’d love to stay, but I have to get back!” He hoped he wouldn’t have to explain to a kid that his mom was coming over, yet again. Mike wanted a fighting chance of at least appearing to be completely independent, even if only for a short period of time.

Luckily, he didn’t push for details. He frowned and said, “I wish you could stay longer; you’re way cooler than Greg.”

Fritz grinned when he heard this. “Don’t worry, you’ll see him again soon,” he met Mike’s eyes, “right?”

His face lit up in delight. “Uh, sure!” Mike stopped for a moment and gasped out of excitement.

“What?” Fritz inquired.

“I just had a great idea! What if we brought the kids to the restaurant? We could invite the Fitzgeralds too!”

His smile faded immediately, that same serious expression he noticed on Christmas Eve returning. “No way. Mike, come on, it’s dangerous there and you know that. No offense to Thomas, but I’d never bring my kids there. And after that ... Jeremy won’t go near the animatronics, let alone let Taryn or Adeline.”

“But what about-”

“Too much has happened there before. I don’t want to take that risk.”

“Dad, please?” Tristan asked. “You’ve been working at a place ‘where fantasy and fun come to life’ for years, and you haven’t taken me once! What could be so dangerous about some arcade games and pizza?”

“The tv said it was so much fun!” Rosemary added. “I want to hear the music!”

Fritz sighed wearily. Without revealing any troubling information to his children, he didn’t have a valid reason to not bring his kids to his work. “Alright, we’ll go,” he grunted, almost begrudgingly.
“If we go, it’s going to be at night when Mike and I are working, so no one gets lost.”

“That’s fine!” Mike exclaimed. “It’ll be like a sleep over!” Both kids began to enthusiastically discuss what they were looking forward to the most about going to Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza. Fritz, however, didn’t share their joy. He could only hold onto the hope that, as long as he took care of them, they wouldn’t meet the same fate that the Fazbear brothers had, along with their friends. He couldn’t be too sure if that monster responsible was still on the loose or not.
Fritz held the front door open for Anthony to make it easier for him to get inside the building on his crutches. He was still using them, but was deemed well enough to report to work once more. Convincing him to stay home and rest was surprisingly difficult. Mike trailed in behind him, heaving a weighty tool box inside.

Today was the day: Reynard and Gilead would finally get the repairs they deserved. It had taken them a good deal of time, but they eventually managed to locate enough pieces to create an endoskeleton for Gilead out of the spare parts lingering around in the back room. As for Reynard, they found a few more parts to fix his internal hardware. Unfortunately, considering they had originally replaced his broken legs with a back-up pair of Freddy Fazbear legs, the repairs to his costume would have to wait.

The three staff members went to the back room first to grab the supplies they had gathered beforehand. Fritz was left to drag the endoskeleton pieces out by himself, which proved to be challenging, even in his spectacular physical condition.

In a few trips, Mike and Fritz brought all of the required parts to Pirate Cove, along with a stool for Anthony to sit on while he worked.

“Good evenin’,” Fritz greeted the two animatronics, holding up the naked endoskeleton head for Gilead to see. “It’s about time we made good on that promise,” he said with a grin.

Gilead gasped. “You’re actually going to fix us?”

“Of course we are,” Anthony explained. “How could we leave you both here in such poor condition?”

“It’s jus’ been a long t-t-t-time on these ‘ere wa-a-a-aters, and no o-o-one’s c-c-c-c-c-c-c-c-c-come,” Reynard pointed out. Much to everyone’s disappointment, his pirate character had taken charge, sounding very damaged.

He gave him a sympathetic smile and got himself settled on the stool. “I know, and I plan to make up for that. Have a seat in front of me so I can work on you.”

He nodded and slinked over, settling cross-legged in front of Anthony with his back turned to him.

“I’m sorry to do this, but I need you to-”


Anthony smiled softly and pried open the maintenance panel on the back of the endoskeleton head. He picked up his screwdriver and began to loosen a few screws. “Uh, I’m sorry you’ve been left like this for so long. If I’d known, I’d have had Thomas, uh… Do something.”

“Nae, it be fi-i-i-ine. Besides, Fre-e-e-e-eddy needs ‘im more tha-a-a-an me.”

He didn’t continue the conversation, choosing to change the subject instead. “I need you to hold on
in there; I’m about to remove Foxy’s software drive.”

Reynard went quiet and closed his eyes, focusing on keeping his soul tied to the suit. He felt Anthony disconnect the cables for the drive and pull it out of his head. His suit shut off on him, leaving him feeling alone and afraid. Reynard felt his connection to the suit weakening as his spirit threatened to slip away.

“Is it done…?” Reynard asked, sounding as if he were speaking from inside a tin can.

“Yeah… Are you alright in there?”

The suit didn’t move. A figure of a young man, around 16 years old, stepped out from the robotic body. He had light golden brown eyes that almost glowed, messy and bright red hair, and sun-kissed skin. His translucent body was trim and fit. The teen met Anthony’s eyes for a moment, smiling sadly. “Hey…”

Anthony’s eyes widened in surprise. “R-Reynard…?”

He nodded. “Yeah. Uh, my ties to the suit grew kind of weak so… here I am.” Reynard grinned. “Thank you. Thank you so much, Anthony.” He stepped a few paces away from his suit over to stand beside him. He hugged Anthony as best as he could, despite the lack of substance to his body. After a moment, Anthony returned the gesture. When he let go, he noticed Reynard appeared to be even fainter.

“You’re fading!” he shrieked.

Reynard glanced down at his hands and frowned. “I need to get back in there, I guess…” He gave Anthony a slight smile and a wave as he stepped back into the suit. After about a minute of nerve-wracking stillness, Reynard’s eyes fluttered open, glowing their usual yellow colour. He closed the maintenance panel and shook his head a little to regain his bearings. He slid the mask back on over his endoskeleton head and turned to face Anthony, still smiling.

A look of relief settled over his features as he saw Reynard functioning properly. “That’s much better. Uh, now you won’t fade away, right?”

“I don’t think so,” Reynard explained. “I feel a lot more secure now. Wow, there’s so much room in here! I feel so free!” His smile grew. “I feel like myself again!”

“I’m glad you do.” Anthony stretched and stood with his crutches to support himself. “Now, how are Fritz and Mike doing?”

Reynard carefully eased himself to his feet, wobbling a little as he tried to settle himself in his mechanical body. “Why don’t we go and find out?”

He grinned and walked across the stage with him to where the other two men were working to assemble the new endoskeleton. Mike was struggling to make one of the hands stay on while Fritz was focused on attaching the head to the torso.

“Need some help there?” Anthony chuckled.

“I’ve almost-” Fritz grunted and put a lot of strength into tightening the final piece, “got it!” He sighed in relief and set his tool down, pausing to wipe the sweat from his brow. “Well, that won’t be comin’ off any time soon.”

Anthony grinned, easing himself down to the floor and taking extra care to not injure his leg, beside
the endoskeleton to test the joint securing the head to the body. As Fritz had said, it was attached properly. “Well done,” he congratulated. “I’m surprised. I mean these machines are, uh, quite advanced. No beginner’s project for sure.”

Then there was Mike. He fumbled with the hand he was still attempting to connect to the body. His tool slipped out of his hand and clattered to the stage floor. The endoskeleton hand tumbled down after it, evoking a whine from Mike.

“I can finish this up,” offered Anthony.

Mike sighed in defeat and stood, reluctantly backing away from his failure. Anthony gave him a soft smile to assure him that his effort was appreciated, then got to work.

About an hour later, Anthony and Fritz had finished assembling the endoskeleton.

Fritz said, “Hey, Gilead?” to get his attention.

“Hm?”

He smirked and waved the endoskeleton’s hand at him.

“You finished that really quickly!” Gilead remarked.

“We wanted to make sure we had it done for you tonight,” Anthony explained.

Mike laughed and light-heartedly added, “I don’t know, maybe we should put his suit on it tomorrow night.”

“Don’t do that, please!” pleaded Gilead.

Anthony chuckled and removed the head from Gilead’s costume and replied, “We won’t.” With help from Fritz, he sat the endoskeleton upright and slipped the head of the mask onto it. The three staff members worked together to take the pieces of the costume and attach them to their rightful places on the endoskeleton. When Anthony gave Gilead the go-ahead to move, he started by opening his blue eyes and beaming.

“Well, what do ya think?” Fritz inquired.

Almost too quickly, Gilead stood up. “I can move again!” he cheered with glee. He attempted to run about the stage, but only managed to take a few steps forward before tumbling over. He laughed as he sat up and worked to reorient himself. Once he had managed to bring himself back to his feet without assistance, he pulled the three men into a bear hug. “I love it! Thank you so much!”

Mike squeaked when he had the air knocked out of his lungs as he was crushed right in the middle of the hug. Fritz, meanwhile, put some resistance against Gilead’s arm to avoid being crushed by the oblivious animatronic. His efforts had little impact, however, other than ensuring that Mike took less of the force.

Anthony choked a little from the tight hold around him. “Gilead, careful!” he commanded.

As requested, he released them. “Sorry, I was just so excited! I haven’t been able to hug anyone for years. I haven’t been able to move at all! But now I can, thanks to you!”

Anthony grinned at him. “It’s the least I could do for you after I took out that spring-lock one a few years ago.”
“At least we managed to get that much fixed up for ya. I’m afraid we didn’t find anythin’ to replace that missing ear, though,” Fritz said.

Gilead waved it off. “It’s just a piece of metal and fabric. It doesn’t really serve a purpose, anyway.”

Fritz quietly nodded to this. Mike then broke the tension. “But if we got it fixed, you could start performing!”

“Me? Perform? I don’t know about that…”

“Why not? It’d be fun!” Mike exclaimed.

“I don’t think Dad would allow it…”

“Then tell him you’re here, kid,” Fritz instructed. “I doubt he’d say no to ya of all people, if ya asked him.”

“But what if we end up in the back room again?” Gilead lamented, actually able to frown now and hang his head.

“We won’t let that happen, Gilead. I, uh, saw Reynard. I mean saw him. He stepped out of the suit,” Anthony told him.

Gilead looked up quickly, meeting Reynard’s eyes with shock. “You did…? But how?”

“My ties to the suit were weakened by the major repairs,” Reynard explained calmly. “But as you know, souls aren’t really supposed to leave the body, so I started to fade. I wouldn’t try it if I were you; it isn’t worth it.”

“That’s interesting, but it doesn’t mean my dad will believe it.”

“We believed you, didn’t we?” Mike piped up.

“If we didn’t, you’d still be in the back,” Fritz added. “Give us a little credit, eh? We’ll help ya get on stage.”

“If that’s what you want, of course,” Anthony finished for him.

Gilead smiled. “I… guess it’d be nice.”

“Awesome!” Mike enthused. “So, when are you telling him? Do you want our help?” he questioned eagerly, bouncing on his heels.

Fritz chuckled. “Ya should probably give him an answer before he gains too much lift-off,” he teased.

“I guess we’ll tell him when he comes in tomorrow morning,” he offered. “We may as well get it over with quickly. All of us are telling him, right?”

“Of course!” Anthony exclaimed. “We wouldn’t want anyone to be forgotten.”

Fritz patted Gilead on the shoulder. “You’ll be fine. We’re all here to help ya.”

He thanked him with a smile. “I’ve missed him so much, it’d be wonderful to see him again.”

Reynard awkwardly kicked at the stage with the metal edge of his foot. As much as he wanted to
bring up a question of his own, he felt much too awkward to do so. Instead, much like the idea of performing again, he doubted the likelihood of ever appearing in front of an audience again. Instead, he concluded that he’d be happy if Gilead was. Despite the repairs, he was cosmetically too damaged to perform. He stood nearby and continued to listen to the conversation.

“... anyway, I’m off to see Freddy!” Gilead cheered as he leaped off the stage, running to the door, making sure to not fall this time.

Fritz grinned and stepped off the stage with Mike, following behind Gilead with an arm around Mike’s shoulders.

Gilead charged onto the stage and nearly tackled his brother with a tight hug. Freddy screamed in surprise as he struggled to keep himself upright.

He stared at his brother in shock, not fully sure of how to respond other than to make several unintelligible sounds.

Gilead laughed and happily shouted, “Surprise!”

“You’re moving again!” he replied joyfully.

Gilead ignored his obvious statement and continued. “I am! Isn’t it great?”

Freddy nodded and grinned at him, still trying to convince himself of the reality of what he was seeing before him.

“Do you know what this means now?” he asked, taking a step back.

“No, what?”

“I can start performing now!” Gilead enthused.

Freddy’s surprise shifted into worry. “That would be nice, but I don’t think that’s possible. I don’t see how we could without Dad getting suspicious.”

“I know, that’s why we’re going to tell him!”

His jaw dropped at the mere suggestion. “Gilead, is that new endoskeleton causing you to glitch? You know we can't do that!”

“Why not? You told the night staff and the assistant manager that we’re here, and that got me out of the back room. Even then, they’ve said they’d make sure nothing bad happens,” Gilead argued calmly while adjusting his bow tie.

“I- We-.” Freddy struggled to piece together his thoughts as he got progressively upset. “I won’t hurt Dad like that!” he finally screamed. “He’s already lost so much! I don’t want to see him heartbroken like that!”

He frowned as he considered Freddy’s point. As much as he had weighed the risks of talking to his dad, he hadn’t given any thought to just how much distress the information could cause him.

“I’d think the fact you’re still here but not talkin’ to him is worse,” Fritz interjected.

“You have a good point,” Gilead mumbled.

Freddy became sadder as he realized that his efforts to help his father were also hurting him. “But he
just seems so sad already…”

“If ya tell him, he won't be struggling as much in the long run.”

“Come on, Freddy, please?” Gilead begged. “Don't you want to talk to Dad too?” He took off his top hat and shuffled it in his hands as he waited for an answer.

Freddy remained silent for several long moments before uttering a few words of agreement. He hated the fact that he had no way to avoid causing pain for his father. He comforted himself by reminding himself that putting the mysteries to rest was the kindest thing he could do.

Once the others had left, Anthony and Reynard were alone in Pirate Cove. As Reynard was about to wander off to brood, Anthony called his name. He stopped and turned around to look at him, his tail swishing slowly behind him in a wary manner.

Anthony smiled at him fondly and casually said, “You know, you’ve always been my favourite. Uh… Not to say that the other animatronics aren’t great or anything, but, I’ve always had a bit of a soft spot for you. I can’t say I’m too fond of that puppet, though. He’s just so creepy, you know?”

Reynard’s eyes lit up in delight as he heard the compliment. “Really? But I’m just a machine; there’s nothing that makes me any different from the others. Besides, James isn’t a bad guy. You should try talking to him at some point. He’s always alone in that box of his, so I’m sure he’d appreciate it if you visited him.”

“I, uh, guess I could try… But hey, you’re more than a machine! Now that it’s just you in there now, I’d love to get to know you. The real you.”

“But I’m not Foxy. I’m not a pirate,” he pointed out, dropping his gaze to the stage.

Anthony shrugged. “Yeah, I know that. But it’s you I want to get to know, Reynard. Anyone could make a pirate fox robot, but they can’t create you. You’re what matters most.”

His ears perked up. “That’s very kind of you.”

Anthony gave him a charming smile. “As the assistant manager of this fine establishment, it’s my job to ensure that everyone is happy and performing to the best of their abilities. That includes you.”

Reynard took a deep breath as he worked up the courage to pop the question he had been avoiding. “Does that mean you can bring my mom here, then?”

His eyes widened. Although they had discussed the idea of talking to Thomas about his sons, it had never occurred to Anthony to ask about the parents of the other children who had met the same fate. “Oh, of course! Uh, we’ll do our best!” he assured him enthusiastically.

“Thanks,” he said with a smile. “It’ll be so nice to see her again. I’ve missed her, and I’m sure she’s missed me as well.”

“You’re not worried about her being upset?”

Reynard’s optimism faded a little as he thought of how unpleasant the revelation would inevitably be. “I guess… But, she’s probably been even more forlorn as she still expects me to walk through the front door of the house one day. She still has that thread of hope to cling onto, keeping her from truly moving on. As long as she still believes I may be alive, she can’t heal.”
Anthony took a moment to absorb the information. “Wow, that’s… mature of you. Uh, try not to worry about it, alright? We’ll be here to help both of you.”

Reynard’s smile returned as he thanked him again, then excused himself.

After Reynard had left, Anthony braved going to pay the unsettling puppet a visit. Even after all of his years working for Fazbear Entertainment, Anthony couldn’t fathom what had possessed Everett to make such a bizarre animatronic. Although the other ones could be ghoulish at times, the puppet seemed as if it always was. Always watching, always thinking. He as a grown adult thought it was the kind of things nightmares were made of, leading him to question how a child could ever like it. He then remembered that the Prize Counter was now run by human staff members since Thomas took over the business, specifically to replace the role of the white masked creep. Clearly, he understood the concept of nightmare-fuel more than his brother had. Child friendly or not, the animatronic was still haunted by the soul of a child, just like the others. Yet, if somehow possible, that boy in particular was unluckier than the others.

“Uh, hello…?” He was met with silence. “Hello, hello?” Anthony headed over to the large gift box in the corner, tucked behind the counter and cautiously pried the lid off, bracing himself despite not needing to.

As expected, the animatronic was curled up inside, with a walkman at his side and his eyes closed peacefully. Anthony lightly tapped on the side of the box to get his attention. He looked up at him and took off his headphones.

“Oh, hey,” he said. “Anthony, right?”

“Oh, yeah…” he mumbled uncomfortably, still feeling uneasy.

“We haven’t met properly, have we?”

Anthony shook his head. He stood up from his box and offered his hand. “It’s nice to meet you properly. I’m James. James Wyrick.” He smiled. “I haven’t been able to say that for years. I’ve missed that.”

His eyes widened in surprise. “Wyrick?” It all came together quickly. “You’re that little boy who went missing at Fredbear’s, aren’t you?”

James nodded. “Was, more like, but yeah. I’ve been here since then… Well, what’s happened has happened.”

“Right, uh… I’m sorry I haven’t been over since finding out about… that.”

He waved it off. “Don’t worry about it. I know I’m not exactly nice to look at.” He chuckled heartily. “When I came here as a kid, I ran from the building in tears because of this,” he said, pointing to his mask.

“Well, you were quite young,” Anthony reasoned, not finding any humour in the tragedy as James had.

“That’s true.” James’ contentment vanished when he noticed Anthony’s crutches. “What happened to you?”

As if he had almost forgotten, Anthony replied, “Oh, these? Right, I, uh, had a bit of a run-in with Porfirio recently.”
His face took on a sympathetic and a gloomy appearance. “I’m sorry he got to you, too. So many of us have fallen victim to his sick, twisted ways.”

“Wait… He killed you, too?” Anthony questioned uncomfortably. “I thought he only, uh, murdered the other five.”

James shook his head slowly. “I was his first. At least I think I was. I felt sick when I saw him come back, day after day. I thought we were free of him until he returned last month.” He sighed and pulled his arms around himself. “I just… didn’t say anything, because I knew there was nothing I could do to stop him.” He met Anthony’s eyes, a grave expression on his face. “Anthony, you need to be careful. He’s capable of dreadful things. I don’t want you to end up stuck here with us.”

“I-I know,” Anthony stuttered. “H-He uh, threatened to ‘finish what he started’ if I… said anything about… You know…”

“I wouldn’t risk it. He’s already killed six people; I’m sure he’d go for seven if given the chance. Don’t give him that opportunity.”

“I won't...” He took a deep breath. “I just can't believe he did all of that... He and I used to be friends, you know? But, he just snapped all of the sudden. I’ll be honest with you, I’m scared. What if he tries again? W-What if I don’t survive?” Anthony was pale and shaky as he contemplated his mortality. He truly feared Porfirio as of now, despite how close they had been in the past. More than anything, he wished that the Porfirio he used to knew would come back; the one that used to be his friend, instead of the cruel monster that had replaced him.

James gave him a sympathetic expression. “You won't die,” he assured him. He laughed a little and added, “You’ve survived at Freddy’s for this many years, and you’ll be around for many more to come.”

Anthony smiled uncomfortably. “I guess I’ve been lucky.”

“Lucky or not, you’re alive, and that’s what matters. Just be careful, and you’ll be fine.”

Anthony nodded and thoughtfully considered his odds of survival. He eventually reasoned that James was correct; if he could be mindful around Porfirio, in theory, he could avoid another confrontation. At this point in time, he no longer desired to regain his friendship with him. He found it difficult to trust someone who had made an attempt on his life.

Reynard wandered off to set up his new SNES in the security office. Considering the fact that no guards were truly using it to monitor anything, he assumed nobody would mind if he converted it into a gaming area. He started hooking the system up as he eagerly waited for Gilead to join him. Now that he was able to move once more, Reynard looked forward to playing video games with him, as they used to years ago.

Gilead stepped into the room a few minutes after he had set up the console, quickly brightening as he saw the remote in his friend’s hand. “Ready to play?” he asked.

Reynard grinned. “Are you kidding? Of course I am!” he exclaimed giddily, booting up the system. “It’s been far too long since I’ve played a proper video game!”

He stood beside the desk chair Reynard had curled up in and added, “Let’s just hope this one’s better than E.T. was.”

Reynard shuddered at the mention of the name. “Even if I could eat, I still don’t think I’d ever want
Reese’s Pieces ever again.” He passed Gilead the controller for the console, giving him the honours of playing the single-player game first. “I’m sure Mike has a better taste in video games than your dad did.”

Gilead shrugged. “It’s not like he knew or anything.”

“I guess. Anyway, let’s play!”

Gilead completed the first level, holding the controller triumphantly in the air. The two animatronics met each other’s eyes and said at the same time, “That. Was. AWESOME!” They sounded like young boys once again, only much happier than the last time they had played together.

“Did you see those barrel rolls?” Reynard chuckled. “Aw man, that was wicked cool!”

“The graphics are great, it plays smoothly, and it’s challenging. It’s perfect!” he enthused. “I’d keep playing, but I think you should have a turn.” Gilead reluctantly transferred the controller to Reynard and watched as he played the next level. For once in a long time, the two of them felt normal; playing video games and laughing together like friends usually did. Not even death could take that joy away from them.
At 7 AM, the lock on the front door clicked open as Thomas made his way into his restaurant for another day of work; his most anticipated activity. Like every other day, he wearily dragged himself to his office to have some quiet alone time in the morning. This morning, however, was different from the others: the night staff were still there along with the assistant manager, who was not even supposed to be at work as of yet.

“Mr. Howard? What are you doing here?” He then looked to his night staff. “Mr. Schmidt, Mr. Smith, you are aware that your shift ends at six, right?”

“We, um, needed to stay late,” Mike explained.

“And I had some… things to take care of,” Anthony stated.

“Surely it could have waited until you were scheduled to work,” Thomas replied. He sighed and added, “You know what the company finances look like at the moment.”

Anthony realized what his boss was worried about, and clarified immediately. “Sir, I’m not looking for any overtime or extra pay. None of us are. Please understand, I came here by choice.”

Mr. Fazbear raised an eyebrow skeptically. “I can't think of anyone who would come to work before his scheduled time for no pay, especially when he knows he’s expected to be in his chair for a full work day during business hours. Now try to explain to me how that makes sense. You came to work at some point during the night shift, expecting no pay for whatever it was you were working on, assuming you were working, and now are staying for your scheduled shift. Are you not sleep deprived, Mr. Howard?”

“Sleep deprived? Not at all!” he replied brightly, giving him a charming smile.

Although Thomas didn’t comment on it, the dark bags that had formed under Anthony’s eyes stood out as an obvious contradiction to his statement. The yawn that followed served to emphasize the point. Although everyone knew he was keeping up a facade, there was no sense in arguing with him, considering he was doing extra work for free. Even if he did try to convince him to lighten his workload, he probably wouldn’t have listened. Anthony had a strong work ethic, and it showed through in the high quality of his work. Thomas couldn’t have found a better, more dependable assistant manager, even if he had tried to.

Mr. Fazbear sighed wearily, frustrated with his employee’s dedication, for once. “What was so important that you needed to come in so early? You’re clearly too tired to do your job.”

“No, I’m not,” he protested.

“That doesn’t answer my question. What were you working on?”

“Follow me,” Anthony insisted, leading the way. Thomas shook his head slowly and shuffled behind him. Mike and Fritz tiredly dragged along behind them, both looking forward to crashing on their
beds after their long shifts. He took them to Show Stage, where the band stood motionlessly as they waited for the day to begin. Gilead stood behind the main three, posed similarly to Freddy.

Mr. Fazbear stared blankly at the stage for several moments before asking, “Why is that one on the stage? Did you three stay here to bring that old thing out of the back? I thought I told you to disassemble that a few years ago, Mr. Howard.”

“You did, but I, uh…”

“We needed to bring him out and fix him up,” Fritz interjected. “It’ll make sense in a moment.” He looked up to the stage and called out, “Hey, Freddy?”

The animatronic’s eyes glided open and he blinked a few times. Freddy noticed his father and remained silent, staying rigid, as he would have during business hours when they were not performing.

“That’s… odd,” Thomas mumbled.

“C’mon,” Fritz encouraged, taking a few steps toward the stage by himself.

“Be careful, Mr. Smith. You remember what happened last time someone got close to them.”

“They’re not dangerous,” he explained, hoisting himself up onto the stage. He tapped Freddy on the shoulder and said, “Remember what we agreed on?”

The bear remained motionless.

“Mr. Smith, get down from there!” Thomas commanded sternly.

Before Fritz could react, Gilead stepped toward them.

“Fritz, now!” Mr. Fazbear barked. “Watch out! Behind you!”

Instead, he smiled at Gilead and gave him a nod, not moving as he had been directed to. “Great of ya to join us.”

“Freddy, please?” Gilead requested kindly.

“ What is going on?” Thomas snapped.

He sat on the edge of the stage to face his father, who backed up immediately. “Please, don’t be afraid…”

It did nothing to calm him. He continued to stare at the animatronic before.

“I just want to talk to you.”

“You can do that from where you are,” Mr. Fazbear said shortly.

“Very well.”

Freddy sat down beside him, appearing to be quite tense. Gilead gave him a reassuring smile.

“I really don’t want to say it,” Freddy lamented.

“You don’t have to, I’ll deal with it.” Gilead turned his attention back to Thomas and said, “Just
listen, please.”

He hesitated before nodding, leaning against one of the tables facing the stage with his arms crossed. Fritz leaped off the stage and rejoined his colleagues.

“You know how, uh… A couple of years ago, you know…” Gilead began awkwardly.


“Yeah… Um, those kids went missing, and…”

“They weren’t found, I know,” Thomas finished. “It almost bankrupted the company.”

Freddy’s eyes widened in shock. “It did…?”

Gilead frowned. “I’m sorry to hear it was that bad. I know the budget’s still tight, but it will get better.”

“If we can even afford to stay open that long,” Mr. Fazbear said.

“I want to help,” he offered. “Foxy and I want to perform together, if that’s alright with you. It’d attract more customers.”

He shook his head slowly. “Pirate Cove is out of order, and so is Foxy. Even if I wanted to, I can’t fix him. I’m afraid I can’t keep that empty attraction forever. I might have to-”

“You can’t!” Gilead shrieked.

Thomas sighed. “I know he’s been a well-loved character, but I’m afraid he’s broken and in need of repairs I can’t make.”

“But I already did, sir,” Anthony explained. “His costume’s still torn up, but he’s working well now.”

“So that’s what you were doing here…” Thomas muttered. “I’m not sure how you figured out how to repair him, but there’s no use for him. He’s still too damaged to be used; it’s unprofessional.”

“Anthony fixed me, too,” Gilead added. “He, Fritz, and Mike assembled a new endoskeleton for me.”

“You shouldn’t even be out here in the first place.” Thomas sighed wearily and faced his staff. “You do know you’re supposed to get permission from your employer before making business decisions, right? I could-”

“Hear him out,” Fritz ordered.

“Watch your mouth, Mr. Smith. You’re not the one in charge around here.”

Fritz grit his teeth in frustration as he waited for Gilead to continue. Mike gave him a concerned look and lightly touched his shoulder.

“So, uh, as I was saying, those kids went missing, right?” He cleared his throat uncomfortably. “I hate to say it, but… they’re dead.”

Thomas visibly tensed, a brief flash of misery coming over him before being replaced by a cool and stern expression. “And how would you know that? No one knows what happened to them.”

“You can’t be. They’re gone,” Mr. Fazbear replied bitterly. “They went missing and they’ve never come back.” As much as he was aware that all five of the missing children were likely dead, he refused to believe it. His sons were among them, and, against all odds, he still held onto the hope that they were out there somewhere. It was all he could do to cope with the loss.

“Dad… It’s me. I-I’m so sorry I said that E.T. game was wretched…” he said sincerely. “I know you were just doing your best for Freddy and I… I’m sorry I couldn’t see that when I was younger.” He hung his head in shame, feeling awful for his ungrateful remark, despite the truth of his words.

Thomas simply stared at him, his jaw slack as he took the information in. He simply didn’t know how to react, but it was undeniably Gilead speaking to him, he could be sure of that. His mannerism were all too familiar. Plus, no one else would have known about that conversation that day.

Freddy watched him, losing his motivation to say his part as he saw his father start to crumble.

“Freddy’s here, too,” Gilead continued. “He’s… well, Freddy.”

Within moments, Thomas had fallen apart, reduced to a weeping mess. He hid his face in his hands, his body shook with every sob he let out.

“D-Don’t cry!” Freddy exclaimed, rushing over to him. Thomas pulled him into his arms and clung to him, bawling onto his shoulder. Freddy gingerly supported him.

“M-My sweet, s-sweet boy…” he choked out. “Gilead, c-come here…”

Gilead came right over and held them both close. “At least we can be a family again, like we used to be…”

“I’m sorry I hurt you!” Freddy wailed.

“It’s n-not your fault,” Thomas consoled him, wiping his tears off his cheeks and giving them both a sad smile. “I’m j-just happy to h-have you boys back…”

“We’re not going anywhere, Dad,” Gilead assured him. “N-Not that we could, but that’s beside the point.”

“I know.” He turned his attention back to his staff, no longer caring about being seen in his disheveled state. “Th-Thank you for looking after my boys for me…”

Fritz smiled softly. “As soon as Freddy told me Gilead was back there, I made sure we got him outta there as soon as possible. I didn’t want any human bein’ to spend any length of time back there. He’s a good kid; kind, patient, cooperative, and decisive. Ya should feel proud to have him as your son. But how could I forget Freddy?” He grinned at him. “If it wasn't for him, we'd have never known. And the shows he puts on are wonderful! I can't wait to bring my kids here to see him. Freddy, you've kept the people comin’ and stayed positive through it all. I don't know what dad wouldn't be proud of that.”

Freddy beamed, feeling fantastic as he received the praise for all his efforts. “Thanks, Fritz! And thanks for helping us!”

“No problem, kid.”

Mr. Fazbear smiled warmly at him. “Of course! We’ll fix that ear up for you and make sure you get on stage. We could have you in the main band or we could set something up for you in Pirate Cove.”

“I’d prefer Pirate Cove. I want to perform with Reynard.”

His eyes widened. “Reynard’s there? My my, it’s been so long… How has he been?”

Gilead replied, “He’s much better, now that he’s been fixed. He was having a problem with his soul and the Foxy programming, so Anthony got rid of the A.I. for him.” He smiled. “I missed him so much, so I’m glad to have my friend back.”

“At least he’s functioning again. I’ll get him back up there, too. Why don’t you two talk about what you’d like to do as your show? Come up with some ideas for a performance you can do together.” Thomas suggested. “Let me know what you decide on, so I can figure out how to fix that suit of his.”

Gilead embraced him. “Thank you so much!” he cheered as he raced off to do just that.

“Dad?”

Thomas met his eyes with a smile. “What can I do for you, Freddy?”

Freddy signalled for him to wait as he darted up to the stage and over to the nearby Backstage. He returned with the Discman and headphones Mike had given him for Christmas. He sat with his father, offering him the headphones.

“What’d you get this?” he inquired with genuine curiosity.

“Mike gave it to me for Christmas,” Freddy replied, grinning at Mike.

The nightguard faintly blushed from the attention. “It was nothing, really!” He gave a slight nervous laugh. “Just trying to do something nice, that’s all.”

Freddy passed his father the headphones to let him listen, playing Carmen Overture for him. Thomas smiled as more tears streamed down his cheeks. A flood of fond memories sprung to mind, along with the tragic ones, creating a flurry of emotions. Freddy watched him happily, remembering the good times they had spent together, and now would going forward.

“Sir?” a voice asked from the doorway once Thomas had removed his headphones.

Thomas saw the Marionette standing at the entrance of the Dining Room, watching quietly. A warm smile danced across his lips as saw the old animatronic.

“Ah, if it isn’t the Puppet. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen you out of that box of yours.”

“Yeah, it has been…”

Thomas patted the chair beside him. “Please, do join us,” he insisted.

He nodded and slinked over to the chair, sliding into the seat across from Thomas and Freddy.

“I understand that my sons and at least one of their friends is here… You’re one of them as well, are you not?”
“As of now, I suppose. In life, I did not have the pleasure of knowing them. I’m not sure how well you remember me, but I was the boy who went missing at Fredbear’s Family Diner. I’m James.”

Thomas quickly recalled the information. “Ah yes, I remember Everett telling me about that. I’m so sorry that happened to you... How come you didn’t speak to us about it?”

James shrugged. “I didn’t want to scare anyone, I suppose. And there was always the threat of the back room.”

He seemed confused. “Why would we put any of you back there for that?”

“Because it sounds like a glitch.”

“I know my boys well,” Mr. Fazbear explained. “I recognized them right away. I have no reason to doubt that you’re all telling the truth about this, despite how outlandish it may be.”

James smiled. “I’m glad you do.” He went quiet for a moment before asking, “I know it’s been a good 15 years or so, but, would it be too much to ask you to track down my parents? I’ve missed them so much…”

Thomas was almost shocked. “Of course I will! Why wouldn’t I? I’ll notify them, somehow.”

“What about the other parents?” Freddy questioned.

“With Charlotte’s parents, yes,” Thomas replied. “As for Bailey, I still have that business card his father gave me, but I haven’t spoken to him since. I know how to get in touch with Ms. Coleman as well.”

As if taking the mention of their names as their cue, Bonnie and Chica joined them at the table.

“How have they been?” Chica enthused. “Are Mom and Dad alright?”

“They miss you more than you could imagine, my dear,” he explained. Mr. Fazbear had no need to ask which child he was speaking to. Considering how well he knew Charlotte, it was easy for him to recognize her. “We’ve missed you all. Losing three children from our church in such an upsetting way took quite the toll on the congregation.” He let out a sad sigh. “It’s been difficult for all of us, but we have all done what we could to return to life as usual.”

She frowned. Before she could reply to that, Bonnie interjected, “Dude, you didn't talk to my parents? Rude!”

Chica rolled her eyes. “Really, Bon?”

His cheeks glowed a deep red. “I thought you said you wouldn't call me that in public!”

She snickered and replied, “I only said that about Bon bon!”

Freddy burst out laughing. “Wait, she calls you ‘Bonbon’?”

Bonnie stamped his foot forcefully, much like a kicking rabbit. “S-Shut up! Both of you!” he grumbled. “Anyway, I don’t remember anything about them, but it would still be cool to see them. Maybe it'll jog my memory.”

“I’m sure Elliott misses you,” Chica added.

“Who?” he asked, tilting his head in a confused way, his ears flopping to the side.
“Your little brother.”

His bewilderment grew. “I have a brother?”

“Yeah, you do,” Freddy chuckled. “You used to act like he annoyed you, but you would always play with him.”

Bonnie snorted and rolled his eyes in annoyance. “I doubt it. How old is this ‘Elliott’ kid, anyway?”

“Um…” Freddy briefly trailed off in thought. “7, I think. He was around a year old when we ended up here.”

“I see,” he responded receptively. “Well, he’d better like rockin’ out, ‘cuz that’s what cool kids do!”

Chica giggled. “It’s very possible. Your parents were both metalheads, so I’m sure Elliott likes music just as much as you do.”

“Wicked! I can’t wait!” Bonnie enthused.

Thomas chuckled quietly. “You haven’t changed a day, Bailey.”

“Huh? Oh, right.” He laughed uncomfortably. “I forgot that’s what my name used to be. I don’t really remember anything before the incident. No offense, man.”

“No need to apologize. The worst thing was you did when you would come to visit us would be how loud you were… and sometimes a little mischievous, but never in a harmful way.”

Bonnie took interest in this detail. “I was a trouble-maker?”

“I’m not sure if I would call it that, but you certainly pulled your fair share of… pranks,” he said carefully.

He laughed triumphantly. “That’s awesome! Aw man, what kind of pranks did I pull off?”

“You and I put mud in Gilead’s shoes that one time, even though Chica warned us not to,” Freddy recalled. “The look on his face was so worth it!”

“You were in big trouble for that,” Thomas remarked.

“I know, but it was still pretty funny! It was so worth the week of chores.”

Bonnie chuckled at the thought. “That’s a good one! What else did I do?”

“You put a glass of water on my thumbs, telling me it was a magic trick. You and Freddy raced off giggling.” Mr. Fazbear smirked and shook his head slowly. “I must have been there for at least for fifteen minutes before you boys came back and moved the glass.”

He burst out laughing, just as delighted as he would have been when he had pulled off the prank. “That’s awesome!”

“I really hope you start to remember the time before we came here,” said Chica. “We had so many wonderful times together.”

“I hope I will as well,” Bonnie replied. “Seeing my folks might help.”

“Reynard mentioned that he wanted to see his mom,” Anthony piped in. “Uh, I guess we just need to
bring in all the parents, huh?”

“That would be ideal,” Thomas agreed. “I’ll do my best to bring them here.”

“Thank you, sir!” James, Chica, and Bonnie exclaimed.

He chuckled softly and said, “Please, call me Thomas. There’s no need to be so formal.”

“S-Sorry!” Chica stammered nervously.

“My dear, you’re like a daughter to me. You don’t need to be shy around me.”

She smiled warmly and nodded, a slight blush coming to her cheeks. Bonnie laughed and poked her cheek in a teasing manner.

Thomas stood and pushed in his chair. “I’d love to stay and chat, but the restaurant opens soon. I need to get things ready for that.”

“I could help make the pizza!” Chica offered. “I love to cook.”

Thomas thought this over for a few moments before telling her, “If you can get in there and back on stage before we open, you’re welcome to. Make sure your costume stays clean.”

“Of course!” She grinned excitedly. “Thank you!” She raced off to the kitchen to begin her kitchen preparations. At this time, James returned to his box for the day, knowing he still wouldn’t be allowed to roam.

“Bonnie and I will work on warming up, I suppose.”

“Heck yeah, let’s rock!” Bonnie enthused.

Mr. Fazbear smiled at them. “You boys have fun with that. I’ll do what I can to contact the parents.”

“Thanks, man.” Bonnie he hopped back up onto the stage and strapped his guitar on his shoulder.

Freddy hugged his father once more before following his friend up onto the stage. He then grabbed his microphone and the two quickly launched into some songs, periodically cracking up as they came across some of the cheesier lyrics. Mike and Fritz, who had lingered to watch, also found themselves snickering on occasion.

As they arrived at a point where Chica usually had a solo, they broke down in a fit of laughter.

“This sounds so stupid! I can’t believe kids actually like this crap,” Bonnie remarked

“Hey, it’s a livin’,” Fritz encouraged.

“I still think we need better stuff,” he maintained.

“You could write some new songs!” Mike suggested.

“Kid-friendly ones,” Freddy reminded him. “To the customers, we’re simply pizza-loving robots made to entertain the kids. We can’t do much outside of that.”

Bonnie’s ears drooped in disappointment. “That blows, dude.” He strummed a few random chords on his guitar boredly.
“You’re allowed to play whatever you want after we close,” Freddy reminded him.

He nodded. “True.” Bonnie continued to strum away and eventually came up with a few bars that he and Freddy deemed to be good material for a potential new song.

Despite the fears Freddy had going into the coming day, he did not regret his decision to go through with it. He had Gilead to thank for pushing him to do what he had longed to do for several years. Now that their family was reunited, they could finally be at peace and rebuild the restaurant. Maybe now, there would be hope of avoiding the impending threat of bankruptcy.

Chapter End Notes

Side note: I may or may not have pulled that glass of water prank on my boyfriend when he and I first started dating. Heh, at least I can verify that it does work well! I didn’t abandon him, at least.

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